

Examiners' Report Summer 2007

GCSE

GCSE ICT (1185/3185)

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Section B

Comments About Individual Questions

QB1 (b)

Few candidates were able to correctly identify the data type for both fields. Many incorrectly gave text/number for STAFF-ID and number for Date of Birth.

QB1 (c)(i)

Very few candidates demonstrated any real understanding of encoding. As in previous years candidates confused encoding and encryption, many other candidates related answers to key field issues and a large number gave answers about putting data in a format that hackers cannot understand.

QB1 (c)(ii)

As most answers followed on from (c)(i) few gained marks.

QB1 (c)(iii)

Despite poor responses to the previous questions, candidates were able to work out the correct answer and many gained full marks.

QB1 (d)

As this was an overlap question with the higher paper it was not surprising that responses were poor. Very few candidates recognised that the answer involved both a query and a report. Very few were able to demonstrate an understanding of the use of or rather than and in the search criteria.

A significant number of candidates do not seem to have an understanding of a database as a permanent record of staff from which data can be selected and viewed in many ways. Many responses involved 'cutting and pasting', deleting unwanted fields or indeed re-entering the data into a new document in order to create a report.

There was also a significant number who gave spreadsheet related answers despite database being given in the question.

QB2 (a)(iv)

Many candidates were able to score one mark, although there was a great deal of confusion over formulae and calculating. Many gave responses relating to graphs and charts.

QB2 (b)

A clear understanding of validation checks was demonstrated by only a minority of candidates.

QB2 (c)

Where verification was correctly identified most were able to give a clear example. Others showed little understanding.

QB3 (b)(i)

The more able candidates were able to score well. Weaker candidates showed little understanding.

Marks were gained for inserting and manipulating images. Less popular answers were formatting, text wrap and text flow. Where candidates did not gain marks it was because they referred to simple word processing such as colours/fonts or general features such as 'easy to use', 'looks more professional' etc or because they referred to templates which was given in the question.

QB3 (b)(ii)

Most candidates were able to make a reasonable attempt at this question, although there were many 'easier', 'quicker', type responses. Marks were gained for consistency, reusability and the layout already being created, only a few mentioned saving time entering fixed data.

QB3 (c)

This was one of the better answered questions on the paper, presumably reflecting the familiarity of the process with the candidates' everyday lives.

Candidates who gave step by step answers often scored full marks. A significant number demonstrated a good knowledge of technical terms such as importing, manipulating, resizing and cropping, with the benefit of adding to the CoWC marks gained. Unfortunately at this level others struggled with the technical terms and were unable to gain these marks.

Other candidates lost marks by not reading the question and concentrating on the process of downloading the photograph into the computer.

QB4 (a)

A large number of candidates lost marks by giving cheaper', 'quicker', 'easier' answers with no qualification. The most frequent correct responses were related to having a hard copy and no need for the recipient to be there.

QB4 (b)

Very well answered by the vast majority, a small number did however lose marks for using named packages rather than generic names.

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Section C

Comments About Individual Questions

QC1

Most candidates were able to score well on this introductory question. However, many gave storage devices / media for (d).

QC2 (a)

Candidates were frequently able to gain both marks.

QC2 (b)

Many candidates scored one mark for identifying the magnetic strip, few identified the chip. Only a small minority of candidates were able to correctly identify a number as necessary data.

QC2 (c)

Very few candidates were able to identify the device and few were able to gain marks on parts (ii) or (iii).

QC2 (d)

A significant number of candidates were able to gain a mark, however many lost the mark by failing to read the questions and giving faster as a response.

QC3 (a)

Very well answered by the majority. However, some candidates lost a mark by using Identification instead of Investigation and others appeared to have entered the words randomly.

QC3 (b) - (d)

A pleasing number of candidates correctly identified when the feasibility study would be carried out. A smaller number were able to give correct responses to (c) and (d).

QC4

The candidates who scored well on this question appeared to have learned by rote the names of the topologies and advantages and disadvantages of each. At the other end of the scale many candidates failed to get the initial three marks for identifying the topologies.

