

Examiners' Report

Set 19

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills ICT Level 1 (FST01)

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The On-Demand Functional Skills ICT tests have been available since 2012. This paper reflected the content, layout and degree of difficulty of all previous papers both paper-based and online.

It is a requirement of this test that learners should only have access to the internet during the first 15 minutes of the test. Invigilators in a small number of Centres appear to be unaware of this stipulation. Centres need to ensure that learners are reminded that there could be serious consequences if they are found to be breaching the code of conduct.

Facilities for offline email should be available for learners to use during the test. There are some centres where the use of learners' personal email accounts (e.g. Hotmail, Yahoo, etc) was evident in the screenshots submitted. There was also some evidence seen in learner responses that new user accounts are not being set up and files not related to the test were present in the test folder or screenshot evidence of work. It should also be noted that ALL items in email clients used for the test should have been cleared before the start of the test.

It is a requirement that separate user areas, not accessible to learners outside their sitting of the test, should be prepared before the test. Centres must provide the appropriate facilities for learners to complete all tasks within the specification. The guidelines for setting up the user accounts for the test are clearly laid out in the *Information for the Conduct of the Examination* available on the Pearson website. Further guidance on email and internet access is available from Edexcel if required.

Another general issue that examiners often mention is that the zip folder of evidence for a learner is missing documents that were completed during the test. This leads to delays in processing the marking of the work as the centre has to be contacted to check whether further evidence is available. Missing work is always to the detriment of the learners. Centre staff should make sure that the zip folder is named in accordance with the instructions published by Pearson.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of Centre staff to print out the copy of the relevant test paper. Electronic copies should not be made available to the learners. With on-demand tests, it is also the responsibility of Centre staff to ensure that the contents of the test are stored securely. The paper copies of the test must be collected in at the end of the test session and locked in a secure place.

Centre staff should also ensure that learners receive the correct paper copies of the question paper and electronic copies of the data files for the test set for which they have been registered. There are occasions when this is not the case and learners have submitted evidence for tests for which they were not registered. Sometimes, this has been for a test that the learner has previously attempted.

There were five tasks to be completed by learners based on a fictional restaurant.

Task 1 – Internet Research

Learners were required to search the internet to find the number of calories in 100 grams of strawberries. The number of calories and the website from which the information was retrieved were to be entered on the given Responses document which was saved in the learner's test folder. As with all Functional Skills ICT exam papers, the value found was required for use in Task 3.

A significant number of learners provided the required screen shot of a search engine within which appropriate key words were visible, recorded the number of calories and the source URL in the appropriate locations on the Responses document as required.

Several learners carelessly used 10 grams rather than 100 grams or omitted the unit and found the number of calories in 100 strawberries. Unfortunately, and as always, a significant number of learners presented a screen shot of the result of the search rather than the search engine and key words, or recorded the search engine as their source for the information.

Areas for improvement and development:

- reading the task and instructions carefully
- checking keying-in matches requirements
- differentiating between a search engine and a web page.

Task 2 – Spreadsheet

A spreadsheet was provided for the learners for use in Task 2. The spreadsheet stored details of sales of each menu item in the previous week. The main requirements of Task 2 were to enter values into specific cells; calculate using addition and multiplication; replicate formulae; format the spreadsheet and create a bar or column chart to display the income for each menu item. Although many learners scored well on this task, many learners displayed limited spreadsheet skills.

In Task 2(a) most learners entered the three values accurately into the specified (empty) cells on the spreadsheet thus securing all three marks available.

Task 2(b) involved the addition of given values in adjacent cells. The task required the calculation of total sales of each menu item. Sales were clearly identified in the spreadsheet. However, several learners failed to consider the data and erroneously included the price per item in their total sales calculation. Although `=SUM(C5:G5)` was the required formula and used correctly by the majority; it was disappointing to note the frequency of `=C5+C6+C7...` or the incorrect `=SUM(C5+C6+C7...)` approaches in this calculation.

After calculating the total sales of each menu item in Task 2(b), Task 2(c) required learners to use the price per item with their total sales figure to calculate income. It was very disappointing to note the numbers of learners who were unable to create a formula for this simple multiplication of values in two cells. Frequently the redundant use of `=SUM` was included, but there were also numerous examples of incorrect formula: addition of the two cells, division and even some learners adding everything from column B to column H together.

Irrespective of their accuracy, replication of the formulae included at Tasks 2(b) and 2(c) was very well done by the majority of learners.

Task 2(d) required learners to calculate the total income for the week. This involved adding the income values in cells I5 to I14 calculated in Task 2(c). Many learners correctly used `=SUM(I5:I14)` in cell I16 and secured both marks available. However, a significant number – perhaps using the software shortcut available – included the blank row I15 in their formula unnecessarily and there were instances of `=I5+I6+I7...` or the incorrect `=SUM(I5+I6+I7...)` approach being used.

Task 2(e) gave a specific instruction to format all currency values to currency, £ with two decimal places, and to add any other formatting to make the spreadsheet 'clear and easy to understand'. Many learners secured all the marks available for this task. However, whilst formatting to currency was accessible to most, some failed to consider the data and formatted everything rather than only columns B and I as required. Frequently the truncation of column A was not noticed and not removed. Although there were examples of good formatting particularly borders, bold and other enhancements, some learners failed to add any additional formatting whatsoever.

