Version 1.0: 0808

ASSESSMENT and QUALIFICATIONS ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Secondary Education

GCSE Information and Communication Technology 3521/3527 Full and Short Course

Specification A

3521/7/C AQA-set Assignment

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

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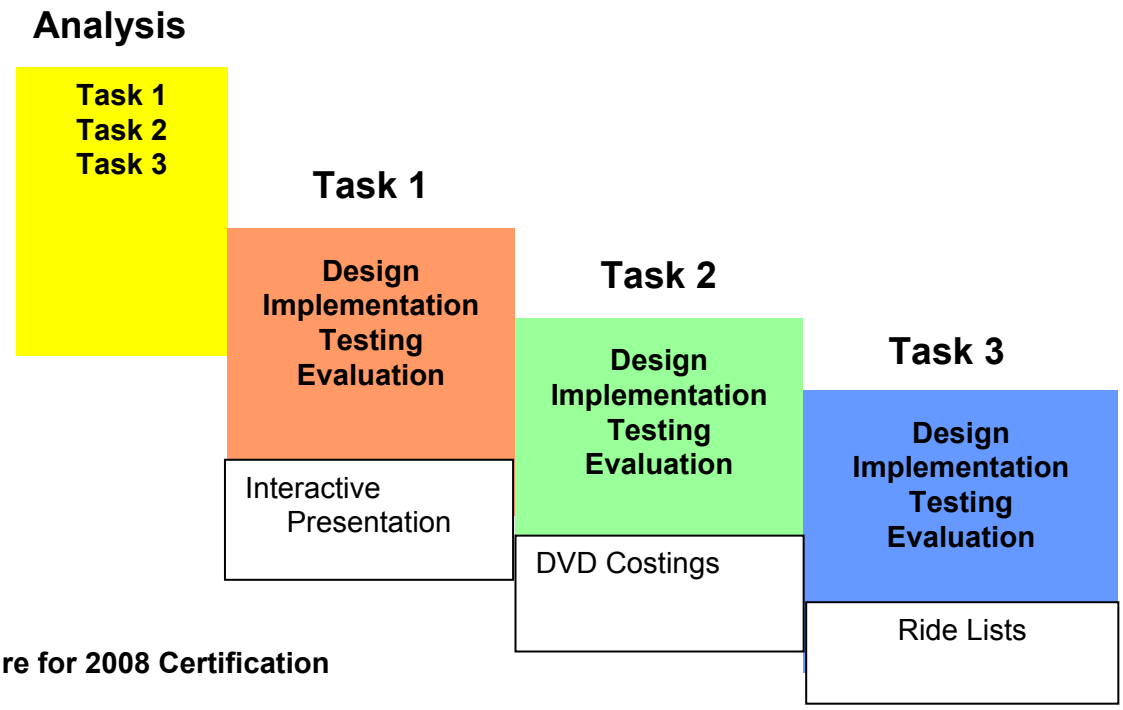
Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

AQA-set Assignment

The AQA-set Assignment continues to be an integral part of the coursework requirements on this well established and popular specification, and in general the work continued to reflect improving standards where more and more candidates are showing further understanding of the requirements of the tasks, both in terms of the task itself but also the evidence needed to produce a documented solution to the task involved.



Structure for 2008 Certification

Analysis

Candidates were required to analyse the material sent by the Board. This was an assignment based on the Lancre Theme Park, and the aim was for candidates to use their ICT skills to help the way the Park operated so that visitors had a more enjoyable experience and the park made more profit. The requirement was that the analysis was first completed and then presented for marking, before candidate(s) moved on to design and then implement solutions. It was pleasing to note that this year virtually all centres entering candidates for this component presented this work as a discrete section at the beginning of the coursework.

There was evidence that more and more centres had given candidates thorough preparation for the requirements of this component, initially using examples from a previous, non confidential Assignment, to provide candidates with an insight as to what they would need to do for the current one. This was supported by further evidence of increased awareness and eventual use of aspects of the software. One centre is to be congratulated on their aim to try to ensure candidates had an understanding of how a theme park operates by taking their candidates on a trip to a local theme park to give candidates more awareness of how such a system operates.

Analysis is defined as being about identification and categorisation; what is required is a list and no explanation of the items is expected. The list should:

- identify the problem
- state the form of the output
- identify the information to be output
- the data needed to produce the output
- and the desired outcomes and performance criteria.