Many gave unclear responses eg if a cable brakes all will fail, although there were a small minority who used the diagrams to help them show what they were trying to explain.

The weakest section was the ring - frequently referred to as a bus, more often a circle. Line/linear responses were frequently given for the bus topology. The idea of the furthest station being the slowest was common for both of these.

Candidates who scored poorly often concentrated on issues other than topology with many answers relating to the spread of viruses, the ease of hacking or the impact of a server failure.

QC5 (a)

Candidates who correctly identified a database in (i) were generally able to gain at least two marks in (ii). Unfortunately only a small percentage of candidates correctly answered (i), with a large number giving spreadsheet as their answer.

QC5 (b)

Generally well answered. However, as in (a) the answer to (i) impacted on (ii) and in this instance candidates often lost the first mark by giving 'Word' as a response. A significant number also appear to think that mail merge is a software package in its own right.

QC5 (d)(i)

Reasonably well answered by those that had read the question and understood that the computers were stand-alone machines. However, as always at this level the majority gave firewalls and anti-virus responses. Many candidates failed to gain marks by giving 'back up' without stating that this should be stored in another location.

QC5 (d)(ii)

Although a significant number of candidates gave locking rooms as a response few were able to identify a second method. Marks were lost where software responses were included.

QC5 (e)

As in previous series many candidates were able to demonstrate a good understanding of how health risks could be minimised, although several lost marks by repeating answers. Another frequent incorrect response was 'comfortable chair'.

QC6 (a)

One of the better answered questions on the paper. Candidates appeared to have read the question and were able to gain marks for including relevant information such as specifying a hotel and the number of rooms required.

Although some gave little thought to 'ease of use' many others demonstrated a good understanding of the concept and incorporated command buttons, drop down menus and tick boxes. It was often difficult to determine whether consideration had been given to field length.

Many candidates identified at least two items of data for personal information, but as usual date of birth was regularly included.

QC6 (b)

A significant number of candidates gave answers which were unclear as to whether the benefits were for the customer or the hotel. Others gave responses suggesting that time and money would be saved by not having to travel to the hotel to book. There were however some good responses relating to being able to view facilities and being given immediate feedback on availability.

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Section B

Comments About Individual Questions

QB1 (a) Few candidates demonstrated any real understanding of encoding. As in previous years candidates confused encoding and encryption, many other candidates related answers to key field issues and others thought encoding meant using an input mask.

QB1 (b) Very few candidates recognised that the answer involved both a query and a report. Those that identified the query frequently failed to mention job title. Very few were able to demonstrate an understanding of the use of or rather than and in the search criteria.

A significant number of candidates do not seem to have an understanding of a database as a permanent record of staff from which data can be selected and viewed in many ways. Many responses involved 'cutting and pasting', deleting unwanted fields or indeed re-entering the data into a new document in order to create a report.

There was also a significant number who gave spreadsheet related answers despite database being given in the question.

QB1 (c) Very few candidates gained both marks for this question. Whilst some identified the need for a query they struggled to correctly identify the correct one. Many identified Date of Birth but then slipped up by either incorrect use of the > symbol or by simply stating >1963. Several candidates used the IF statement. However, the most common incorrect answers were to manually search through records (deleting rows or copying into a new table) or to sort the rows then copy the ones later than 1963.

QB1 (d) This question was generally well answered. Most candidates managed to get a correct answer for typical and invalid data but only a few showed understanding of extreme data. Many answers given for the extreme data question involved the DOB of the oldest employee in the part of the database shown rather than the oldest possible employee.

Where candidates did not get any marks it was either because they simply described what each term meant and did not give an example, or they categorised each type of data into range, presence or type checks.

QB1 (e) This question was generally well answered with candidates showing a good understanding of the Data Protection Act. Candidates frequently lost marks by not reading the question and giving security issues or by incorrectly stating that data should not be passed on to third parties.

QB2 (a)(i) A well attempted question. Many candidates gained marks for inserting and manipulating images. Less popular answers were formatting, text wrap and text flow. Where candidates did not gain marks it was because they referred to simple

word processing such as colours/fonts or general features such as 'easy to use', 'looks more professional' etc or because they referred to templates which was given in the question.