Task 2(f) required learners to create a bar chart to display the income for each menu item. As always, the chart proved a challenge to many learners and few scored well on this task.

There were some pie charts, but most learners created a bar chart as expected. Most learners selected the correct data – menu item and income - although there were instances of all the data being selected and some had the correct values but omitted the menu item. Despite the wording of the task and clear indication of the appropriate title, frequently learners included incomplete or unsuitable titles. Many learners omitted the axis labels; however, when included, these were usually correct. If automated by the software, the category labels were usually shown in full but a number of learners failed to remove the unnecessary legend. Most learners correctly saved their chart on a separate worksheet within their spreadsheet. For the reasons identified, few of the charts were fully fit for purpose.

Areas for improvement and development:

- review nature of data
- efficient formulae
- correct syntax in relation to data and context of question
- appropriate and effective formatting
- selecting specific data
- devising appropriate charts correctly labelled with titles, axis labels and legends.

Task 3 – Presentation of information

In Task 3(a), learners were asked to create a new menu for the restaurant.

Learners were required to include the text from the given file MenuSet19L1, the number of calories in 100 grams of strawberries found Task 1, the logo and three other appropriate images from the ImagesSet19L1 folder.

There were some very good attempts at this task and many learners secured high marks. However, creating a menu presented a challenge to some learners who, perhaps surprisingly, seemed unaware of the format, layout and presentation of a menu.

Few learners omitted the task entirely. Most used the required word processing or DTP software. Despite the specific instruction that the menu should be only one page, A4 portrait and the limited amount of textual content, there were some examples of two-page menus.

It was disappointing to note how many learners omitted the given title and failed to format it as a title with some learners choosing to use the logo as their title. Most, but not all, learners secured the mark for incorporating all the given text. Where text was omitted, it was usually around the insertion point for the information from Task 1.

The value found in Task 1 was inserted as expected by the majority; although, as mentioned, some failed to consider the associated text.

Most logos were at the top or bottom, above or below the body text. In most cases three of the images were included somewhere and most were appropriate; palm trees were included in only a few examples. The inter-relationship of size between logo and images was usually sensible although there were some very large logos, particularly where these had been used as the document title. Most learners positioned their chosen images to correlate with the text but there were some mismatches.

Most learners retained a consistent font style and size for the content and emphasised the sub headings in some way as expected. Page borders, centre alignment of text and bullets were used most commonly as formatting features to enhance the menu, but some learners failed to include any additional formatting whatsoever.

Very few learners secured the fitness for purpose mark due, usually, to erroneous or omitted content, distorted images or inconsistent spacing.

Areas for improvement and development:

- following instructions in respect of incorporating provided and sourced material
- format, layout and presentation of a menu.

Learners were required to record their responses to Task 3(b) in the Responses document. Learners were asked to identify ways to protect the created menu from being changed by others. One method – read only – was included in the question and learners were required to identify two other ways. Many learners correctly answered this question and secured the two marks available. However, it was noticeable how many learners ignored the fact that 'read only' was a provided suggestion and included that as one of their answers.

Unfortunately, the content and theoretical knowledge required to answer this question appeared outside the scope of a considerable number of other learners. Some answers did not relate to the question at all. Other responses included 'print the menu off', 'save on a USB stick', 'laminates the menu' and were not relevant in the context of the question.

Areas for improvement and development:

- answering the question asked
- knowledge of ways of protecting a document against change.

Task 4 – Communication: preparing an email

Task 4 required learners to email the menu created in Task 3 as an attachment to Ricardo Rovello, the owner of the restaurant. The email address to be used was provided.

Although there were examples of the use of personal email accounts, learners appeared to have access to offline email software as expected.

Most learners scored reasonably well on this task. However, as always, there were examples of careless and erroneous copying of the address and inaccurate, incomplete or unsuitable subject lines. There were instances of the attachment being omitted entirely or the wrong document chosen. In some cases, the full menu was pasted within the body of the email.

Most learners included the necessary elements in their message and asked Ricardo if he was happy with the layout of the menu. The most frequently recurring issue with the message was the absence of any reference to the layout or format of the menu.

A handful of learners changed the nature of the message entirely and there were examples of inappropriate and out of context language and tone of the messages. Frequently there were omitted salutations. 'Hi' and 'Hey' were used regularly along with text speak or lower-case i.

Areas for improvement and development:

- copying the addressee details as given
- use of subject line and choice of subject
- devising appropriate message to match requirements of question
- language and tone of message.

Task 5 - Using ICT

Task 5 required learners to answer a hypothetical question about using ICT and record their answers in the Responses document. They were told that music was playing and this could be seen from the laptop screen but no sound could be heard in the restaurant. Learners were required to identify two checks that Ricardo could carry out to establish why the music was not being heard.

This question undoubtedly challenged large numbers of learners. The most popular answers related to the volume levels or mute enabling learners to secure one of the two marks available. Simply checking cables were plugged in correctly or the speakers being switched on would have sufficed for the second. Many of the answers were inappropriate and irrelevant in the context of the question and there were some poorly structured and incomplete answers.

Areas for improvement and development:

- reading the task and requirements carefully
- answering the question asked
- devising grammatically correct and complete phrases/sentences
- knowledge of range of checks for problem solving in context.

Pass mark for FST01 Set 19

Maximum mark	50
Pass mark	36
UMS mark	6

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