The candidate can identify the latter by making an explicit page and probably a line reference or by copying out or describing the data; no distinction in the marking grid is made between desired outcomes (subjective) and performance criteria (measurable). Identifying and listing them is enough.

It is essential that candidates are encouraged to use the structure and headings provided in the candidate booklet and the majority did this, giving them every opportunity to address the full range of marks in this section. On the marking criteria for this section, the following main criteria apply:

9-10	**all** means 'close to all' and must be in correct categories (award 10 for up to 1 error and 9 for 'for 2 to 3 errors).
7-8	**most** means **more than half altogethe**r and must be in correct categories (7 close to but above half, 8 nearer to but more than 3 errors).
5-6	**some** means about (but **less than** or **equal to**) **half** – not necessarily in each category (6 equal to half or just below, 5 more than ¼) OR 'most' but not in correct categories (6 marks)
3-4	**few** means more than 3 but less than ¼ correct

Helpful teacher annotation indicates 'all', 'most', 'some' or 'few' for each category

The total number of statements in Confidential Instruction for all categories was:

Task 1 (46), Task 2 (30) and Task 3 (33)

At times there were repeats under these required headings; candidates do have to 'state the obvious', and many clearly had copied and pasted the requirements where needed. By defining 'some' as more than half altogether, a large number of candidates had the opportunity to achieve a minimum of the 5-6 mark band of the criteria, and evidence showed that many had taken full advantage of this. In general, the vast majority of the work presented on this section was appropriately marked, with many centres having taken on board the advice on how to mark each section of each task by ticking and either recording a total for each mark or using the terms 'all', 'most' 'some', or few.

Having completed the analysis, candidates should, if required, be assisted in identifying the three tasks and their requirements. This prevented those candidates who had not done so from being disadvantaged for the next stages. It also allowed centres to manage the work of their weaker candidates. Some tasks are inherently more challenging than others and not all candidates were expected to complete all tasks, though centres should note that each task is worth the same mark. While much of the differentiation is by outcome, weaker candidates would be better advised to spend more time on the more straightforward tasks. Teachers should annotate the candidates' work to indicate which tasks the candidates have managed to

identify for themselves and if they have been helped at this stage. Centres can reveal the whole of the analysis to the candidates at this stage if they wish. They must bear in mind, however, that there is some evidence suggests that candidates who have completed their own analysis, however flawed, tend to be disadvantaged by receiving the "correct" answer and then having to adjust their thinking to that presented by the analysis in the Confidential Instructions. It may be advisable to consider carefully the feedback that is to be given, particularly to the weaker candidates, who may be better directed in to completing those tasks that are more appropriate to their needs. What centres must **not** do is photocopy the confidential material and present this directly to candidates.

Most centres did get their candidates to reorganise their analyses into the separate tasks. Most ensured that the candidates then numbered and titled the tasks according to those given in the Confidential Instructions. This made the moderating process straightforward. Work in this section is going well and it was once again rare for differences to be seen between awards made by the centre and those produced on moderation. The point previously highlighted with regard to providing feedback to candidates once the Analysis has been marked is once again highlighted; these should be considered throughout all the remaining sections of the work, commencing with the design component. The provision of theses criteria will help candidates to consider user needs; otherwise this can be a barrier to achieving such as a design mark in the 21 – 25 mark range.

Most centres are now effectively using either using Analysis Marking Grid [a copy of which being available from AQA or the coursework adviser allocated to the centre] or ticking with "all / some" style comments. It is now rare to see no annotation of the candidate's analysis.

Design

The design section should include three main components together with the test plan:

1. What? : evidence of how the problem is to be solved [plans]
2. How? : the software that will be used and the features of the solution that make the software suitable
3. Why? : explaining the choices made, and
4. Test plan (to be credited in the testing section)

It should be remembered that candidates only needed to design that which is to be implemented namely:

- Task 1 : The interactive presentation to allow for a Home page, Land of Mysteries and Monsters page, Central Dome page and The Dragon's Lair page

- Task 2 : the publicity pack calculator to allow for:
  - results of 1000 standard packs with no ticket agent packs
  - results for 3000 packs of which 50 were ticket agent packs
  - the number of standard packs required if there was a maximum of 300 visitors

- Task 3 : Lists for:
  - popularity for animated track ride
  - service record for flight to the stars

Designs are about identifying how the work might proceed. Initial ideas as to how to solve the problem are required. These should be subsequently improved and amended as the problem, and the possible ways of solving it, become clearer. A developed design is one where an initial

idea is improved, showing initial outlines and first thoughts and then progressing to an improved design, justifying any choices made.

