

Frequently Asked Questions for GCSE Applied ICT - Year 2006/7

Q	When is the exam window for the January 2007 exam?
A	8 - 12 January 2007
Q	When will the data files be available for the January 2007 exam?
A	From 11 December 2006, centres can download data files from Edexcel Online - please refer to the ICE document which you can download from the Edexcel web site.
Q	How do I obtain the data files?
A	From 11 December 2006. Centres can download data files from Edexcel Online - please refer to the ICE document. Centres should download the data files as early as possible. If it is necessary to create new files, the centre must send a copy of the files to the examiner with the candidates' scripts.
Q	Where can I obtain a copy of the ICE Document for GCSE Applied ICT?
A	This can be downloaded from the Edexcel website. On the main page you will see two drop down menus. On the first one, select qualification, scroll down to "GCSE (vocational subjects)" Then on the second drop down menu select Applied Information and Communication Technology. At the bottom of the page is the heading Noticeboard. Scroll down, the second file available is the Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination (ICE) - January 2007 .
Q	Do I need to notify anyone of when in the exam window my candidates will be sitting the exam?
A	Yes, centres must notify Edexcel by 1 December 2006 - see the ICE document para 1.4. An examination schedule pro forma for this can be found on page 11 of the ICE document. You should send this to Compliance & Legal Services, Edexcel, One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH. Remember each candidate MUST sit the examination in one continuous slot of time: it must not be spread through their lesson times during the week.
Q	Can candidates get up and fetch their printouts during the examination?
A	Candidates are not expected to spend all the time in the examination working at the computer. The length of time allocated for the examination is such that candidates will have time to print out and collect their printouts as their work progresses, thus building in a natural break from screen work. They should also spend time reviewing their work once it is printed to check that layout, styling and sizing are appropriate and fit for purpose.
Q	How long is the exam?
A	The exam is 2 hours and 30 minutes long. A further 30 minutes is available at the end of the exam for candidates ONLY to finish printing and collating their work.

General Queries - 5332 / 5333 - Unit 2 / 3

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Q	Which candidates work should I send to the moderator?
A	The OPTEMS will have asterisks against the names of those candidates whose work you should send to the moderator. In addition if the highest and lowest samples in the cohort are not part of the asterisked sample these should also be included - a maximum of twelve samples. Please note that samples for Units 2 and 3 are likely to be sent to different moderators. Please refer to the Guidance for Centres on the vocational GCSE page of the website - this will give detailed instructions on the sampling.
Q	For units 2 and 3 are the Unit Marking Guide on the web optional or mandatory?
A	These are optional but all centres are highly encouraged to use them since they provide an opportunity to add detailed annotation, which is mandatory, to aid the moderation of the work, including professional judgement.
Q	Where can I find the Unit Marking Guides?
A	These can be downloaded from the Edexcel website. On the main page you will see two drop down menus. On the first one, select qualification; scroll down to "GCSE (vocational subjects)". Then on the second drop down menu select Applied Information and Communication Technology. On the right hand side you will see a heading "Related Information", click on the "Support Material" link. It will bring you to another page, scroll down the screen and you will see the two Unit Marking Guide files - Unit Marking Guide for Unit 2 - 5332 and Unit Marking Guide for Unit 3 - 5333.
Q	Do you require a sample of ten for 5332 and ten for 5333, or ten across the two units?
A	For each individual unit. For 10 or less candidates entered, you must send all the work. For more than 10 candidates entered you need to send 10 samples plus the candidates with the highest and lowest if these are not included in the asterisked sample.
Q	Where can I find the "Teachers Guide" for GCSE Applied ICT?
A	On the main Edexcel page you will see two drop down menus. On the first one, select qualification; scroll down to "GCSE (vocational subjects)". Then on the second drop down menu select Applied Information and Communication Technology. You will be automatically taken into another screen; scroll down and you will see a heading "Noticeboard". Under this section you will find the file "Teachers Guide".
Q	When is the work for 5332 and 5333 to be submitted to the moderator?
A	The deadline for all work to reach the moderator is by 15 May 2007
Q	Do we need to annotate candidates' portfolio work?
A	Annotation is a mandatory requirement for internally assessed work. All pages in the portfolio should be numbered to facilitate the moderation. As a minimum, teachers must complete the annotation column on the mark record sheet by listing the portfolio page number(s) where evidence can be found for each of the assessment criteria. However, moderators do find more detailed annotation on the work itself extremely useful since it pinpoints evidence of achievement of particular assessment criteria.

Q	Is the Unit Marking Guide used to best fit students in to mark bands?
A	This is what the UMG are striving to achieve - holistically this could happen, but there has to be some concrete evidence or documented professional judgement with which the moderator must agree. You cannot simply best fit a student into MB2 to get a 'C' just because they are getting a C elsewhere - otherwise what would be the point of doing the coursework in the first place?
Q	A higher degree of guidance is justifiable due to the vocational nature of the course.
A	This is true, but as in the case of other qualifications, students should be enabled through teaching to work independently to complete coursework. There will of necessity be guidance when students are planning to interview the adult or special needs person in Unit 3 - that is what we would call teaching - we as professionals should be 'translating' the specification so that students can understand what is required. Clearly they need guidance in the phrasing of questions if they are going to conduct an interview - but this is teaching not guidance that would impede the possibility of independent working. A common questionnaire devised by the group during a taught lesson would not necessarily produce all the same answers and analysis.
Q	Do the same reports / queries produced by all candidates constitute over guidance?
A	Yes, to an extent, if the work is completely identical, but students can customise the reports and queries which shows some independence. Again, we would suggest that for some mid/low mark band students this may be the only satisfactory way to enable them to achieve their potential.

