



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Applied Information and
Communication Technology
(Double Award) 3851**

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - January series

- Unit 3 ICT in Society

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available to download from the AQA Website:
www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2008 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales 3644723 and a registered charity number 1073334. Registered address AQA, Devas Street, Manchester. M15 6EX.

Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

Contents

Applied Information and Communication Technology (Double Award)

3850/3 Unit 3: ICT in Society.....5
Task 1: Presentation on Working Styles and New Employment Opportunities.....6
Task 2: Report on Personal Communications.....9
Task 3: Newsletter or Brochure on Legislation.....11
Conclusion.....14

Unit 3: ICT in Society

Introduction

January 2008 saw the third series of the revised examination for Unit 3. The revision to the examination reflects a desire to see students focus on the context given in the three tasks and produce more detailed analysis of the impact of ICT on society.

Since the launch of the revised examination, AQA has provided a large amount of support to centres. In the autumn term 2007, and the spring term 2008, a series of meetings was held around the country specifically aimed at centres about to commence delivery of the specification. These meetings gave detailed information on the content of the specification, and advice on its delivery and assessment. The meetings were well-received by the centres that attended, with positive feedback on their usefulness, however attendance was disappointing with some meetings cancelled due to no delegates. The meetings that ran provided delegates with an insight into candidates' performances in previous examination series. Previous candidates' strengths and weaknesses were identified, and strategies for improving candidates' performances were suggested. A range of exemplar material was issued, with commentaries explaining where marks had been achieved by candidates.

In general, candidates sitting the January 2008 examination seem to have worked to the new requirements and most centres used the full time allocation. Examiners were, however, disappointed to see many of the same mistakes still occurring on the third instance of this series. It is hoped that centres will direct their candidates wisely so their efforts concentrate on the aspects which are accredited rather than producing superfluous material. It was evident that centres were utilising the checklist provided by AQA and so, in theory, the correct evidence should have been provided.

The *Candidates' Booklet* and *Instructions and Guidance for Teachers* clearly describe stages which combine together to form each task. Working through these stages allowed candidates to produce tasks which demonstrated the depth and range of knowledge and understanding required by this Double Award Specification. Centres are reminded of AQA's expectation that candidates are taught the ICT content for all five focus areas identified in Unit 3 prior to starting the assessed tasks. Evidence from Teacher Support meetings and questions raised by centres with Portfolio Advisors suggest that a number of centres did not teach the content in sufficient depth or detail to provide their candidates with opportunities to achieve success. This assessed unit represents one-third of a double award GCSE qualification, and the teaching and study allowed should reflect this, both in the amount of time and depth of preparation. It is clearly unreasonable to expect candidates who have been given insufficient teaching and study time to achieve similar marks to those who have received the 5-6 hours per week that would normally be allocated to two GCSEs.

Task One: Presentation on Working Styles and New Employment Opportunities

The requirement was for candidates to focus the content of their presentation, exclusively on the effects of ICT relating to Working Styles and New Employment Opportunities, on one identified group. Examiners were pleased to note that the number of candidates producing generic presentations, which did not relate to any particular focus area, had decreased. Presentations of this type were unable to achieve more than a minimal number of marks as responses were not sufficiently detailed.

A number of candidates mentioned and described a group, but then proceeded to list many different technologies, sometimes including technical detail, but failed to relate these technologies to the identified group. This again resulted in only minimal marks.

For a number of centres it was clear that a significant number of presentations were quite similar, for example they related to the same groups or areas of content. Centres are reminded that candidates must produce individual presentations and must work unaided whilst in the controlled sessions. It would be inappropriate for the teacher to influence the content of candidates' work in any way.

It is important for candidates to realise that the presentation must be produced for a specified audience and must focus on the effects of ICT on the identified groups or individual. It is not sufficient for candidates to offer generic responses that do not relate to the identified groups. The presentation is essentially an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate that they are able to use ICT knowledge and understanding that they have developed through the teachers' delivery of the content and apply that knowledge and understanding to a new context.

Centres are asked to ensure that, where candidates use the speakers' notes section to incorporate a lot of text, the font size is not reduced to a point where the examiner cannot read it. Similarly, where text is coloured on a coloured background, the examiner will need to be able to read it if marks are to be awarded.

Candidate identifies the audience for their presentation and ensures that the presentation is appropriate to the needs of the audience (2 marks)

A1 Identify audience

Examiners were pleased to see the number of candidates not identifying an audience has reduced. Those who did not achieve this mark either did not identify an audience at all, or highlighted unacceptably vague audiences, such as, 'investors', 'adults', 'the general public' or 'everyone'. Audiences such as 'my ICT group' and 'managers of a supermarket' were quite acceptable.

Candidates should not assume the audience is implied from the group they are discussing in B1 and should make a clear point to identify who they are aiming their task at.

