

Examiners' Report

January 2015

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
ICT Level 2 (FST02)

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

January 2015

Publications Code FC040575

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2015

Introduction

This paper was written to closely match the layout and the degree of difficulty of the previous series. It was clear that some centres had worked hard to prepare their candidates for the exam, however, as in previous series, there are still centres that entered candidates who lacked the knowledge to access the higher marks. For example, a significant proportion of candidates could not form a correct VLOOKUP formula, and to apply that rate to calculate the VAT payable and subsequently the final selling price and total income of a range of items sold in the sports club shop.

Centres should make sure that candidates' work is collated correctly before it is submitted to the examiner as many candidates did not hole punch the printouts correctly, some pages were upside down or back to front and they were frequently not in task number order or attached to the cover sheet.

Centres should remind candidates to check that screenshots provided for Tasks 1 and 4 are of a sufficient size so that the information can be easily read.

There were five tasks to be completed by candidates; the background to which included finding information and producing an information sheet to encourage new members for the sports club.

Task 1 – Internet Research

In Task 1, candidates were asked to search the internet to gather information about the 2015 British Open Golf Championship and the winner of the 2010 British Open Golf Championship. This task was generally well done and most candidates gained either 5 or 6 marks although a small number failed to copy a full or relevant web address. This was generally when candidates included the URL for the search engine Google and not the actual website source or they used a review website where the link did not lead to the image. Candidates need to be reminded that Google is a search engine and, as such, is not appropriate when requested to enter the website address of the source of the information required in the test.

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 – Spreadsheet

In Task 2, candidates were presented with a spreadsheet which contained data for the sales of various items in the club shop, and had to find the appropriate rate of VAT using the table of data provided, calculate the VAT and then add it to the basic price to find the selling price and thus the total income. Candidates were asked to format the spreadsheet to make it clearer and easier to read, then filter the spreadsheet to show the information for training jackets only. Finally, they were asked to produce a chart to display the income for each of the type of training jacket from the filtered list.

Many candidates used a workable VLOOKUP formula to find the rate of VAT, often using a named range, with the most common errors seen being the use of a range instead of a single cell, additional rows and not including absolute cell references where required in the criteria. Some candidates did not attempt to use a formula and simply entered the VAT rate manually.

A small number of candidates lost marks because they failed to apply formatting techniques to all the currency columns. The majority of candidates made acceptable improvements to the spreadsheet.

Most candidates successfully attempted the filter, although some did include the first row.

Virtually all candidates produced the specified chart from the required data range. The charts produced were generally fit for purpose but there are still a number of candidates who include an unnecessary legend for a single variable or do not include a suitable title or correct axis labels.

Areas for improvement and development (not all these were assessed on this occasion):

- formatting a spreadsheet
 - currency
 - decimal places
 - appropriate borders and shading
 - word wrapping
 - appropriate row heights and column widths
 - use of text formatting to enhance visual clarity e.g. bold, italics, font size
- using formulae
 - simple formulae using arithmetic symbols (+, -, / and *)
 - using functions e.g. SUM, IF, MAX, MIN and VLOOKUP where appropriate
 - using efficient formulae (eg using SUM for adding up a range of cells)
 - using absolute and relative cell references
- sorting and filtering
 - on one column
 - on multiple columns (secondary sorting or sorting within a sort)

- expanding selection to include full table in a sort
 - using appropriate filters to show selected data from a table
- charts
 - pie charts, line graphs and column or bar charts with one or more series of data
 - understanding the appropriateness of different chart types
 - inserting a suitable title on the chart
 - using legends where appropriate
 - axis labels where relevant
- printing
 - printing in data view
 - printing in formula view
 - ensuring that cell contents are not truncated in printouts
 - adding footers with candidate details
 - fitting a spreadsheet to one page
 - making sure that colour schemes used are still readable when printed in monochrome.

Task 3 – Presentation of information

This task required candidates to produce an information sheet to attract new members to the sports club. This task was generally well done with most candidates producing an information sheet which did not include the irrelevant text. Almost all candidates selected the correct images and filtered table. Some correctly included the image they found in Task 1a. Most candidates removed the brackets as instructed and inserted the correct information from Task 1b. Regrettably there were some candidates who inserted their chart from 2e in place of the filtered table.

Candidates should be encouraged to check the document in print preview prior to printing to check that it fits to one page and that the layout is appropriate for the required purpose of the document.

Areas for improvement and development:

- selection of appropriate software for producing an on-screen or paper-based presentation of information
- integration of information from a variety of sources including text, images, tables and graphs
- consideration of suitability in selection of text/images for an audience and purpose
- use of formatting techniques appropriately:
 - text enhancements – bold, italic, underline, font sizes
 - selection of font styles
 - selection of suitable font sizes for a document
 - hyphenation
 - text wrap and alignment
 - checking for consistency in font sizes and styles
- checking the printout for truncation of text and/or images
- checking that all the criteria stated in the question paper have been met
- consideration of fitness for purpose
- consideration of audience.

Task 4 – Communication: preparing an email

Candidates were asked to produce an email to Sarah copied to James attaching a copy of the information sheet. The majority of candidates successfully demonstrated the use of email software. Most candidates entered the correct e-mail addresses, suitable subject and attachment.

Candidates were required to include a message asking Sarah to confirm the times in the training schedule were correct and the majority of candidates did this; however a significant number of candidates lost marks by using inappropriate salutations such as 'Hi' or 'Hey' or 'text speak' in a business email. Almost all candidates successfully attached the correct file to the email.

As mentioned previously, some examiners report that there are still several centres where there is evidence that candidates are accessing the internet during this task and using online accounts – often these are the candidates' personal accounts. This is unacceptable and a breach of the code of practice for this examination. Examiners also noted that some candidates seemed to be using an existing account with several (often personal) contacts already in the address book and messages in the inbox/outbox/sent boxes.

A small number of examiners have reported that candidates at some centres do not appear to have access to an offline mail client and produce 'emails' in word processing software. Since these do not provide suitable evidence of attachments or ability to use email, centres which do not provide the candidates with offline email clients are penalising their candidates unnecessarily.

There are many ways of producing the evidence using offline account systems – for example the setting up of Outlook or Outlook Express accounts as part of the examination account used by the candidate. Centres are reminded that the accounts set up for the test should be cleared of previous contents. Further guidance is available on the Frequently Asked Questions section of the Edexcel Functional Skills website.

Areas for improvement and development:

- selection of appropriate offline email client software
- careful copying of text from the question paper
- accurate copying of email addresses
- attachment of correct files to an email
- using a suitable subject line for an email
- using appropriate language for business email messages
- ensuring that screen shot evidence is readable.

Task 5 - Using ICT

In Task 5a candidates were asked to state an action that Sarah should take to ensure that the downloaded image is used legally. This task was generally well answered and most candidates were aware of the copyright laws, although a number had answered different questions from previous papers.

Task 5b asked for one action Sarah should take when she receives an email with an attachment from an unknown sender and give a reason why she should do this. This task was generally well done, although some candidates did give vague answers to the first part of the question, before fully answering the second part.

Areas for improvement and development:

- awareness of the laws of copyright and ways of complying with them using alternative images
- awareness of how viruses can be transmitted via email attachments
- actions to take to minimise the risks associated with such emails and attachments.

Pass Marks

Pass marks for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html?Qualification-Family=functional-skills>

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL

Ofqual




Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

