



**General Certificate of Secondary Education**

**Information and Communication  
Technology  
3528 Short Course  
*Specification B***

**3528/H                  Higher Tier**

**Report on the Examination**

*2007 examination - June series*

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## 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.

When answering the questions on the written papers, a few 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 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. It was not uncommon for candidates to be awarded marks because they had given a good example, where marks could not be given for a weak explanation or a vague description. Diagrams were sometimes poorly labelled and not well drawn.

Many candidates demonstrated a good standard of literacy and many answers were clear and well structured. However, some candidates expressed themselves very poorly. Such candidates often answered multiple choice and short answer questions with greater success and would have had better opportunities to fully demonstrate their knowledge and understanding if they had been entered for the foundation tier. It is likely that inappropriately entered candidates obtain lower grades as questions on the Higher tier paper are less accessible to them than questions on the Foundation tier paper, perhaps causing them to be awarded significantly fewer marks. Centres are urged to enter for the Foundation tier candidates who do not express themselves clearly in written English.

The marking of the Higher 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 was 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.

## **Comments on specific questions:**

### **Question 1**

Most candidates answered most questions well. In 1b, some candidates were awarded partial marks as their descriptions were insufficiently detailed to demonstrate a full knowledge of what happens when you click on a hyperlink to send an e-mail. In 1cii, around a third of candidates were awarded full marks. Some candidates' repeated the question and others gave insufficiently detailed answers.

### **Question 2**

Most candidates answered question 2a and 2b well. In 2c, most candidates were awarded full marks with both applications and spreadsheet functions mentioned. However, some candidates repeated the question and were not awarded marks. In 2d, some candidates were awarded full marks but many did not mention the need to position the cursor in the word processing software before pasting. In 2e, most candidates were awarded at least one mark. Most candidates recognised that the main security threat to data on a memory stick was the loss of the memory stick. However, fewer candidates could clearly describe a valid way of improving security.

### **Question 3**

Most candidates answered question 3a well. In 3b, most candidates were awarded marks but few achieved full marks. Some candidates referred to 'quality' or 'size' without further explanation which was too vague to be awarded a mark. In 3c, many candidates were awarded full marks but many answers lacked sufficient detail especially in the description of the search process. In 3d, some candidates were not awarded marks because answers were too brief or not expressed in ways which were sufficiently meaningful, for example, 'delivery' or 'fraud'. Some candidates incorrectly believed that when an item that is delivered is faulty it is not possible to return it.

### **Question 4**

Most candidates answered most questions well. In 4b, most candidates demonstrated some understanding of hierarchical file structures but some candidates could describe only a single level, and a significant minority could not describe how to organise the music files. In 4dii, most candidates could not describe a disadvantage of using a PDA rather than a flash memory stick to store music files.

### **Question 5**

Most candidates answered questions 5b and 5c correctly. In 5a, most candidates did not answer correctly. This suggests that candidates do not understand the basic ICT systems life cycle that is also the basis of the coursework. In 5di, few candidates achieved full marks

although most were awarded at least one mark. Many candidates could draw a diagram of a basic LAN topology but could not go beyond this; and many drawings lacked clarity. Some candidates did not include other hardware. In 5dii, around half of candidates were awarded no mark and showed little understanding of the question.

### **Question 6**

Most candidates answered 6a and 6d well. In 6a, most candidates were awarded full marks but a significant minority were unable to explain how the computer would know whether a boat was entering or leaving the harbour. In 6c, most candidates were awarded at least one mark with a range of good suggestions as to why the totals might differ. Most candidates were awarded a mark for two boats entering or leaving at the same time. There were a wide range of creative suggestions for improvements some of which would not have improved the accuracy of the control system.

### **Question 7**

Most candidates answered most questions well. In 7c, there were some correct and accurately expressed search conditions but around half of candidates did not understand what was required. Some incorrectly stated a list of those items in the table that should be reordered.

### **Question 8**

Question 8 required an extended written answer based on an unsupported analysis of the question and answering this type of question is often very demanding for candidates. Most candidates attempted this question well with some being awarded full marks. Very few candidates were awarded no marks. Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the capabilities and limitations of this type of software although many incorrectly believed that the software would be real time. In response to the request to discuss who would use the software, some candidates incorrectly believed that 'some people' would be sufficiently clear.

### ***Mark Ranges and Award of Grades***

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