Designs should include, where appropriate:

- sketches
- descriptions
- layout plans
- suggestions for formulas and cell types and widths, field details, search criteria, reports and mail merge requirements plus validation checks, all identifying the way the output will look.

A planned design will contain enough detail to explain to a third party the requirements for the implementation, thus enabling anyone familiar with the package being used to carry out that implementation. A useful rule of thumb will be "*… Is there enough detail for someone else to carry out the Implementation?"*

There is no requirement in this section that candidates have to produce more than one design plan; a candidate who produces a single page plan of the requirements of a task and includes on this development and reasons for choice can score full marks for this part of the component.

At the lower end of the design mark, candidates will choose software and describe some features of the software. As we move up the mark range these descriptions will relate more closely to the needs of the solution. The descriptions will focus on how the software solves the problem and not simply on all the things the software can do.

The design section was attempted overall quite well, though some centres gave very high marks to limited design plans, and the reasoning for the selection of software was sometimes rather weak or very generic. Fewer candidates than last year did not obviously start with the 'plan' nor have it in sufficient detail that it could be implemented exactly as 'envisaged'. There were also still some 'scrappy' plans with no more than some of the content included. Design still a problem for 'higher performing' candidates with some centres overall awarding 21-25 marks although crucial details are missing, on for example the plan.

Software description was not always focussed on using a feature to complete the plan, and the needs of the user as design choices were not always intertwined with the plan or software description or separate.

On a more positive note, once again more candidates included designs for search requirements than previously, although there were still a number of candidates who failed to meet this requirement and for whom very high marks were awarded. For spreadsheet models, often there was a plan showing where data and formulae were to be used but the types of data to be used in the cells and recommended cell widths were lacking. A small number of candidates did provide a printout of the formulae for the spreadsheet and screen dumps of the query requirements in the implementation section, and included the same in their design section. It should be remembered that implementation work should not encroach on the design section, and whilst allowance can be made for the cyclic design process, the aim is for designs not be done either retrospectively or include work that actually is evidence of the implementation.

Test plans, if required should be included in this section BUT (repeated and) credited in Testing. The design of testing plans showed some improvement on the previous year, with many candidates identifying what needs to be tested together with the production of test plans against which candidates could compare with the results of testing and come to a reasoned conclusion. Testing needs to be designed and planned, with the data, and sometimes some of the

processes, given within the assignment booklet but candidates must be very clear about what they are doing and how their work is going to be tested. Candidates need to give in their plan details of the actual specific expected results as well as the data they will use to test. The plan may consist of a copy of a relevant page from the candidate booklet with an appropriate heading and the expected results highlighted or could be in the form of a list or table of expected results. Whichever way is used, the plan must contain sufficient detail to identify the results required.

The table below summarises the marking requirements for this section:

Design – should include a plan, software features and design choices (i.e. 3 components – some may be done better than others, judge which mark range is the best fit) – if necessary average them.

21-25	developed a **good 'hand drawn' plan** appropriate to the user's needs and shows how it is to be solved, a clear **focussed description** of the **reasons why the software** is suitable and detailed **explanation of the design choices** made and how they meet the user's needs.
16-20	developed a **'hand drawn' planned design** which considers the user's needs and shows how it is to be solved, a **description** of the **reasons why the software** is suitable for the task and an **explanation of the design choices** made.
11-15	developed a **'hand drawn' plan** which shows how the problem is to be solved, **list of software features** and explained **few design choices** (which may be present in a plan and/or features).
6-10	may contain both (a plan and software features) or one well done
1-5	may contain just a layout plan **or** just some software features

Test plans are credited in the Testing section but should be presented here.

Task 2: Spreadsheet design – must show formulas/ functions, in some form, to be used at the planning stage to achieve 11+	Task 3: Database design – must show queries/reports/ labels/mail merge documents to be used at the planning stage to achieve 11+

Implementation

For each problem, the solution design should be implemented. Implementation is about creating and using the solution. Candidates should:

- provide evidence that the task has been implemented
- include earlier versions of the work to show the development of the solution and any improvements, corrections or changes from the design
- annotate printouts/provide written evidence to make it clear what has been done
- carry out changes if any tests show they are needed

To gain high marks candidates should choose, and clearly justify, the choice of appropriate tools and techniques to solve the problem. They should develop good, planned and creative designs. They should produce clear testing plans. A test of a good design is whether or not another candidate, with a minimum of interpretation, could successfully follow the design to its conclusion.
The Implementation section was, within the ability of the candidates, done quite well, and again showed improvement on the previous year. Candidates were showing (with attempts at

explanation) 'stages' in the production of the solution, sometimes with all key stages included. More able candidates sometimes missed out obvious stages such as creating hyperlinks or showing how the query was created.

