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General Certificate of Education

Information and Communication Technology 2520

Unit 3   The Use of ICT in the Digital World

Report on the Examination

2010 examination – January series

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General Comments

Centres are reminded to read this report in conjunction with the published mark scheme that includes sample answers and the section in the specification where the expectations of candidates performing at grade A and E are described (Appendix A, pages 33 to 35).

The examination consisted of two parts: Section A - structured questions based on pre-release material; and Section B - questions requiring extended answers. Centres are reminded that all candidates should be familiar with the pre-release material supplied to them prior to the examination. This material should be used as the basis for further study and the content investigated thoroughly.

Question 1(a)

Although the question asked for an explanation of the three types of maintenance tasks, many candidates gained only one mark showing some knowledge of the different maintenance categories, but little understanding. There were some candidates who showed confusion between adaptive and perfective maintenance.

Question 1(b)

Few candidates gave sound answers to this question, with many showing that they had not read the question carefully enough or had not understood what was meant by 'maintenance changes'. Some candidates were awarded no marks, as they missed the point of this question and discussed hot and cold restart, staff training and general disaster recovery techniques, rather than the practical difficulties of implementing maintenance changes to the PC based sales system described in the pre-release material.

There were some good in-depth discussions about the difficulty of implementing changes on the laptops, including those likely to be caused by the number of laptops involved and the wide geographical spread. In some cases, candidates demonstrated a deep understanding by suggesting the sales staff download the maintenance updates.

Question 2

In the majority of cases, candidates found this question straightforward and made some good points. Many candidates gained maximum marks for this question.

A significant proportion confused 'hot' and 'cold' restart options with redevelopment options. Some candidates presented sufficient arguments for the two redevelopment options but failed to include the requested recommendation and did not gain the maximum marks available.

Question 3(a)

Most candidates answered this question well and provided a variety of answers demonstrating either depth or breadth of knowledge and/or understanding. The more able candidates gained additional marks for relating their answers to the pre-release material.

Question 3(b)

Many candidates merely reworded the descriptions of 'hot' and 'cold' restart given in the pre-release material and consequently gained no marks. There were some good, reasoned discussions about the impact of the time delay in recovering from the two systems. A large proportion of candidates confused hot restart with continuous operation.

Questions 4(a), (b), (c) and (d)

This question required candidates to **explain** how procedures could help compliance with current legislation. Although many candidates named relevant legislation, they failed to explain how procedures helped compliance. There was a general misconception that having legislation 'prevents' or 'stops' a criminal activity, when in fact it can only **discourage** it.

Question 5

Many candidates did well in this question, which tested knowledge and its application. Candidates were well prepared in the required areas of Client Meeting, User Interviews, Observation and Questionnaires and possibly some drew upon experience gained when preparing for the INFO4 project. However, there was some confusion in the area of research, with incorrect references made to general research rather than to specific research about past systems and company procedures and documentation.

Question 6

Well-prepared candidates gave some good answers, gaining good marks as they discussed the meaning of CBT and its use, followed up with alternative methods of training and the relevant benefits and limitations.

Question 7

Candidates had a good awareness of Management Information Systems and often gained high marks. However, there was a misconception that an MIS is used to help in decision making at operational level.

Marks were given for explanations and examples relevant to both Transaction Processing Systems and Transaction Processing, provided the meanings were clear. A Transaction Processing System is an information system that assists staff at the operational level to conduct event-driven business transactions; a valid example would be the processing of orders. Transaction Processing concerns changes at the data record level, where each update transaction must be successfully completed or failed before the next transaction commences; an example would be the processing of an individual order.

Few candidates seemed to have any understanding of a Customer Relationship Management system. However, where there was an understanding, candidates provided some good explanations, including reference to company loyalty cards and the associated data mining systems used to target customers.

Question 8

Many of the essays lacked structure, with sentences and paragraphs poorly connected. Candidates should be reminded that the quality of written communication is an integral part of the assessment of the answer to this question.

The question required that reference be made to the stages of systems development and when and how clients and users need to be involved. Whilst many candidates correctly described the involvement in the development stages, few were able to sustain this degree of understanding to all stages in order to reach the high mark range.

To assist future candidates, some example essays from this examination will be posted on the Teacher Resource Bank.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.