

Principal Examiners' Report November 2010

FS

Functional ICT Level 1 (FST01)

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information, please call our Functional Skills line on 0844 576 0028

or visit our website at www.edexcel.com/fs.

If you have any subject specific questions about the content of this Mark Scheme that require the help of a subject specialist, you may find our Ask The Expert email service helpful.

Ask The Expert can be accessed online at the following link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/>

November 2010

Publications Code FC025812

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2010

FST01 - Functional ICT Level 1

Introduction

This was the first series of examinations for this specification. The paper was written to closely match the layout and the degree of difficulty of the sample assessment material. There were approximately 1500 entries for the qualification. The specification has some marked differences from the Pilot Functional Skills specification. It was felt by examiners that this was not always demonstrated in the work of the candidates. Some candidates seemed poorly prepared for the assessment.

It was a requirement that candidates had no further access to the internet or internet technologies after the first 15 minutes. However, there were several centres where this was evidently not adhered to. There were instances where candidates had used images from the internet for later tasks and where candidates had used online email account facilities - even in some cases where candidates were using their personal email accounts (often Hotmail or Goglemail). This was accepted in this series but may be penalised in future series. Particularly worrying were examples where scripts indicated that candidates had emailed copies of their work to their own personal email account. This could result in a serious breach of the examination window's integrity and centres must ensure that candidates are fully aware of the serious consequences that could result.

Centres are strongly advised to read the Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination (ICE) document which can be downloaded from www.edexcel.com/fsict . This document should be read by the Examinations Officer, the ICT faculty staff and the network technicians, since it contains a wealth of guidance and information to enable them to deliver this examination successfully.

Many candidates did not appear to understand the instructions for collating their work, punching holes only in the top left hand corner, etc. with scripts appearing upside down and/or not in question number order. Candidates are prompted at the beginning and throughout the examination to enter their name, number and centre details before printing, yet many scripts showed handwritten details added after printing. This practice should be discouraged and candidates prepared properly for the examination so that they know how to add the relevant details in the header or footer of a document as required.

There were five tasks to be completed by candidates based on a theme park scenario.

Task 1

In Task 1 candidates were asked to search the internet for the price of a entry ticket for a 16 year old to a UK based theme park. Whilst the majority of candidates were able to identify the required information there was a frequent lack of understanding of the requirement to produce a screen shot to show the search engine. Many of the candidates produced instead a screen shot of the theme park website. The large majority of candidates scored at least 3 marks for this task. Where they lost marks it was usually due to the poor search engine evidence. Most candidates scored well on identifying a UK theme park, the cost of entry and the copying of the website address into the responses document.

Areas for improvement and development:

- understanding the need for a screen shot of search criteria
- producing screen shots in which the critical information is easy to read
- copying website addresses accurately and completely.

Task 2

In Task 2, candidates were presented with a spreadsheet which contained figures for teenage visitors to a number of fictitious theme parks. They were asked to correct a typing error in the spreadsheet and format the spreadsheet to make it clearer and easier to understand. They were also asked to calculate the average number of visitors each month and produce a chart to compare the average number of visitors each month.

Most candidates correctly altered the incorrect figure in the spreadsheet and made a reasonable attempt at entering a formula to calculate the average. There were however few candidates who managed to get the correct formula with many only producing the total number of visitors rather than the requested average. Few candidates formatted the spreadsheet. Examiners found that very few candidates added a suitable title. Many candidates also failed to display the formulas for the spreadsheet. Most candidates produced the expected bar/column chart from the required data range (even though they had not managed to get the correct values, they were still credited for the graph range). However titles and axes labels were not well done.

Areas for improvement and development:

- adding titles to spreadsheets
- adding borders and shading
- using font enhancements to improve layout of spreadsheets
- using AVERAGE function
- replication
- selecting appropriate graph types
- selecting data for graphs
- adding titles and axes labels to graphs
- removing unnecessary legends from graphs
- printing data from a spreadsheet
- printing the formulae used in a spreadsheet
- printing a spreadsheet graph using appropriate size and proportions.