Centres must not forget that one printout limits mark awards, and it is still disappointing to note that there are still a very limited number of candidates who had not printed out the formulae for the spreadsheet on task 2. It should also be remembered that incorrect solutions cannot gain top box marks, no matter how well documented.

The Design mark plus the Implementation mark is worth 70% of the total marks for the assignment, and where there were significant alterations to the centre's mark, it was usually because of over-marking in these areas. These reductions were usually because of the lack of detail in the candidate's report. Examples of earlier work, showing the development of the final solution, are very valuable and are a requirement of the specification and marking criteria. Candidates should annotate this work to explain its relevance. A few examples are sufficient and candidates need to realise that showing development **is not the same as revealing errors that they imagine may be penalised**, but is a positive process and one that can only be beneficial to them. Those candidates who continually printed page after page showing the processes gone through will obtain credit often in terms of development and some evidence of annotation, but would be better advised to prepare and plan the significant stages they will produce rather than such a repetitive process.

Centres should note that candidates must fully annotate all their work, to explain how they achieved their objectives and how the solution was produced; this is also included as part of the marking criteria. Printouts should be annotated matching to the design, providing reasons for any changes and showing efficient use of software (skill being used). Where this annotation was present, it was often possible to agree readily with a centre's mark. Without annotation from the candidate, this was more difficult and was often a reason for the adjustment of marks. Many candidates produced many pages of printout for their implementation, without any notes to indicate what the printouts were. The best candidates were able to show the development of their solutions by several annotated printouts. This annotation needs to show the candidate's thinking as well as the processes they followed. A few notes on each page are usually sufficient.

Candidates who printed out early versions of their work and then explained how they were going to improve were credited with more marks than those candidates who simply presented final versions. These early versions provided some of the evidence to indicate that a candidate understood the work and the techniques used. With such material clearly annotated it was possible to see how the resources the candidate chose to use were appropriate and that they had been used efficiently. This will not be evidenced by the final solution alone.

Marks in the upper range are available to candidates who use appropriate resources and techniques, with a good level of skill, understanding and efficiency. They should produce the evidence in a form that is clearly the solution to the problem and carry out any modifications indicated by the testing.

There was much work in evidence on the implementation that met the criteria for the middle mark bands upwards, although there are centres who consider a reasonably complete solution, which is not annotated and where there are no earlier stages, to be worth 37 – 45; additionally some are not annotating to show how their solution was arrived at to show their efficiency. For others, even though some candidates had annotated their work, the final solution was incomplete or incorrect, but judged by the centre to be complete and correct. On a literal interpretation of the marking criteria, candidates who produce an implementation with no

development or annotation shown could not score above the 1-9 marking criteria; however, evidence of the final production is more inherent in certain areas, and therefore the points below were additionally highlighted at the teacher meetings to add further clarification to the marking criteria:

Implementation – should show versions and include annotation (which can be of several types – 'handwritten', screen shots or a progress log).

37-45	must be clearly annotated about **how** produced, **contain all key stages** and must be 'correct'
28-36	well annotated and largely 'correct' but **misses some key stages**

max of 27	**If the candidate has no/little annotation but shows development stages** **Or if there is one version which is annotated to show how produced** – maximum mark of 27 for all tasks provided the conditions for d/b and s/s are complied with:

No candidate annotation and **no** development (i.e. one 'finished' version) –

max of 18	Task 1 (website)
max of 9	Task 2 and 3 (festival accounts and accommodation letters)

Different implementation to the 'plan' or if there is **no design plan:** the implementation must match the design 'plan' at some stage otherwise the maximum mark is usually 36 – this rule also applies where a candidate has chosen to use a different type of software from the one described in DESIGN.

If there is **annotation to explain why it is changed** from the design then mark as in the above table.