QB2 (a)(ii) Most candidates were able to make a reasonable attempt at this question, although many candidates gave 'easier', 'quicker', type responses. Marks were gained for consistency, reusability and easy to use for beginners, only a few mentioned saving time entering fixed data.

QB2 (b) This was one of the better answered questions on the paper, presumably reflecting the familiarity of the process with the candidates' everyday lives.

Candidates who gave step by step answers often scored full marks. Many demonstrated a good knowledge of technical terms such as importing, manipulating, resizing and cropping, with the benefit of adding to the QoWC marks gained.

Where candidates lost marks it was frequently by not reading the question and concentrating on the process of downloading the photograph into the computer.

QB2 (c) Many candidates scored reasonable marks on this question, as in the previous question those that gave step by step answers gaining the highest marks.

The function of mail merging was clearly identified with many candidates correctly opening the template and using the database as the source data. However, marks were frequently lost where candidates were unable to use correct terminology for inserting mail merge fields / tags, referring instead to 'leaving gaps / spaces' or by simple adding << >>.

Those that scored low marks showed little knowledge of mail merging with a significant number of these candidates 'copying and pasting' names and addresses. Others described the process of sending the cards as email attachments.

QB3 (b) The candidates that scored well were those that identified the 'website should be easy to use' given in the question. Candidates in this category frequently identified hyperlinks, site maps, drop down menus and navigation buttons and were able to give reasonable explanations.

Many lost marks by giving website design related answers eg good use of graphics, interesting fonts, good colour scheme.

QB3 (c)(i) A large number of candidates failed to read the question and gave answers relating to security.

It is expected at this level that candidates should be able to use the correct terminology, unfortunately a large number used 'main computer' in their answers when referring to the server. Another frequent response was 'if one computer goes down they all do', again disappointing on a higher level paper.

Many candidates were able to identify cost as an issue but failed to gain marks by giving any indication of where higher costs would be incurred.

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Section C

Comments About Individual Questions

QC1 (a) The vast majority scored one mark for identifying the magnetic stripe, few identified the chip. Only a small minority of candidates were able to correctly identify a number as necessary data.

QC1 (b) (i - iii) Most of the candidates who scored any marks for this question were awarded them for saying that processing cheques in this way is accurate. However, a large number of candidates lost out on this mark for saying that this method is "more accurate". Candidates also frequently identified the expense as a disadvantage but neglected to specify what was expensive and so got no marks.

QC1 (b)(iv) Candidates were often able to give adequate explanations of batch processing, few were able to extend this into the advantages and disadvantages.

QC1 (b) (v) Many candidates were able to correctly identify one other method, few managed two. Responses were often confused with examples of real time processing being given for transaction processing and vice versa.

QC2 (a) This was very well answered by the vast majority. Candidates appeared to have read the question and were able to gain marks for including relevant information such as specifying a hotel and the number of rooms required. Many demonstrated a good understanding of 'ease of use' and incorporated command buttons, drop down menus and tick boxes.

QC2 (b) This question was answered correctly by a large percentage of the candidates. Those that scored no marks did so primarily because they hadn't read the question properly and so had listed advantages to the customer rather than the hotel. Often it was not clear who the advantage was for especially when 24/7 booking was mentioned.

QC3 (a) The majority of candidates scored well on this question and were able to draw good representations, well labelled. Unfortunately, as in section B, several candidates lost marks by labelling the server 'main computer' or 'mainframe'. Often the bus configuration was shown as a continuous line, without the branches required for each work-station.

QC3 (b) Many candidates were able to give good responses for the advantage of the star and disadvantage of the ring.

Weaker candidates gave responses relating to server reliance. Many gave repeated responses across all topologies such as 'when one work station crashes they all do'.

Often one word responses were given which will rarely gain any credit at this level.

Q4 (a) Generally well answered by those that had read the question and understood that the computers were stand-alone machines. Encryption and read only were the most popular correct responses.

Q4 (b) As in previous series many candidates were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the possible health risks and were able to give sensible ways to minimise them, although several lost a mark by repeating answers. Those who had not read the question gave responses relating to back pain.