A2 Format appropriate for audience

Most candidates who identified an audience could also be awarded the mark for appropriateness for audience, which was judged in terms of content, language, appearance and format.

Candidate describes an individual or group affected by ICT systems (4 marks)

B1 Identify one individual or group

Most candidates attempted to identify a group or individual. Working mothers, employees of supermarkets and banks were common. Some candidates failed to achieve full marks in this section through their identification of inappropriate groups. Examples such as a named supermarket, bank or adults are not sufficiently specific to provide meaningful structures. When centres invite a speaker in and all candidates then use this information, some suspicion of malpractice can be raised, especially if all students are using the responses to the same set of questions. Although it is not a requirement, it may be useful for the centre to enclose a note to say that the speaker had presented to the entire cohort, to avoid suspicion of malpractice.

B2 Describe the individual or group

Many candidates attempted to describe the groups mentioned in the above section. Simple descriptions are perfectly acceptable and the majority of candidates who identified an acceptable group attained marks in this section.

B3 Relate the individual or group to ICT use

This section was often attempted simply as a list of technologies and therefore those candidates did not achieve the marks. Most candidates were able to relate their individual or groups to ICT use, however some failed to relate the groups to ICT at all by using generalised statements, for example, 'working mothers use computers', with no supporting statements as to how they are used in relation to working styles or new employment opportunities. Candidates should explain the link between the group, the ICT and the context.

Candidate considers consequences of lack of access to ICT and benefits available through use of ICT (6 marks)

C1 Describe in detail the benefits of the use of ICT

Candidates are expected to provide the detail to the individual or group of using ICT in relation to the context. Benefits must be those related to the individual or group identified in B1. Often candidates failed to link the benefits of the technology to the individual, but rather to the company they were employed by. This discussion could have been rewarded if the candidate had completed the flow of discussion by bringing the benefit to the company into the individual or groups context, so the company making bigger profits, for example, could lead to a more secure position for the employee, but again the link must be clear and not superficial. The same depth of discussion is also required for the C2 section in relation to the consequences of lack of access.

Candidates often failed to achieve all the marks available in this section as they only gave one benefit which lacked sufficient substance to be awarded additional marks. Simple one-sentence answers are insufficient for three marks.

C2 Explains the consequences of lack of access to ICT

Candidates generally interpret a consequence as the opposite of a benefit, or make statements that the groups are unable to do certain things, for example, 'working mothers without access to the Internet would not be able to work'. This section is intended for the candidates to identify how the group would be able to continue their working life without the use of ICT, and the impact it would have on them. In this context it may well mean that the working mother would not be able to work in the same way and could indeed find herself unemployed, but this section is looking for a discussion of how the individual would function prior to the end conclusion of unemployment.

As in the benefits section, see C1 above, the consequences must be for the group or individual and not the company they are employed by.

Candidate makes informed suggestions to show how ICT developments already in progress will affect their chosen individual or group in the near future (2marks)

D1 Basic details of future effects

This criterion is aimed primarily at more able candidates as it requires them to interpret the information they have already researched and project that information into the future to make realistic predictions. A large number of candidates were unable to achieve marks within this section as they did not relate the future effect to their identified group. Most candidates made superficial statements regarding technologies being 'better' or 'faster', which is not sufficient for this section. Again the context should be with the group identified and topic of the series. Discussion outside the context will not achieve marks. Similarly, technologies which are already in widespread use within the environment, the individual described that had not been identified in B3 will not be awarded marks. For example, saying that a company used video conferencing, but it will be used more, is insufficient.

Candidate makes informed suggestions to show how ICT developments already in progress will affect their chosen individual or group in the near future (2 marks)

E1 Use of software features

Most candidates achieved the marks available for use of software features. Some candidates may have included a background, which could have been awarded a mark, but did not achieve that mark as their printouts were produced in black and white. There is no requirement for colour printing in this section, but backgrounds often disappear when printed in monochrome due to the design of the software. A simple annotation by the candidate indicating that a background has been used is sufficient for the background mark to be awarded.

Very few candidates provided evidence of slide transitions or build effects, both of which would have earned marks. Again, a simple annotation or screen print of the transition setup window is sufficient for the mark to be awarded.

Task Two: Report on Personal Communications

Whereas the presentation focuses on the effects of ICT on identified types of groups or individuals, the report is concerned primarily with the available technology. The requirement is for candidates to focus exclusively on Entertainment and Leisure, and to relate the content of their report to that area.

Many candidates produced generic reports that were not sufficiently focused on the prescribed area and so they were unable to achieve the full range of marks. Some candidates appeared to have adopted a minimalist approach, sticking rigidly to the mark scheme wording, often trying to respond in a single sentence. Candidates who simply wrote unrelated sentences in response to each mark criterion, rather than expanding on the task list of requirements, missed out on achieving many of the marks.