Testing

This could probably be called **checking** for the assignment. The candidate must identify and state whether testing is required or not for each problem. A test plan would identify the data needed (all in the candidate booklet) and what the actual expected results will be (again given in the candidate booklet). They should also show how the data will be used to set up the tests. Some candidates at the lower end of the mark range might describe the above but then not be able to follow their plan, or their plan might contain the correct information but be so disorganised and unsystematic that it is difficult to credit them highly. They must produce a record of the results of their tests and describe the changes they will then implement. They may describe these in their implementation section but they will need to be credited in the testing section.

Essentially testing is about entering known data and comparing the output with a pre-stated result. In a spreadsheet for example one test is by entering sample integer values, which allows a hand calculation and check to be done. One checks the rules (formulas) that are used.

In a database one predicts the outcome of a search before the search is made. This expected outcome is then compared with the output when the search is executed. The test is not of the ability of the database programme to search but tests the correctness of the data input.

Testing is an area that candidates in the past have found difficult, although for this award evidence presented in this section showed further improvement on work produced previously. If candidates understand the problem and how the solution is to be used, they seem to be better able to decide how to test their solution. They can then identify the likely errors that could arise and are able to subject their solutions to suitable tests according to a test plan.

There was further evidence to show that some centres were teaching candidates how to test database solutions and spreadsheets, in preparation for these elements of the work. Testing plans should identify expected outcomes and compare those to the actual outputs. The data required for testing will be given in the assignment booklet and it is not necessary for candidates to do more than the testing required by the assignment. Many candidates limited the mark they could obtain by not providing designs for testing plans for tasks that required such plans. Some candidates described testing but provided little evidence that it had been carried out. It was not uncommon to read that the solution worked; therefore it was OK and had been tested.

Those candidates who went further than the test(s) required of them in the booklet, did so often in preparation for the more difficult testing requirements on the project; it should however be remembered that candidates do not gain any extra credit for this with full marks attainable by using the appropriate data from the Candidate Booklet. Additionally, some candidates carried out 'tests' but not the required ones.

For high marks, candidates have to do more than just enter their test data. They have to follow a comprehensive test plan and produce a record of the results. They then have to compare and evaluate the results against their expected results. They should then identify any modifications required, if needed.

It should be remembered in most cases the acceptance of ephemeral evidence would not be accepted; the exception to this is the actual evidence that the hyperlinks work when carrying testing for the interactive presentation task. Candidates should indicate what is to be tested, have included a plan in the design, indicating the links between various pages, and then produced clearly labelled evidence of testing with a conclusion reached. **Teacher confirmation that any hyperlink tests work is needed**.

The points below were additionally highlighted at the teacher meetings to add further clarification to the marking criteria:

Testing – should include a test plan (which may be in Design section as well) and test printout *

9-10	must include a complete test plan which is comprehensively tested with comments to explain, describing any changes needed.
7-8	must include **a reasonable test plan** (what is being tested, with **some test data** and **some expected results**) and a **test printout compared against expectations** (i.e. evidence that 'checking' has taken place), describing any changes needed.
5-6	must include a **limited test plan** (identifies **limited test data** and **limited expected outcomes**) and evidence of an **attempt to test** some results against the plan.
3-4	some evidence (i.e. printout identified as testing with perhaps some indication of 'checking' but no test plan) that the testing has been attempted.
1-2	awarded where candidates have printed the test results (e.g. in implementation) with no explanation or just included the test plan with no test printout.

* Website testing – a **complete test plan and teacher confirmation** to achieve **9-10**, without teacher confirmation 7-8 marks are appropriate	* Website testing – **teacher confirmation alone** indicates an attempt at testing by the candidate (award **1-2**) marks

If there are two tests mark each separately and average the marks (rounding up if necessary).

Evaluation

Evaluation still continues to be recognised as being difficult by some candidates although much improvement has been in evidence in this component, particularly with additional clarification to the marking criteria provided in recent series. The process of being self-critical using pre-stated criteria is not easy. In this work, the identification of clear performance criteria in the analysis is fundamental to the later production of a high quality evaluation**.** Evaluation is more than a statement of 'what I did'. However, for some criteria it will not be necessary to do more than indicate that these criteria have been met.

At its simplest level, evaluation is a process of reviewing what was done and what is achieved. What went wrong, and how it was dealt with, is also a feature at this level.

The performance criteria and desired outcomes are vital to success in this section. It is useful to get the candidate to cut and paste them from their analysis or a teacher provided list if that is more appropriate. (If the latter is done then the centre **must** state this on the Assignment Cover Sheet).