QC5 Responses to this question produced wide ranging performances, although in general responses were far better than in previous series.

A number of candidates who had obviously revised systems analysis scored at least 10. At the other end of the scale candidates who did not understand the question wrote 2 sides about completely the wrong topic, gaining no marks. Some candidates relied exclusively on coursework and gained middle order marks.

Those candidates who gave structured responses scored the highest marks, working methodically in order to correctly identify the stages, describe what was involved, and identify where staff could be involved. Others gave more rambling answers in which the order of the stages became confused and often general statements, such as asking for staff feedback, were repeated at each stage.

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General Comments

The standard of work this year was very similar to that of last year with centres that gave candidates clear guide lines and focused projects gave their candidates the chance to maximise their marks. There is however still a significant number of centres that fail to give clear instructions or allow their candidates to attempt suitable projects.

Centres and candidates that had used the following sub-headings usually produced work that matched the marking criteria and therefore scored well.

For candidates to score high marks, all sections of the project report should clearly explain how the data will be manipulated to solve the problem.

It is useful to give the candidate the following sub headings or writing frame.

Identify

- Introduction
- The problem
- Real user
- Alternative solution 1
- Alternative solution 2
- Why is ICT a sensible way of solving this problem
- Quantative Objectives

Analyse

- Hardware
- Software
- Input
- Processing
- Output
- Backup
- Security

Design

- Initial Designs
- User Comments
- Final Designs
- Test Plan

Implementation

- Evidence of Error Correction
- Evidence of Testing
- Evidence of the Problem Solutions

Evaluation

- Evaluation of Objectives
- Users comments
- Further improvements

Internal Standardisation

It was occasionally apparent that internal standardisation had not taken place, despite having a signed OPTEMS declaration to the contrary. This makes it very difficult to moderate and some work had to be returned to centres to be remarked.

Annotation

Despite my repeated comment in previous reports the majority of centres are still not giving reasons for marking a project as an extended piece of work. This is the most useful piece of annotation a teacher can add to the project and can be added to the CCMS1. Teachers who use the marking grid available on the Edexcel web site need to add none or very little extra annotation apart from the extended marking features. (NB. This has been updated)

Administration

Some centres made it very difficult for moderators by failing:

- To send the correct sample of work
 - Highest and lowest marked candidates work is required
 - If any asterisked candidates have been withdrawn candidates they should be replaced by other candidates
- OPTEMs
 - Marks not written on OPTEMs
 - Marks on OPTEMs were not the same as candidates work
 - Teacher had failed to sign OPTEMs
- CCCS
 - No indication of whether the work was standard or extended.

Standard and Extended

This is still causing some centres problems and centres are reminded that the evidence for extended work should not just appear in the Implementation section but also in the Analyse and Design sections. A significant number of centres had extended marks reduced to standard due to the lack of extended evidence.

One of the best ways to make sure a piece of work is extended is to mark the design section and make a list of the extended features, then check that the extended tasks have been evidenced in the implementation. The new mark grids on the Edexcel website have space for this

Only the extended tasks that are in both sections count towards extended work.

Evidence

It has become an increasing trend for teachers to give marks where no evidence exists in the candidates report. This is especially true in the design and implementation sections of the project report.

Centres are reminded that marks can only be awarded if the evidence exists in the project report. This often meant projects being over marked as an extended project when there was no evidence to justify extended marking.

Projects were on the whole still far too large, with candidates including far too much hardcopy of their solution. A significant number of centres included user guides which are not required or multiple copies of output demonstrating the same point ie Mail merge.

Identify

Most centres are doing this well.

Marks are being lost by not having two alternative solutions to the problem and then failing to justify the chosen solution.

More candidates expressed the user's requirements (quantitative objects) clearly but too many candidates are still giving general statements such as: "The user will need to be able to search the database" when an objective such as "The user will need to produce a printed list of everybody who has not paid their bill" gives the candidate an objective that can be used in all the other sections of the solution.

Although the specification only suggests three objectives, this should be looked at as a minimum and the more a candidate can suggest at this stage the easier it is to use them as a check list for analyse and design.