Candidates who used the marking criteria as side headings in their report often produced more structured evidence that included much more detail.

However, candidates were still failing to link the technology to its use for Entertainment and Leisure and marks were not awarded when this was the case.

Candidate produces a basic description of two technologies available to access and exchange information and carries out transactions (4 marks)

F1 Identify two technologies

The vast majority of candidates identified two technologies. Some candidates lost marks by including technologies that were not relevant to Entertainment and Leisure, for example identifying mobile phones but discussing the technology in relation to communication and not in relation to the context of this report. Examiners were disappointed to note that candidates were still failing to achieve marks in this section because they used brand names rather than the name of the technology itself.

F2 Basic description of two technologies

The majority of candidates were able to describe at least one of their technologies. When candidates were not awarded marks for their descriptions, this was mainly due to their responses not demonstrating any significant degree of technical knowledge or understanding. An example of this was a candidate who discussed instant messaging, but did not mention the requirement for computers or the Internet.

More detailed description, including main purposes of technologies available, giving advantages and disadvantages (10 marks)

G1 Purposes of two technologies

Some candidates were unable to identify the purpose of the technology being discussed, and simply produced a list of its uses. Specifically in this series candidates were able to identify that the purpose of an MP3 player is to enable people to listen to music in relation to their leisure and entertainment activities, but found some difficulty in framing a similar purpose when it came

to the Internet or mobile phones, with many candidates giving the main purpose as “to entertain”. As the focus was entertainment and leisure, this terminology was not accepted.

G2 Advantages of the technologies

The main criterion asks for a detailed description, which appeared to have been overlooked by many candidates who produced a bulleted list instead. The advantages and disadvantages section produced minimal responses from many candidates. Candidates often overlooked the entertainment and leisure aspect of the task and gave general comments. Unless the commentary was linked into the context of the report, marks were not awarded.

G3 Disadvantages of the technologies

The disadvantages highlighted by candidates were often bulleted lists with no reference to the context of the report. Marks were not awarded without explanations and reasoning. Additionally, the disadvantages must be related to the technology in context. Mobile phone pricing plans and battery life are not disadvantages of the technology, yet the majority of candidates who used this technology focused on these areas, often giving detailed tables of the different tariffs available on the various networks.

Candidate produces a well-structured, well-organised report that is easy to read and understand (2 marks)

H1 Provides a well-structured, well-organised report

The majority of candidates could be credited with the organisation mark this year. Most marks were awarded due to candidates’ uses of sub-headings and bullet points. Candidates could also have been awarded marks for the inclusion of introduction and conclusions; however, although most candidates did start the report with an introduction, many failed to include a conclusion.

Task Three: Newsletter or Brochure on Legislation

This task is standard content in each examination series in that it always focuses on ICT legislation as detailed in the specification. Candidates are required to produce a DTP document, this year for employees of a large organisation, discussing the purposes and effects of legislation related to ICT. Marks are awarded predominantly for content rather than DTP skills which are assessed in Unit 1.

Centres are again asked to remind candidates that the Acts discussed must relate to ICT. The Health and Safety at Work Act is particularly likely to suffer in candidates' elaboration, with many focusing on the non-ICT aspects of this piece of legislation.

Candidate produces a description of the main purposes of legislation covering working with, and using, ICT (4 marks)

I1 Simple descriptions of main purposes of four pieces of legislation

This initial section requires candidates to identify and describe the purposes of the various Acts; it does not require detailed and working knowledge of the contents of the Acts. Most candidates were able to describe the purpose of the Acts adequately. Many candidates thought that the main purposes of the Acts were to make something illegal without identifying the precise purpose.

Candidates who discussed the purpose of the Internet Code of Practice did not gain marks, as this is not specific legislation. Another common error was the inclusion of legislation not specific to the UK, with US and Australian legislation, often sourced from the Internet, being used. The focus of the newsletter or brochure should be UK-based legislation.

Candidate produces a more detailed description, which includes an explanation of implications for users of implementing the legislation (4 marks)

J1 Implications for users explained

This criterion is an extension of I1 and requires candidates to identify the implications for users, at any level, of two of the Acts they are considering. These implications could be related to working practices, efficiency, costs, etc. and may be different for different types of users.

Candidates tended to provide the most comprehensive information about the Data Protection Act and the Computer Misuse Act, however when this information was simply details of the Act with no implication they could not be awarded marks in this section.

Candidate produces a well-structured, well-organised newsletter or brochure that is easy to read and understand (2 marks)

K1 Well-structured description

Some candidates produced word processed essays, rather than the required newsletter or brochure, and so could not be awarded marks for structure. Some candidates had used

software templates or wizards, which is quite acceptable, but had selected a template which did not provide space for sufficient detail, and so marks were lost. The majority of candidates, however, were able to structure their newsletter or brochure appropriately, gaining at least one mark. Many candidates achieved the additional mark for the appropriate inclusion of a structure feature, most often the use of bullet points.