5332 - Unit 2

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Q	The flowcharts you have produced have been really helpful, but I notice there isn't one for 2a and 2b. Is there going to be one?
A	The moderators have not produced a flow chart for these two sections as there has been a substantial amount of exemplar work with commentaries available for quite some time.
Q	For unit 2d, can a candidate get into mark band 1 if they have not produced a user guide?
A	Even though the user guide is stated in the banner at the top of the assessment evidence grid, candidates can still get into mark band 1 - but are unlikely to progress further. This qualification is not like GNVQ where everything in the banner must be achieved.
Q	Unit 5332 strand C - what evidence should teachers ask candidates for regarding the design, not the implementation?
A	Candidates should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the user and need • produce sketches of input screens and give sources of data, data capture methods • sketches of output screens (sketches should be pencil sketches) • describe processes used (calculations, queries) • produce a test plan (only the plan not the results of the tests) (this may include expected outcomes for more able candidates) • make sure tasks are listed in a logical order. The Unit Marking Guide for unit 2 on the Edexcel web site gives the list of what to do.
Q	Unit 5332 strand C - what data capture methods are necessary? Are we expecting candidates to ask for names, addresses etc in a form or something else?
A	Candidates could produce a data capture form - that would be enough as long as they have identified the sources of data and the data needed. They may wish to test the data capture form and get some feedback from the end-user (this may be a way of extending more able candidates).
Q	In the unit 5332 specification it states that candidates should gather information on how organisations use data flow, ideally by contacting several local businesses. Is it ok for candidates to use the school, would candidates be penalised for doing this?
A	Candidates may use their school, although it would be better if they used an organisation other than their school since candidates might find a school limiting as a result of its structure and blurred business purposes. Candidates will not be penalised for using the school as long as everything in the specification is covered.

Q	Unit 5332 - One case study to fit all candidates?
A	<p>This depends on the centre. This could be a way forward in different cases. Centres could use a single case study say for 2c/2d - but the case study might provide options for either a database or spreadsheet solution, ie the case study is broad enough to allow either a system based on a customer database for sales or a spreadsheet for accounts. Thus it remains the same case study, but students can choose different paths to a solution that is not necessarily directed by the teacher. However, a common assignment (as opposed to case study) retains a risk since a centre could not expect to award MB3 for both 2c and 2d; although once the planning and design are complete it may still be possible to achieve MB3 in 2d if the proposed solution is implemented independently. If the students are mid/low ability it may be sensible to provide an assignment with more structure, but then centres presumably would be expecting MB2 or MB1 outcomes.</p> <p><i>Centres need to be clear as to whether they are providing a case study as a basis for analysis and solution proposals or an assignment which directs the outcome. A case study is not recommended for strands 2a/b since it provides little scope for the students to ask questions which lead to evaluative comments. Of course, case studies may be used for preparatory work so that students have a clear idea of organisational structures and so on.</i></p>
Q	Can some of the subsections in unit 2 be produced using web pages or PowerPoint presentation software rather than word processor?
A	Yes, as long as it covers the specification criteria. However, there won't be any marks for the preparation of the web pages or presentation itself.
Q	For units 2c and 2d - System Building, can the work be presented using a website rather than a database?
	Some of the exemplar material shows PowerPoint slides describing the candidates work. However, candidates cannot get the marks under complex processing if they create a website or presentation. They could use a presentation or website to describe what they have done, but a word processed report is the easiest way to do this. If candidates must do a website they must content themselves that they may not get into MB3 or even MB2.
Q	The marking guidance for assignment 2c of the GCSE Applied ICT stipulates that the solution must be complex and include complex processing. What constitutes complex processing (mail merging from a database, queries that use more than one table, user forms with macros)? The marking guide states see separate guidance. However I cannot find any guidance on this issue.
A	Yes, that is correct, "complex processing means mail merging from a database, queries that use more than one table, user forms with macros and buttons." The separate guidance is for moderators. However, there is some information in the document under unit 2, called Evidence Criteria, on the website. The link is below: http://www.edexcel.org.uk/VirtualContent/72385/Unit_2_Evidence_Criteria.pdf In addition, the Teacher's Guide provides substantial detail on what might be expected.

5333 - Unit 3

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Q	Unit 5333 - for the three technologies, must these be on one aspect of the community or can they be on three different aspects eg the library, the Church and speed cameras?
A	Candidates can do either. They could use just a library or they could use a whole town, but either way the technologies MUST be related to the NEEDS of the community. The focus here is on technologies, or use of ICT, in a community which can be wide ranging. For example, schools, fire departments, local hospitals, clinics, shopping malls, local authorities. These technologies must be related to THE COMMUNITY and NOT THE ORGANISATION , ie of benefit to a wide range of people rather than a business purpose.
Q	Unit 5333 - One case study to fit all candidates?
A	Centres should be very careful about using case studies. The spirit of the qualification is vocational - so students should be investigating wider society. See Unit 2 (5332) - same question.