At this stage before the analyse and design of the problems solution candidates should avoid mentioning technical terms in their objectives such as "the user will require a lookup table".

Analysis

In general, C grade and below candidates find it very difficult to produce anything other than generalised bookwork answers in this section.

Hardware - good candidates are focusing on the specific hardware to solve the problem. Lots of candidates do not list cameras or scanners when images are required as part of the solution and then only the top candidates are adding meaningful detail.

Software - Only the software that relate solely to the candidate's solution is required and the choice should be justified by using the objects.

Input - To score high marks candidates need to include examples of actual data stating how it will be collected and input into the system. Most candidates may find a table format is useful.

Data	Type	Collection	Input	Validation
Cost of product	Currency (2DP)	From Invoice	Keyboard	Not negative
Number in stock	Integer	From stock take sheet	Keyboard	

Processing - Candidates find this section very difficult, with most of them producing a written report on how they are going to create the solution. This lacks any of the detail required to gain high marks. To improve on this, candidates should take each of the Quantative Objectives and explain how they are going to achieve them.

EG Quantative Object - Produce a weekly profit total.
Process - Subtract weekly expenditure from weekly income.

Output - This section is still very poor with little or no detail included. For some problem types eg DTP, WP and Multi Media this section is very important with lots of justified details required. Candidates should have at least 2 alternative ways of formatting the output. This can also include references to the user interface.

Backup - This should relate to the solutions backup and not the candidate's work. It is therefore recommended that candidates treat this as instructions to their users. It should include "real" file size, frequency and the medium to be used.

An increasing number of candidates used memory sticks for backup. These can only be used if it is clear that they are being used as other types of backup media and are stored in a safe place between backups.

Security - Not all problem solutions need security. Some candidates had elaborate security when the solution required easy access by the general public.

Design

This is a section where the evidence is very important, lots of centres are giving high marks for the design when the evidence to support it is missing or lacks detail.

Far too many centres are still marking implementation as design. Once a candidate uses the target software, the design process has finished and implementation has started, therefore hand drawn designs are preferred.

Designs should be regarded as working documents; crossings out and changes are acceptable as long as they remain readable. For designs to be awarded top marks they should show evidence of progression. This can be done by:

- Producing an initial design and then a second more detailed version
- Adding detail to the initial design in a different colour
- Photocopying the initial design and adding detail to it

When candidates are manipulating images, the original image should be printed out with notes on how the image is going to be changed. These changes need to be executed in a graphics package to be awarded extended marks.

Candidates and teachers would benefit from checking the designs against the objectives, ensuring they have included the objectives that will earn them extended marks. Only the extended tasks that are designed can be awarded marks in the implementation.

Most candidates included user comments.

Although some candidates produced excellent test plans including the data that would be used in the testing, most candidates test plans were poor.

The test plan can only score high marks if it contains test data. While all of the objectives need to be tested candidates also need to fully test the problems solution. If their objectives are poor then testing then does not mean high marks can be scored. It is good practice to test every formula in a spreadsheet, every search in a database and all the extended tasks.

Test No	Reason	Data	Expected Result
1(SS)	Profit formulae	D34 (Income) =£500 F45(Expenditure)= £300	H6= £200
2 DTP	Each page should have a company logo	Company Logo	Is present on every page
3 (DB)	Search for customers who have not paid their bill	See test data in table Search payment =£0.00	3 records: Smith, Gall & Watson

When it is not possible to print out the results of a test, a column can be added for the teacher to sign. Teachers can not only sign when the evidence of the test is not printable.

Test No	Reason	Data	Expected Result	Teachers Signature
4(MM)	Sound plays for 5 seconds when slide is loaded	William Tell Overture	Hear William Tell Overture for 5 seconds when slide loads	
5 (SS)	Check home button returns user to main menu page	Home button on profit sheet	Clicking on button will close profit sheet and open main menu	

Candidates limit the marks that can be awarded if a test plan is not included.

More candidates this year produced a list of sub tasks. This can be presented as a numbered list or graphically as a chart.

Implementation

Marking - Centres are reminded that if no real design exists the maximum a candidate can score for implementation is 2 and it can not be an extended project. The inclusion of hardcopy evidence of the testing cross referenced to the test plan needs to be present for a candidate to score more than half marks on this section.