If a candidate has produced a poorly defined or even incorrect performance criteria then they could be operating at a level where they were describing what they had achieved and had made some comparison with the intended outcomes. These candidates will tend to do little more than record the performance criteria or restate them. At a slightly higher level, the candidate would be trying to show how the work meets the performance criteria more directly.

To meet the requirement to be describing the effectiveness (how well they have done it) of the solution, one needs to refer to the solution as both an outcome; a total of a spreadsheet, and as a process, how correct data gets into the spreadsheet. There also needs to be a greater recognition of the overall problem being solved; recognition that the tasks contribute to an overall solution and are not simply separate, stand alone pieces of work.

At the top end, the candidate is truly critical of the process followed and final output produced and is clearly able to evaluate the work, giving a discussion of the solution which shows some of the insights gained through developing a deeper understanding of the original problem. 'Discussion' has to be an 'argument' / comparison and take in to account other possibilities such as things the candidate could have done or alternative way(s).

On the whole the Evaluation sections were appropriately marked, with many candidates producing the desired outcomes and performance criteria as the initial part of the section and using these to produce the required reference to these outcomes, thus giving them an opportunity to address at minimum the middle area bands of the marking criteria. Some desired outcomes and performance criteria may only require simple comments and not require description or discussion and hence the points below were additionally highlighted at the teacher meetings to add further clarification to the marking criteria:

Evaluation – should include a list of performance criteria

Assuming candidates have **listed the performance criteria/desired outcomes** (PCs) for the task.

9-10	candidate checks all the PCs and **discusses** the effectiveness of **at least 3 PCs**. *'discussion' means they are comparing their solution with 'something else'*
7-8	candidate checks the PCs and **describes** the effectiveness of **at least 3 PCs**.
5-6	candidate checks the PCs and says **how they have done** most of the PCs (**or** states effectiveness of 2 PCs).
3-4	candidate says that they **have done** (or not) most of the PCs.
1-2	what candidates have done, unrelated to PCs

The tasks as they appear in the Confidential Instructions did provide degrees of differentiation.

Task 1 (The Interactive Presentation) was done well with many candidates producing effective implementations in colour using web page or a PowerPoint presentation. Once again, many more candidates included the necessary requirement for this, or any other web / DTP type solution, in that it is not just the final output that is required but additionally the development work required plus the necessary annotation to show the level of skill being used. The lack of these components would reduce possible top box mark criteria work as indicated on the implementation section earlier, although it was very encouraging to see more and more candidates developing and annotating their work.

Task 2 (Publicity Pack Calculator); in terms of differentiation this proved to be the most challenging of the three tasks. It should be noted here that it would be perfectly acceptable for teachers to provide support to candidates to assist them in overcoming any barriers; anything regarded as the normal teaching process would not incur a penalty. If help is provided, candidates should only be given credit for the work they have achieved themselves, and annotation should be provided by the teacher to indicate this.

Within the task itself, clarification was provided at the teacher meetings to ensure no candidates were 'penalised' due to the challenging nature of this task, with the following applied at both the centre marking stage together with that on moderation :

Guidance on Processes	**Marking** *Usual advice applies to the guidance of processes i.e.:* ***<=18 formulae not evident*** ***19-27 stages shown with formulae*** *but not explained how produced* ***28-36 many stages shown with formulae and some explanation of how produced*** ***37-45 all key stages shown, with formulae and explanations of how produced and correct solutions***
1. **Enter the data** in the tables from the Candidate Booklet on page 14.	**1-9**
2. Decide a **'place' to enter the number of standard packs** (and extra Ticket Agent packs) and work out the number of packs over 1000	**10-18 lower end (10-14)**
3. Attempt to calculate the cost of the **standard pack**	**10-18 upper (14-18)**
4. Attempt to calculate the **extra cost** of a **Ticket Agent pack**	**19-27**
5. Attempt to calculate the **number of visitors** and **round it up** to a whole number	**28-36**
6. Completing the **three solutions**: a) 1000 standard packs b) 3000 standard packs and 50 extra Ticket Agent packs c) The number of standard packs that could be sent out, if the maximum number of visitors was 300 (trial and improvement/goal seek)	**37-45**

Evidence of the work presented resulted in most candidates being able to produce a printout of results at some of the above stages which was undervalued by some centres not following or having standardisation The vast majority of candidates are now producing the evidence of formulae used, which is one of the major requirements of the annotation to support the level of skill in a task of this nature. For testing requirements, the breakdown of each of the components

should be compared with the results of testing (not just the final figure) and a conclusion reached.

