



**General Certificate of Education (A-level) Applied  
June 2011**

**Applied Information and  
Communication Technology**

**IT04**

**(Specification  
8751/8753/8756/8757/8759)**

**Unit 4: ICT Solutions**

***Report on the Examination***

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## Unit 4: ICT Solutions (IT04)

Candidates produced a variety of work, much of which was accurately assessed. Generally there appeared to be a good understanding of the portfolio and assessment requirements. In some cases, however, it was apparent that candidates were being awarded marks for copying and pasting details of a specification from the Internet, though the marking grid now clearly states that the candidates should either attempt to write or write a specification. This means that the specification must be produced entirely by the candidate, or the candidate must describe in detail what hardware and software items are required by the client and then choose a proprietary specification that fits these 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 written 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 and 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 did, in places, limit the marks that could be awarded in A03 as these items should be considered and related to clients needs in order for the candidates to write what can be considered 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 "progress from left-to-right" rule for awarding marks on one row of the Marking Grid. Unless candidates show clear evidence of completing the practical tasks (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 were not able to achieve 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', so limiting the marks that could be achieved on this row.

Most candidates did recommend a specification for a standalone computer system for the client. However in some cases this was just copied and pasted from the Internet, so limiting the marks that could be awarded for A03. 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 the cables or connectors necessary for their specification and those who 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 on this row they must also relate these to their specification and state how they will be used.

The section on ergonomics was attempted by most candidates but a very large number failed to gain 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 software in order to meet ergonomic requirements. It sometimes became very unclear which hardware and software they were actually specifying for the client, so limiting the marks they could achieve both on A02 and A03, as the specification was no longer clear.

Further, to award 2 or more marks for any of the rows on ergonomics, 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, other authenticated forms of communication or detailed witness statements from the teacher.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

### **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw or scaled marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

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