Candidates are still producing far too much hard copy in this section. There is no requirement for candidates to include screenshots showing each step in the implementation process.

This should consist of three sections:

- Evidence of error correction
 - 3 or 4 annotated printouts showing the work at different stages of the implementation
- Evidence of the implementation of the test plan
 - Maximum of one annotated printout per test, in practice several tests can often be shown on one printout
 - Evidence should be cross referenced to the test plan
 - Ticking a box on the test plan to say the test has been completed without the relevant hard copy evidence gains no marks
- Evidence of the problems solution
 - These needs to include any evidence that has not already been printed out
 - If the test plan fully tests the solution then further hard copy evidence may not be required
 - Evidence of extended work. These may require:
 - Formulae printouts
 - Screen shot of queries in design view
 - screen shot of how the validation is setup
 - Screen shot showing columns with text flow

A lot of candidates failed to show that the problem had been solved. This usually occurred when candidate's evidence of implementation consisted of a series of cropped screen shots. This is not recommended as it fails to produce enough evidence to show that the problem has been solved.

Evaluation

- Evaluation of Objectives
- Users comments
- Further improvements

The evaluation should be based on the solution of the original problem not the candidate's use of the software.

Most candidates attempted to evaluate their original objectives but often failed to include formal user's comments in the form of a letter or the results of a questionnaire.

The evaluation should be concluded by the candidate commenting on the users comments and suggesting further improvements to the solution.

Spreadsheet Solutions

Identify

Quantative objects were less of a problem, but candidates would still benefit by using simple objectives, with at least one objective per formulae used, for example:

- Susan needs to calculate a total for income each week
- Susan needs to calculate a total for expenditure each week
- Susan needs to calculate the profit each week
- Susan needs to have the monthly figure for profit
- Susan would like to be able to have a graph of income, expenditure and profit for a four week period

Analyse

Candidates should be encouraged to use actual data in this section.

Input could be in the form of a table with a list of the data required, with columns for method of collection, method of input and any validation required.

In the processing section candidates need to discuss the formulas required in general terms eg Profit = income - expenditure.

The output section should focus around the user interface, use of colour, menus, buttons and input boxes and the type of graphs.

Design

Initial designs will not have any detail regarding formulas, but should give the user an idea of what the finished solution would look like. Eg what the column and row headings are and the position and look of the buttons. Then once the user comments have been recorded the candidate will add the detail regarding formulas, look up tables etc. It may be useful to give the candidates a blank spreadsheet printout with the grid on. Candidates need to make sure they have designed the elements which will lead to extended marks being awarded.

A full test plan needs to include the data values of the test data and would test:

- Every objective
- Every formula (replicated formulas only need to be tested once)
- Any other elements that have been created
- Validation needs to be tested with two values - one valid data item and one invalid data item
- If buttons are used for navigation the candidate only needs to test **ONE** button
- Features used for extended work

Implementation

There is no requirement for the candidate to show the moderator how they have created the solution, but for a spreadsheet a formulae printout should always be included. The only exception to this is for extended solutions. Eg validation and lookup tables may need extra screen shots/print outs.

Evaluation

The candidate should start by evaluating the original objectives, a simple yes or no with a page references to the evidence is enough.

A letter from the user stating whether they have solved the problem and maybe some things they would like to add or change.

The candidate then needs to explain if the additions or changes are possible. They may also have some comments on how they would change it in the light of their attempted solution.

Database Solutions

Identify

The lack of quantitative objects often got pupils off to a poor start. Simple objectives such as the ones below will help candidates produce a more detailed solution.

- Fred needs to produce a list of cars sold that week
- Fred needs to be able to search the database by price
- Fred needs to be able to search the database by manufacturer
- Fred needs to be able to search the database by engine size.
- Fred needs to print out a list of cars in price order each week for his advert in the local paper.

Analyse

Candidates should be encouraged to use actual data in this section.

Input could be in the form of a table with a list of the data required, with columns for method of collection, method of input and any validation required.

