OCR
RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

GCE

Information & Communication Technology

Advanced GCE **A2 H517**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **AS H117**

Report on the Units

January 2009

H117/H517/MS/R/09J

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of candidates of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new syllabuses to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this Report.

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Information and Communication Technology (H517)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Information and Communication Technology (H117)

REPORTS ON THE UNITS

G061

General Comments

This was the first examination for this paper and whilst it was encouraging to see a healthy entry, it was surprising that centres had felt that they had enough time to cover the content in the depth required. Most candidates were not appropriately prepared for this examination. It was evident that some candidates had learnt sections of the theory by heart but had not learnt to apply this knowledge. There were many gaps in the knowledge and a significant number of responses were left blank.

The use of appropriate technical language was in evidence yet the more technical aspects of the specification, such as databases and the legal aspects were not particularly well known.

Clearly some topics are not being covered adequately by centres. Evidence of having been instructed on the interpretation of keywords was not always to be found in the answers.

Many of the responses given by candidates had not advanced from foundation GCSE – there was no depth to knowledge or understanding and the phraseology used was not of the quality or level required.

If the response cannot be read, it cannot be marked. There was a disappointing increase in poor handwriting from some candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

a) (i) Generally well answered with many candidates scoring full marks.

(ii) Candidates that explained their choice of data failed to score marks. Examples of data must be without context or structure.

b) Candidates had a reasonable understanding of information but few were able to give the difference as required in the question.

c) The majority of candidates seemed aware of the importance of the stated terms, however they failed to read the question. The stem was concerned with information given by the customer – not information given by the company. Repeating the term they are required to describe does not score any marks.

Question 2

a) There was a lack of technical terms used and although the majority of candidates were able to score one mark, they did not understand enough about first normal form to gain more.

b) It was disappointing that a large number of candidates did not appreciate what the question was looking for. Those that did were in with a chance of getting the correct answer as there were a limited number of choices.

c) Whilst many candidates achieved the first mark they failed to go on and exemplify or give examples to gain the second mark. Although frivolous, a large proportion of candidates were of the opinion that it has something to do with spell check. The use of technical

terms that appear in the specification within the examination paper is common and needs to be addressed by centres so that there is recognition by the candidates.

d) It was unfortunate that many candidates did not understand what was meant by integer and were therefore unable to formulate an adequate response. This is a common question and has also been included in many GCSE papers. It should also have been a part of the practical skills component of the AS.

Question 3

a) The higher scoring candidates gave good answers relating to file size, web page loading time, the ability to click on thumbnail for a more detailed picture and a few mentioned picture quality and copyright issues. Most candidates gained at least half of the marks by talking about fitting more images on a page and giving an overview.

b) The majority of candidates gained around half the marks, whilst higher scoring candidates were able to add the expansion for the other marks. There were many answers given which did not appreciate that a bitmap file is the same as jpg file.

c) Few candidates recognised that the Act provides only deterrence and/or legal redress but does not prevent the actual copying or misuse of images.

Question 4

This question was generally well answered. Candidates who confused encoding and encryption did not do as well.

Question 5

The majority of candidates could draw the standard learnt diagram, but less could apply it to the context of the question to gain all available marks. Many candidates had a good go at this question to gain some marks.

Question 6

a) Many candidates failed to apply their responses to the scenario and gave generic answers. The advantages were to the company not to the users or the employees. The advantages given were not expanded to show why they were advantageous to the company.

b) For what should have been a simple question, candidates answered this quite poorly. Hardware was often correctly described but software was not. The continued use of brand names by candidates was disappointing.

c) This was poorly answered. Brand names were common. Also, few candidates seemed to know what utilities were, and surprisingly, few candidates could go further than state that "the operating system operates the computer."

Question 7

a) The majority of candidates were able to give an appropriate storage device. Only a few mentioned incorrect answers such as CD ROM. Hard drive was a common incorrect answer – without the ability to take the data off site it is not an appropriate device. Candidates sometimes gave rather vague justifications but correctly identified that the device needed to store large amounts of data and be portable.

b) Some candidates described what a password and firewall are rather than saying how they are used to protect data, which was what the question was actually asking for.

Question 8

Most candidates scored marks. A common error was to simply give a list of items e.g. leaflet, poster etc and no indication of any action or task being undertaken.

Question 9

This question was poorly answered with many candidates having very little idea about a training system. Characteristics confused many candidates and advantages and disadvantages were common.

Question 10

a) This question was misunderstood by many candidates who didn't appear to understand what a form control was or who identified 3 different uses of buttons.

b) Many answers to this question were too vague, with candidates discussing general needs of visitors without identifying the different needs of novice and expert users.

Question 11

a) Many candidates described what a computer model was without going into reasons why one is created. Candidates who successfully gave reasons were, on the whole, unable to expand on their answers.

b) Another straight forward question, generally quite well answered although some answers were quite vague and showed lack of thorough learning. One area of difficulty was the example to be given within the context of the accounts package. Many candidates incorrectly described ranges in this context, thinking it referred to a validation routine.

Question 12

a) Most candidates could describe a header and paragraph correctly and give examples of their use but fewer candidates could describe a frame – many incorrectly thought it meant a border around the whole document to make it look decorative.

b) There were some good answers here, showing understanding of the steps involved. Unfortunately, some candidates only had knowledge of how to use the mail merge wizard and were unable to describe correctly all the steps beyond creating the data source.

c) Answers were sometimes too vague for this question, lacking enough expansion for the second marks.

Question 13

This was generally well answered with many candidates identifying that a house style created recognition to its customers. More able candidates also identified that it allowed several people to work on the same document as there was consistency in layout. Too many answers reflected on professionalism without giving further details.

Question 14

This type of question is the final question on the paper and will continue to be so. Whilst most candidates realise that 'discuss' questions necessitate at least two viewpoints, nearly all responses were a succession of identified impacts. Few candidates were able to expand upon these impacts and develop an answer that included a progressive explanation of just why they were advantageous or disadvantageous to the individuals in question.

A large proportion of candidates focused on the transport and did little more than list the advantages and disadvantages of devices that assist – such as GPS rather than focus on the impact of the devices. Few candidates went further than listing.

Discussions with very little substance left no reference material upon which to base a satisfactory conclusion. The resultant weak ending was, too often, not worthy of an award.

Grade Thresholds

Advanced GCE ICT, H117
January 2009 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
G061	Raw	120	77	68	59	50	42	0
	UMS	120	96	84	72	60	48	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U
H117	200	160	140	120	100	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	U	Total Number of Candidates
H117	No Aggregation in January.						0

XXXX candidates aggregated this series

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:
http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums_results.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)
Telephone: 01223 553998
Facsimile: 01223 552627
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553