EDEXCEL FUNCTIONAL SKILLS PILOT

TEACHER'S NOTES
ICT Levels 1 and 2

Chapter 8
Communicating using ICT

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ICT Levels 1 and 2

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Draft for pilot centres

Chapter 1: Using ICT systems
Chapter 2: Safety and security
Chapter 3: Find and select information
Chapter 4: Using ICT-based information
Chapter 5: Entering, developing and combining information (Part A)
Chapter 6: Entering, developing and combining information (Part B)
Chapter 7: Presenting information
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How to use the Functional ICT materials

These materials have been developed to help learners acquire the skills that are outlined in the QCA Functional Skills Standards for ICT under the three skills areas of 'Use ICT systems', 'Find and select information', 'Develop, present and communicate information'.

The structure of the materials

The chapters follow the sequence of the standards, with each chapter divided into sections matching the coverage of the standard or standards indicated. The standards are given at the start of each chapter, using the wording from the official document on the teacher pages and an adapted version, more appropriate to learners' needs, on the learner pages.

This structure should not be taken as a recommended teaching framework but merely as the method deemed most appropriate to demonstrate complete coverage of the standards. It is expected that teachers will organise their teaching sessions according to the needs, level of experience and interest of their learners, and the contexts in which they are working.

It should also not be assumed that material included here will form part of the functional skills assessment: by its very nature, the assessment will cover only part of the standards.

Level differentiation

The learner's materials are for learners working at Levels 1 and 2, and the content and activities are designed to be accessible to Level 1 learners. No attempt has been made to differentiate between the two levels in the pages of the learner's materials. The teacher's notes, however, use text presented in a tinted box to identify those activities and teaching points that are intended for Level 2 learners. The basis of the design of the materials is that, as in the standards, differentiation will be as much by outcome as by activity. The other key level differentiators – complexity, familiarity, technical demand and independence – are reflected in the tasks, which are designed to show the progression that is a feature of the standards:

At Level 1, learners would be expected to:
- identify the ICT requirements needed to solve a straightforward task and apply their knowledge and understanding to produce an appropriate solution (complexity)
- apply their knowledge and skills within a non-routine but familiar context (familiarity)
- apply a range of techniques in a number of applications to produce an appropriate outcome (technical demand)
- solve problems that are essentially instructor/tutor guided, demonstrating the confidence to make informed choices and knowing when to seek guidance (independence)

At Level 2, learners would be expected to:
- analyse multi-step tasks and separate the components, identifying the relevant ICT requirements and applying their knowledge and understanding to produce an appropriate solution (complexity)
- apply their knowledge, skills and understanding within non-routine and non-familiar contexts (familiarity)
- demonstrate the application of a wide range of techniques across several applications to produce an appropriate outcome (technical demand)
- solve problems independently, overcoming challenges to produce successful outcomes (independence)

This differentiation between levels requires the teacher to provide more guidance at Level 1 than at Level 2. With Level 1 learners, for example, teachers may choose to use a simplified task to allow a learner to practise the skill within their prior experience, whereas they may choose to enhance the challenge for Level 2 learners by using a more complex task that matches the learner's experience (more specific suggestions for differentiation are contained in the teacher's notes).

The activities have been developed with this varying guidance in mind, so that later activities in each section are expected to be undertaken with less teacher support. The expectation is, though, that all learners will be engaged in the learning process through discussion and social interaction.

The elements of the chapter

The chapters follow the standards and are divided into sections broadly corresponding to the coverage of those standards. Within each section there are two main sub-sections: 'Learn the skill', which provides information and facts for discussion and exploration; 'Develop the skill', which provides activities to practise the skills, test understanding and extend knowledge. The pages of the learner materials also direct the learner to additional electronic resources in the form of 'skills demonstrations' (captivates) and 'assets'.

▶▶ Captivates are screen-based skills demonstrations of points made in the text, which can be clicked on for instruction or information.

◀▶ Assets are files of information provided or stored digitally, which may include photographs, sound clips, databases, spreadsheets, etc. These may also include material needed to perform the activities (e.g. tables to complete).

These resources are available on the website, at the same point where these materials were available for downloading.