Additional marks that may be gained in any one of the three tasks (20 marks)

Candidate provides details of their sources of information. At least one source to be validated and one to be evaluated (10 marks)

L1 List of their sources of information

One mark is available for each list of sources the candidate provides. Most candidates did achieve marks in this area, however those who failed did so for a few specific reasons. Firstly, a list of sources requires more than one source. Secondly, the sources must be identifiable. Sources such as 'the Applied ICT book' are not acceptable. Similarly the Internet cannot be credited. Full names and details of books and addresses of specific websites are required. Thirdly, if candidates repeated the same list three times with no identification as to where the sources were used they would only be awarded the L1 mark once.

L2 Includes a range of sources of different types

Many candidates scored two of the three available marks as they offered a suitable website and textbook that examiners could identify. Third marks were rarer and were awarded for relevant identifiable people, such as specific police officers, for use in presentation on working styles, videos and questionnaires.

Centres must remember that Unit 3 class notes from the teacher are not accepted as a source of information.

Candidates commonly named Internet search engines as sources. Centres are reminded that such websites are content free and are merely tools to identify other sites, and so cannot be considered as sources.

L3 Validation of one source

The validation criterion was attempted by more candidates than previously and more students achieved marks in this section. It is helpful if candidates identify what they are validating with a comparison piece, quoting sections from the textbook or Internet site used. Validations stating, "I checked source A with source B and it was the same", were not successful in gaining marks. Candidates must identify what information was checked if they are to be awarded marks.

L4 Evaluation of one source

More candidates than in previous series produced acceptable evaluations required for the task, discussing ease of use in finding the information and how the source was useful to them in completion of the task. Marks were awarded for evaluations beyond the 'it was helpful' or 'it was clear' type of statements. Evaluations must be based on one of the sources used in L3.

Candidate's work includes evidence of the use of ICT to search for, select and organise information (4 marks)

M1 Use of ICT to search for and select information

Candidates were required to search for, select and organise information in one of the three tasks. Most candidates achieved one mark through the use of an Internet search engine showing relevant search criteria with a list of hyperlinks. Candidates achieved a second mark if they had then gone into one of the results of their search and printed this.

M2 Use of ICT to organise information

The majority of candidates achieved both the organisation marks. The most common organisational features used were a table or the use of bullet points in the presentation.

Candidates who included a table as part of the sources were not awarded marks here, nor were marks awarded for graphs or charts that had been pasted in from a published source.

Candidate produces a detailed evaluation of their work for one of the three tasks (3 marks)

N1 Provides a detailed description of one of their tasks

The majority of candidates attempted to evaluate their work. Evaluation of one's own work is a skill which most candidates, even those working at a higher level, find particularly challenging and this was evident here. Candidates found difficulty in justifying why a particular feature was a strength or weakness. Candidates are expected to be able to outline a strength, a weakness and a possible improvement to the document they produced, which could take the form of, for example, the appropriateness of format, content or language in relation to the intended user. It is disappointing to note that a large number of candidates still use this section to describe what they produced, rather than link the document to the suitability to its audience, and so could not be awarded marks.

Candidate recognises and explores ethical and moral implications of access to ICT in one of the three tasks (3 marks)

O1 Considers ethical and moral issues within one of the three tasks

Candidates who were successful within this area were able to demonstrate an understanding of how ICT has provided some moral dilemmas within the context of whatever task they were expanding. Questions raised such as, "is it right that..", and then a discussion of, for example, the government powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, are more likely to gain a mark than basic statements such as, "computer games make people more violent", and, "you can see pornography on the Internet", without a link to the context gained no marks.

Centres should note that this mark is available only in one task and candidates who gave ethical and moral considerations in all tasks were only rewarded in the task which secured the highest number of marks.

This section must be part of one of the three tasks. Some candidates continue to complete a separate essay on ethics and moral issues. In these cases, if there was a clear link to any of the three tasks then marks were awarded. If this material had no relevance to any of the documents being produced then no marks were awarded.

Conclusion

Many centres have taken on board some of the advice offered by AQA at the Teacher Support meetings and candidates have grasped how to structure their assignment in order to attain marks for simplistic level skills, which is encouraging.

Centres are strongly encouraged to take note of the comments within this report when preparing candidates for Unit 3 in future examination series.

AQA provides support to centres through meetings and the Portfolio Advisor email service. Centres are encouraged to seek advice or clarification from AQA on the areas candidates are researching (aqagcseappictpa@aqa.org.uk) or from ICT Subject Support at AQA (ict-subjects@aqa.org.uk).

The web-link to the statistical data and information on the grade boundary ranges is www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html