Task 3 (Ride Lists) was generally done well, with many candidates managing to produce some evidence of the output required, although often with little annotation or development. Where candidates were asked to sort their list in order of location, as the order was not specified in the Candidate Booklet, either ascending or descending order was perfectly acceptable; however, where specific fields were required in the print out, missing fields or additional fields would produce an incorrect solution for the implementation and hence top box awards could not be supported. On the testing component, candidates should not only indicate the number of records to be found, but additionally identify the details of those records from which a comparison can be made with the results of testing and a conclusion reached. To achieve the top box in testing, the comparison should be clearly made and the use of '✓' to show each part of the comparison being made is recommended together with the final conclusion reached.

Administration matters

It must be stressed that the Confidential Instructions are a 'framework' and do not allow for issues of quality. These instructions must remain confidential and that the current assignment must not be used to demonstrate methods of solution. The use of previous assignments (or components from those assignments) would be perfectly acceptable and can prove a useful teaching aid.

The majority of centres once again are to be congratulated on the way that they provided the material requested in a timely manner. However, more than a few centres were late with their work. Work was far better organised this year though some attention needs to be given to appropriate labelling of the sections of the work, so that the tasks are clearly and easily identifiable. Additionally, all necessary paperwork needs to be included and correctly completed. This includes the Candidate Record Form, Assignment Cover Sheet and the Centre Declaration Sheet; in an increasing number of cases the necessary forms did not contain the candidate number or were not signed by the candidate.

There were still a number of centre arithmetical errors in 2008 on the Candidate Record Forms and additionally on the transfer between these forms and the Centre Mark Form; centres are also requested to ensure that when completing their three part CMF that their marks are clear on all three parts, that any alterations made clearly show the final mark awarded and BOTH the second and third copies go to the moderator.

It should be remembered that bulky A4 files and other ring binders are vulnerable and should not be sent; fewer of these were in evidence this year, with many candidates work well organised and securely fastened together (often using treasury tags) and with no more than two back to back pages per plastic wallet. It was encouraging to see more and more candidates work that had been bound often reflecting the quality work included.

The vast majority of centres numbered the tasks to match those in the Confidential Instructions.

The analysis must be marked before the candidates go on to complete the rest of the work. This analysis mark then stands for the rest of the course. The marking grid should be used as indicated in the instructions with a cross to indicate the mark range appropriate for each task. The marks then need to be compared to the mark ranges given in the instructions and a mark given, for each part of the assignment, which matches the candidates' work in each section. If a candidate fails to present any evidence in a section for any given task, then the effect of this

zero mark should be taken into account when deciding the final mark. A very small minority of centres still does not appear to have recognised this.

Centres must record any discussions that they have had with the candidate in the section on the back page of the Candidate Internal Assessment Form. It is difficult to believe that some centres have not had any discussions about work with their candidates. The content of these notes can be very useful to the moderator, who can then make some judgements about the degree of help given to a candidate and hence the degree of skill shown by that candidate.

Teacher annotation of candidates' work is lacking from some centres, though this is specifically required in the specification. Some candidates may well have failed to gain marks for sections where there was no teacher annotation as, without this annotation from the teacher, it can be difficult to see why a candidate has been awarded marks. It is evident that centres that did annotate candidates' work were more likely to have their marking accepted and not have marks moderated downwards, which was more likely with centres that did not annotate the work appropriately. The amount of annotation required is not onerous. For a centre to indicate where in the candidates' work particular criteria have been met is sufficient.

Centres MUST standardise their marking across different teachers. Where this is not done a candidate, whose work may well be marked correctly by the centre, could risk losing marks if a more highly placed candidate's work is found to be over-marked by the centre.

There were still a number of candidates who, on this component alone, would have received awards at A*, A or middle to high B grades and yet were entered for the Foundation tier overall; it may well be that there was some rationale behind many of these decisions but it is strongly recommended that centres familiarise themselves with the grade boundaries provided on the AQA Website prior to finalising their entries.

Finally, it must be emphasised that each centre will be allocated a coursework adviser by AQA; any difficulties with the requirements of both components of the coursework should be directed to that adviser at any stage in the course.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results Statistics** page of the AQA Website.