



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Information and Communication  
Technology 3522**

*Specification B*

3522/F      Foundation Tier

**Report on the Examination**

*2008 examination - June series*

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*Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.*

## ***The written papers – Foundation Tier (3522/F)***

### **General**

Most candidates attempted most of the questions on the paper. There were some excellent answers showing a good breadth and depth of knowledge at this level. Answers to the multiple choice and short answer questions met with significantly greater success than those questions requiring diagrams or more extended written answers. Very few candidates made too many or too few choices in the multiple choice questions, for example, candidates made three choices when only two were required, thus reducing the maximum number of marks that could be awarded for the question.

When answering the questions on the written papers, some candidates gave the answers 'quicker', 'cheaper', 'easier', 'neater', 'more powerful', 'makes fewer mistakes', 'it could breakdown, etc. without further qualification, and credit was not given for these simplistic answers. More successful candidates explained, what is 'quicker', why it is 'quicker', what are the consequences because 'it could breakdown', etc. in relation to the context of the question. In addition, one word answers were not usually awarded a mark when a short description or explanation was required. Similarly, no marks were given for repeating the question without elaboration, and vague, repetitive or inaccurate answers. Better answers related well to the context of the question, were detailed and accurate, used appropriate technical language, and had illustrative examples. Where marks could not be given for a weak explanation or a vague description which lacked technical accuracy, it was not uncommon for candidates to be awarded marks because they had given a good example. Diagrams and questionnaires were often poorly labelled and not well drawn.

The marking of the Foundation paper was computer based (e-marking). Whole written scripts are scanned and saved in electronic form, and each clip (subsection of a question) is marked separately. Each clip is marked in one of three categories: auto, general and expert. Auto marking is particularly appropriate for multiple choice questions; general marking for short answer questions and diagrams requiring a straight forward response; and expert marking for more complex and extended answers. At the end of the marking period an audit of the e-marking process is carried out to ensure its accuracy. As a result of the e-marking process, item level analysis of candidates' responses is practical. The comments on specific questions are grounded in the judgement of the Principal Examiner; however, these are underpinned by reliable and accurate statistics.

Some candidates did not use black ink to write their answers and as a result these could be difficult to read.

### **Comments on specific questions:**

#### **Question 1**

Most candidates answered most questions well. However, in 1b some candidates did not recognise indented text and a few believed the signature block had been airbrushed. In 1c, many candidates suggested highlighting the paragraph but beyond this many were too vague to be awarded marks.

## **Question 2**

Most candidates answered most questions well. Some candidates confused memory and backing storage in 2aiii. In 2b, some confused the functions of a modem and a router. In 2d, some candidates incorrectly believed a Megabyte is equivalent to 1000 Kilobytes.

## **Question 3**

Most candidates answered most questions well. In 3a, some candidates confused the content of a spreadsheet cell with the format applied to it. In 3ci, answers were often too vague to be awarded full marks.

## **Question 4**

Most candidates answered some questions well. In 4a, many candidates could not identify the appropriate technical language. In 4b, some candidates incorrectly believed that Age should be included in a record rather than Date of Birth. In 4e, few candidates were awarded full marks, and questionnaires were often roughly drawn with most candidates showing little awareness of the need for a design that will facilitate data capture.

## **Question 5**

Most candidates answered some questions well. Some candidates confused sensors and actuators in 5d. Most candidates achieved a mark in 5g but answers did not often show an awareness of the automatic nature of the checks that can be carried out by computers.

## **Question 6**

Most candidates answered some questions well. In 6ai, many candidates were unaware of the presence of an operating system. Answers to 6bi and ii often showed a lack of understanding of verification. In contrast, answers to 6c often demonstrated a good understanding of the use of a range check for validation. Check digits were not well understood in 6d.

## **Question 7**

Most candidates answered most questions well. 7a was well done by most but candidates often found the more complex programming required for 7b more difficult. In 7c, candidates' explanations were often not well expressed but frequently showed understanding of the consequences of incorrect programming. Answers to 7f were often unconvincing or did not go beyond 'faster', 'cheaper', etc.

### **Question 8**

Most candidates answered most questions well, except that in 8d, some candidates discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using computers, and where answers were relevant these were awarded marks. Candidates who discussed the advantages and disadvantages of refusing to use computers tended to be awarded higher marks.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Results**

Grade Boundaries and Cumulative Percentage Grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.