



General Certificate of Education

**Applied Information and
Communication Technology
8751, 8753, 8756, 8759**

IT04 ICT Solutions

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – June 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.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX

Unit 4: ICT Solutions (IT04)

Candidates produced a variety of work, much of which was accurately assessed. Generally there appeared to be good understanding of the portfolio and assessment requirements.

While Internet research is a necessary part of this unit, centres should note that to avoid the possibility of plagiarism, candidates should ensure that they state the sources of all material used.

Good use was made of teacher witness statements, though it should be noted that these must refer specifically to the individual candidate and clearly state what **that** candidate has done. The best teacher witness statements are those that are produced on headed paper, and state specific assessment criteria, together with what the candidate has done to meet them.

The portfolio requirements for this unit are split into two parts –the first being research and workshop tasks; the second being the production of a specification for a **standalone** computer system for a specified client. To gain the full marks available candidates must clearly distinguish between the two items.

Many candidates had neglected to discover sufficient detail about what their clients wanted to be able to do with their systems. As a result descriptions of items such as the amount of backing store required, or processor speed, were often not related to any potential use by the client. This limited the marks that should have been awarded in A03 as these should be matched to the clients needs in order for the candidates to write a clear specification.

Candidates should provide evidence that they have carried out research into what hardware and software is available that could meet the requirements of a client, and in the process of doing so discuss the various options. All sources of information should be recorded clearly. Many candidates had carried out extensive research but had not clearly stated their sources of information or explained how the various options explored could meet the client's needs. If only one option is provided, then only 1 mark can be awarded on AO1, Rows 1 and 2.

AO1, Row 4 caused particular difficulty in adhering to the “left-to-right” rule for awarding marks on one row of the Marking Grid. Unless candidates show clear evidence of completing the earlier tasks required on this row (setting file permissions / user rights, taking security measures) on this row, they cannot progress to the higher marks. Adequate screen shots with commentary, witness statements and/or photographs would be seen as good evidence that these tasks were accomplished. A significant number of candidates provided screen shots of file attributes being set. This is not the same as setting file permissions for users and meant that candidates who only set file attributes could not be awarded marks on this row. For the third mark on this row, a good backup strategy could reasonably be expected to include the “what, where, when and who” of the backup procedure being recommended. Many candidates did not specify the when.

Most candidates did recommend a specification for a standalone computer system for the client. A few candidates provided highly detailed specifications that gained high marks and demonstrated a great deal of understanding of current hardware, software, workstation furniture and layout. Some candidates provided full information about cables or connectors necessary for their specification, and those who did provided very high quality images and descriptions gained all the marks available on AO3, Row 5. Candidates must identify both cables and connectors to gain credit here. For 2 marks, they must also relate these to their solution and state how they will be used.

The section on ergonomics was attempted by most candidates but a very large number could not be credited with all of the marks available. AO2: Rows 2, 3 and 4 of the marking grid require candidates to relate the ergonomics of hardware, software and workstation layout/furniture to the context, i.e. the needs of the client for whom they are producing the specification. Therefore, to be awarded 1 mark, these issues must be related to client's needs.

A large number of candidates having specified hardware and software, undertook more research and specified different hardware and hardware in order to meet ergonomic requirements. It became unclear which hardware and software they were finally recommending for the client so limiting the marks they could achieve both on A02 and A03, as a result of the specification no longer being clear.

Further, to award 2 or more marks for satisfying the ergonomic requirements, candidates must provide evidence of using the Internet to research possible hardware, software and workstation furniture options (note this means more than one option). Screen shots of websites used, or website addresses listed in a bibliography would be seen as good evidence.

Candidates are expected to test their solution. Good evidence of testing for this unit is likely to include client feedback on the specification provided. This feedback might take the form of letters, emails, authenticated forms of communication or detailed witness statements from the teacher.

A03 of the marking grid has been slightly altered this year as candidates are required to write a specification and as such are expected to specify the components based on user requirements so printouts from the Internet are unlikely to be credited with many marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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