Task 3

In Task 3, candidates were asked to produce a screen presentation which advertised the new theme park to teenagers. They were provided a text file containing some relevant and non-relevant text and some images - some of which were appropriate and some which weren't. They were expected to produce no more than 4 slides to advertise the park. They were asked to print the slides 2 to a page. They were also asked to demonstrate their ability to password protect the file to prevent it being amended.

Most candidates did not appear to understand the requirement for the presentation to be aimed at teenagers and so included text such as "Free entry to over 60s". Choice of images was better with few candidates choosing the images of the fox and the plane to illustrate their slides. Several candidates lost marks due to the poor size of their fonts. Very small text is not appropriate for a large screen display. There were a number of candidates who

chose to rename some of the rides named in the text file with "Horoscope" and "Horror Scope" being seen frequently by the examiners. At least one candidate reworded the text "Indoor activities include tiddlywinks, dominoes and chess" to indicate that the theme park had a branch of a well known fast food chain. The choice of fonts by some candidates was poor leading to text that would be difficult to read at a distance.

There was occasionally little evidence that candidates had checked their work for accuracy and meaning and layout of text and images was often poor. This was exacerbated by candidates who printed in black and white. Whilst printing in black and white was not penalised and printing in colour was not credited, candidates need to make sure that the work they present to examiners enables the examiner to give credit for the work. A change of font colour or background colour and use of bold, underline and text size would help to do this. A number of candidates did not present their work 2 to a page.

A number of candidates used images which had not been made available to them in the data files. This suggested that they had access to the internet to download images. This was not penalised during this series but may be penalised in future.

Approximately half the candidates failed to demonstrate the ability to password protect the file -either by using the tools → options → security features or by making the file read only in file management systems (e.g. Windows Explorer).

Areas for improvement and development:

- selecting appropriate software for an on-screen presentation
- selecting appropriate text from a text file
- selecting appropriate images from an image bank
- maintaining image proportions
- using appropriate image sizes
- using appropriate font sizes and styles
- considering suitable layout of text and images
- printing slides two to a page
- accessing security features to make files password protected or read only.

Task 4

In task 4, candidates were asked to prepare an email to be sent to a member of staff at the theme park attaching a copy of their presentation and asking for comments about the presentation.

Most candidates were able to access email software. It did seem, however, that some candidates had not been prepared for using email and attempted to reproduce an email layout in word-processing software.

Most candidates were able to prepare a suitable email with the appropriate attachment. However, subject lines and messages were not always appropriate for a business setting with many candidates being far too familiar in a business context. Many candidates did not request an opinion from the email recipient about the slide show. A large number of candidates were also unable to copy accurately the email address. Whilst an unsuitable subject and inappropriate message detracts slightly from the functionality of an email, an incorrect email address renders the email useless. Screen shots of the email were often too small for the examiner to read without a magnifying glass.

It was disturbing that centres had not adhered to the instructions in the Instructions for the Conduct of Examinations (ICE) document. Many candidates obviously had access to the internet during this task since they were using online web based email accounts. Other candidates were using their normal school or personal email accounts. It was also noted that some candidates were copying their own personal email address into the email. This is a breach of the examination's integrity and must not be repeated in future series. It is imperative that in future series candidates should be set up with a dedicated examination email account which can be accessed offline - for example "Outlook Express".

Areas for improvement and development:

- accessing email software and accounts offline
- copying email addresses accurately
- using appropriate subject lines in an email
- using appropriate messages in an email
- producing screen shots which are of appropriate size to enable them to be read by examiners
- attaching files to an email.

Task 5

In task 5 candidates were asked to create a folder in which to store entries for a photo competition. Most candidates were able to do this successfully and, probably due to the nature of the test, labelled the folder with an appropriate title. However, it was noticeable that some candidates were using their normal home directories and had files and folders created outside the examination window. Centres need to ensure that for future examinations they set up dedicated examination user accounts which are accessible only during the examination.

Areas for improvement and development:

- creating a new folder
- naming folders appropriately
- producing a screen shot in which the text is legible
- making sure that screen shots are not cropped so much that important information is deleted.

Pass mark for FST01

Maximum mark	50
Pass mark	32
UMS mark	6

Note: Grade boundaries vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the questions.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467

Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code FC025812 November 2010

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.com/quals

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH