



Certificate of Education

GCE Applied ICT 8751, 8753, 8756 and 8759

IT01 ICT and Society

Report on the Examination *2010 examination - January series*

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit 1: ICT and Society (IT01)

This was the ninth series for the examination of this unit. Centres new to the unit should also refer to Examiner's Reports for previous series.

General comments

It was pleasing to see the standard of the work submitted for assessment this session.

It is expected that candidates will have sufficient practice in the research, practical and evaluative skills necessary to succeed in this examination before receiving the Candidate Booklet. Centres should remind their candidates to read the scenario and check the requirements of the examination paper very carefully.

It was pleasing to see that most candidates had submitted work in the order of the tasks in the Candidate Booklet and had numbered their pages consecutively as requested. The candidate's name, examination number and centre number should also be put on every page. For presentation to the examiner all pages should be attached together using treasury tags.

A high proportion of candidates presented their work extremely well, gaining high marks in the documentation sections. A few candidates submitted unnecessary material, such as multiple copies of questionnaires, for which a summary would have been sufficient. Candidates who submitted large quantities of material that was not needed for assessment purposes often appeared to neglect the **content** of their newsletters as a consequence. Candidates should be encouraged to be discriminating in the evidence that they present and should be discouraged from confusing quantity and quality.

It should also be stressed that screenshots or pages that cannot be seen or read by the Examiner will not gain marks. The most common causes of this were minute screenshots, unsuitable font styles and the use of inappropriate colour combinations. This is particularly important in item (k) where 24 of the 70 marks available are awarded.

There were a number of administrative lapses where the required documentation was not submitted with the candidates' work. All portfolios should have a Candidate Record Form, correctly signed by both candidate and supervisor and securely attached. The work from the centre should be accompanied by the attendance list, Centre Declaration Sheet and Record of Controlled Sessions, thus avoiding unnecessary delays in the examining process.

The task

The task given for this examination series was to design and produce a newsletter for final year university students to encourage them to consider a career in the police, legal or regulatory organisations. Candidates had to explain how and why ICT is used by these organisations and the threats to society and individuals that the ICT systems help to combat.

Candidates were required to describe the threats, explain how and why ICT systems are used to counteract the threats and any drawbacks for the general public of the systems' uses.

Most candidates seemed to be able to use desktop publishing software competently and produced some appealing newsletters. A significant number, however, produced articles that lacked detail and so were unable to gain good marks in the content section, item (k).

Tasks carried out during Investigation Time

Items (a) and (n)

These tasks were well done with many candidates scoring full marks by explaining the changes made to their plans.

Item (b)

The majority of candidates stated clearly who their audience was and recognised the impact of their audience's needs on the content and layout of the newsletter. Many had carried out good research on their target audience, mainly through questionnaires. Many candidates had also analysed university websites and this had helped them in deciding on layout features and they were able to refer to this research throughout their assignment. These candidates then summarised the impact of their audience's needs on the newsletter requirements and the better candidates demonstrated a full understanding of how the audience needs would affect content and layout. Some candidates clearly had not considered the purpose of the questions they were asking and there was a tendency, in these cases, to ask a lot of unnecessary questions.

Many candidates were able to draw sensible conclusions from their research, gaining two marks, but often omitted to show a clear understanding of the impact of the needs of the audience on content as well as layout. Candidates are reminded that they only need to submit one copy of any questionnaire used, along with a summary of the results.

Item (c)

Many students did not appear to understand what is meant by evaluation criteria – measures which can be used to assess the success, or otherwise, of the newsletter. A significant number of candidates provided “to do” lists, or explained what they would do. Others did not relate the evaluation criteria to the purpose of the newsletter and the needs of the audience.

The better candidates used their research for item (b) to create appropriate criteria and to justify their choices. These candidates produced criteria that were well designed to assess the suitability of the content, design and layout of the pages of their newsletter in terms of their purpose and audience needs.

Item (d)

The majority of candidates quoted a range of sources and followed the advice given in the Candidates' Booklet, thus achieving the maximum three marks.

Item (e)

Many candidates carried out this task well and provided three well-annotated sketches, which included notes about their suitability for the audience and so gained three marks. However in some cases candidates appeared to spend a disproportionate amount of time on this section, worth three marks, to the detriment of their final design, item (g), worth eight marks.

Designs that showed little apart from the general layout of text areas, links and pictures only gained one mark.

Item (f)

Candidates were expected to test their draft designs by showing them to a sample of their target audience, recording the feedback and then summarising their findings and the implications for the final design. Most candidates provided strong evidence of having done this well, with the better candidates using this information in the annotations of their final design.

Item (g)

Very good designs were clear, hand drawn and well annotated. These designs showed most layout measurements and a good range of appropriate features. Reasons for the choice of features were made clear in the annotations. Such designs gained high marks.

A significant number of candidates did not appear to understand the difference between this **final** design and the previous drafts and should be reminded that the final design should be sufficiently detailed that it could be implemented by another person. Weaker candidates did not provide enough detail, showing only the structure and font properties to be used.

Where candidates draw designs to scale this should be clearly stated on the design.