A note on resources and providing a safe working environment for learners

Any suggestion for software to be used with activities is not meant to be exclusive. It is understood that different centres will have different resources, and that some centres will allow learners only limited access to the internet, will not accept downloading and will allow learners only partial control over their work-station. The resources have been developed on the understanding of variations in resources, access and control, but there are still bound to be activities that present challenges for some centres. Where possible, suggestions for alternatives have been given in the teacher's notes; teachers are expected, in any case, to adapt activities for the use of their own favourite, or personally developed, resources.

These restrictions on internet browsing, downloading, and altering machine configurations may create difficulties on functional skills courses, where the standards require learners to actively engage in such tasks. One possible technical solution to this problem is to employ **virtual machine software**, which allows an instance of an operating system (usually Windows or Linux) to be run in a virtual environment that is isolated from the real machine. Changes made in the virtual machine have no effect on the real machine and can be completely discarded when the virtual machine is closed. Alternatively, a working state can be preserved in the virtual machine by taking a 'snapshot' before closing the virtual machine.

A virtual machine can be used to safely browse the internet, download and install software, and explore machine settings, with no risk to the real machine or associated network.

The best-known virtual machine products are Microsoft Virtual PC (currently free) and VMWare Workstation.

8 Presenting information

(pages 2–8 in the learner materials)

Skills area	Skill	Coverage	Unit
	Level 2 content in bold, content that only appears at level 1 in brackets	**Level 2 content in bold**	
C Develop, present and communicate information	**C5** select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, independently, responsibly and effectively, **including storage of messages and contacts lists**	**C5.1** create, access, read and respond appropriately to email and other ICT-based communication, including attachments, and adapt style to suit audience open mailbox, read, reply, forward, communicate using from, to, cc, bcc, subject and content fields, add and open attachments, use instant messaging, contribute to forums, web logs or web-based reference sites	**A** Exchanging information safely
		C5.2 use a contacts list, **manage efficient storage of ICT-based communications, attachments and contact addresses** **create and maintain folders, delete redundant messages**, add, amend and delete **contact** entries	

A *Exchanging information safely*

This section is all about receiving and sending emails safely. Go through the email etiquette with learners. Talk about using text messaging on phones and the differences between formal and informal writing. When is it acceptable to use brief text messages? When is a more formal reply needed? Discuss the benefits and disadvantages of using the various forms of electronic communication.

Look at how learners save their numbers on mobile phones and compare this to using an address book with emails.

Activities

If possible, ask learners to complete the activities on using email. If safety measures allow, ask learners to participate in instant web messaging, and to contribute to forums and web logs.

Level 2

As learners work more with emails, show the benefits of organising storage of emails into separate folders for easier access. Look at how to delete emails and amend contact lists.

Managing email storage

Over time a large number of emails will build up in the Inbox. A good way of managing these is to organise them in a number of sub-folders within the Inbox folder.

The folders can be named to make the groups of emails easy to identify.

To create a new folder in the Inbox, ask learners to right-click on it and select New Folder from the context menu. Or use the File/New menu in the menu bar.

Sorting emails

By default, emails are listed in order of date and time, with the most recent at the top of the list. Messages can be sorted on any of the message fields by clicking in the message header.

This will list the messages in groups by sender name, with the groups in alphabetical order. Clicking in the header again will reverse the order.

Deleting emails

It is good practice for learners to remove clutter from their Inbox by deleting unwanted emails, especially spam. But remind them not to delete emails that could possibly be needed at a later date.

Deleted emails are initially moved to the Deleted Items folder. To remove them permanently, it is necessary to empty this folder.

Bear in mind that email clients typically store all emails in a single file. In Outlook this is a file with the extension pst. This is effectively a database file; when an email is deleted, it is marked as deleted but not actually removed from the file. A deleted record in a database table is treated in the same way.

Level 2 activities

Ask Level 2 learners to complete the following two activities.

A1 In your email client program, use the message field header to sort the messages in order of:
a Sender
b Subject
c Received date/time
d Size

What happens if you click on a message header field, and then click the same field again?

A2 In your email client program, group your emails by sender.
a Create a new folder in the Inbox for one of your groups of emails.
b Move the selected group of emails into the new folder.
c Open one of the emails that are now in the new folder.