Tasks carried out under controlled conditions

During the Controlled Condition sessions candidates should be provided with all their preparation work carried out for items (a) to (g) and item (n) as **hard copies** plus their research text and images, in electronic format. Text must only be stored as **basic text files**. Images must be stored as **individual graphics files**. Microsoft Word and similarly formatted files are not allowed. Items (a) to (g) must **not** be made available in electronic format. Candidates are permitted to add to their research material within the Controlled Conditions period by following the procedures in the Teachers' Notes.

Item (h)

Most candidates provided clear screen shots of their files of researched material, as required. However a significant number of candidates did not show evidence of all of the files of textual material necessary to complete the examination. Candidates should be reminded that the content for their pages (the files of researched material) should principally be produced during Investigation Time and should be available for the start of Controlled Conditions. Candidates are allowed to add to their files of researched material during Controlled Conditions and should note these additions for item (o).

Item (i)

For the newsletter task a template should first be produced and annotated screenshots, or printouts, of the template presented. Several candidates did not appear to understand this requirement, instead showing how the pages were actually composed. These candidates were not able to access all the marks for this item. However, the majority did provide well explained screen shots showing the range of software facilities used and the reasons for including them in the newsletter. A smaller number of candidates were also able to justify their use of software facilities, in terms of the target audience and purpose, and some very good accounts were seen.

Item (j)

Many candidates provided extensive records of development of the newsletter and the better candidates clearly showed how they had enhanced the pages after the initial composition. Clear explanation of the composition of one page, with decisions justified, followed by evidence that the other pages have been completed similarly are most appropriate for this item. Candidates are then expected to assess their pages and make appropriate improvements. Candidates who only showed the development of the template were unable to score marks here.

The majority of candidates also produced clearly labelled screenshots referencing all the content of the newsletter to the files of researched material. The best candidates made sure that their images, as well as the text, was referenced and gained the final available mark. Candidates who had put all their research into one text file found it difficult to gain the third mark as they needed to identify where each section of the newsletter content had come from.

Item (k)

Candidates should be encouraged to spend some time in examining the scenario in detail as many failed to gain marks through not addressing the requirements of the brief.

In this series candidates needed to explain ICT systems that are used by the police, legal and regulatory organisations to combat threats to society and individuals. They then had to explain any drawbacks of the use of that system for the general public. Most candidates were able to identify some appropriate systems and corresponding threats. There was good evidence that candidates had researched the use of ICT in the police forces especially. However many were unaware of the wider issues and concerns surrounding the use of ICT and how these affect the general public.

Appropriate examples included databases such as The Police National database, DNA, fingerprints, the DVLA driver and vehicle, CRB, HM Customs and Excise and Trading Standards records databases. Other systems such as video conferencing in court, biometric id card systems, 3D body scanning systems at airports, computer systems in patrol cars, tagging of convicts and other uses of GPS were used. Descriptions of police and regulatory bodies that use the Internet in different ways included surveillance of terrorists' computers and social networking to support the local community against various crimes. Some candidates described appropriate informative websites such as Kitemark and legal web sites. Others described proposed systems such as the police register of serial domestic violence offenders and the world paedophile register.

The majority of candidates described these fairly well and were able to explain how each system combated a relevant threat for the first two marks, but few were able to explain any drawbacks of their use relevant to the general public for the third mark.

A significant number of candidates gave examples of systems that did not involve ICT use, or did not explain the ICT aspect sufficiently, and so gained no marks for these examples. Such inappropriate systems included breathalysers that did not link to a computer, speed cameras that use chemical films or were not clearly digital, CCTV with insufficient description of the ICT aspects, police radios and metal detectors.

Most candidates presented clearly readable pages. Where candidates did not ensure that their work could be read by the examiner it was difficult to award their marks.

Better candidates gained the marks available for reference to the source of their researched material, including reference to the source of their images as well as the textual information used. Centres are advised to make clear the need for this to be done.

Centres should be aware that from 2011 the assessment of the quality of written communication will be incorporated into item (k). An example of this can be found on the AQA website.

Item (l)

The evaluation task appeared to be well understood by most candidates and some excellent evaluations were seen. The majority of candidates explained how they had met their evaluation criteria (or how they had deviated from them) and easily gained two marks. Very few were able to make true evaluative comments, producing a comprehensive evaluation that clearly demonstrated the suitability of their newsletter for both audience and purpose, which would have gained the third mark. The evaluations of weaker candidates tended to be criteria tick lists rather than evaluative comments.

Item (m)

Many candidates gave a reasonable description of their own performance, or described how they had overcome problems, gaining one of the three marks available. A significant number also explained how they had overcome problems in sufficient detail to gain the second mark. They did this by using screen shots, or referring to those created for item (j) to explain how problems were overcome. Some candidates also provided detailed explanations, cross referenced to their time plans, (a) and (n), and the development of the pages in item (j). This would have gained the third mark. The evaluations of weaker candidates lacked any real evaluative comments and screen shots were often included that did not demonstrate anything relevant.

Item (n) - see (a) and (n) above**Item (o)**

The majority of candidates produced screenshots of their files although a significant number were unable to distinguish their research files from the files created in controlled conditions. Not all candidates appeared to understand that they were able to add to the files of research material during the controlled conditions period. Candidates who identified those research files that had been added or altered since the beginning of controlled conditions gained the second mark, as did those who stated that the folders containing research material had not been altered.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.