The objectives can then be used to explain the process and output. In the processing section they can describe the queries and reports required and for the output discuss the printed reports and the forms required, plus the user interface.

Design

The initial designs should concentrate on look and feel and therefore will be based on the screen forms and printed output. The user will not need to see the table design. The user comments can be written on the back of the designs.

The final designs will then have more detail added to them such as colour, font types/sizes, plus the designs of any data structures, relationships and simple/complex searches or any other features of the software used.

Several candidates just created the relationship but did nothing with it, this does not gain extended marks.

A full test plan needs to include the data values of the test data and would test:

- Every objective
- Creation, deletion and amending records
- Any other searches/sorts which have been created
- Validation needs to be tested with two values - One valid data item and one invalid data item
- If buttons used for navigation the candidate only needs to test **ONE** button
- Features used for extended work

Evaluation

The candidate should start by evaluating the original objectives, a simple yes or no with a page references to the evidence is enough.

A letter from the user stating whether they have solved the problem and maybe some things they would like to add or change.

The candidate then needs to explain if the additions or changes are possible. They may also have some comments on how they would change it in the light of their attempted solution.

DTP Solutions

Identify

The problems were often too superficial to gain high marks. Good candidates will produce a reusable solution such as a template which can be used by the user themselves. A candidate needs a problem that will give them a chance to demonstrate different DTP skills and realise that "real" DTP problem are not normally a one off solution. Magazines are often produced monthly, but very few candidates try to design a template for repeated use.

A magazine where candidates need to create 3 different sorts of page gives them more scope.

- A front cover would allow them to display graphic and layout skills
- A double page spread would allow text manipulation
- A games page/readers' survey would allow different layout and text skills

Most Sunday supplements have examples of these every week.

Quantative objects appear to be a problem for this type of project with candidates falling into the trap of it looking good. This is subjective.

Simple objectives such as the ones below will help candidates produce a more detailed solution.

- The editor requires a front page with a full colour picture in the background
- The editor requires the middle pages to have an article of 1000 words laid out in columns
- The editor wants all the headings to be in the same style and size of font apart from the magazine name on the cover
- The editor needs page numbers at the top of each page aligned alternatively left and right
- The editor requires a front page with a full colour picture in the background

Analyse

Hardware - The candidate will probably need to discuss the extra equipment they may need such as scanners, digital camera and printers.

If the candidate is producing a reusable solution the actual data may be unimportant. Eg If the opening article will always be 500 words then the content of the article does not matter and the candidate could use any 500 word article cut and pasted from elsewhere.

The divisions between the input, process and output sections can get blurred. The input section should concentrate on where the individual data items will come from in terms of the problem. The vast majority of candidates state that the data will be downloaded from the internet, when in terms of the problem they would collect it from the editor, photographer, journalist etc. They can then discuss the format the work will be in and what they will need to do with it to get it into the DTP package. If candidates are using a graphics package to manipulate the artwork then they need to discuss what they need to do in the process section. Different file formats and their use can also be discussed and the order they are going to do the work in.

1. Create template
2. Prepare graphics
3. Insert graphics
4. Insert text

The output section should be discussing paper size, layout and printing. Candidates often gave their own backup solution here and rarely considered the user. The size of the file was often overlooked; lots of candidates assumed it would fit on a floppy disc when the file would be too large.

Design

The initial design should be a simple blocked design so the user has some idea about the layout. Most candidates then added details regarding the fonts for the final design which was not enough detail for a final design. The individual blocks need detail regarding size, number of words, and the location of the data file. Images will require size and the graphics file location and name.

If the candidate is using manipulated images, then the original should be printed in the design with annotation as to the changes that are going to be made. If they are creating an original image then an annotated hand drawn design is required.

The changes should be made in a different software package to the original problem to gain extended marks. Simple manipulation such as resizing and cropping are not extended tasks.

A full test plan would test every objective, plus any features which had been added during the design.

Implementation

Three or four annotated printouts showing the solution at different stages plus the final solution and the evidence of testing is all that is required. If the candidate has manipulated graphical images, then the before (design section) and after pictures are required as evidence and one screen shot of the image in the graphics package.

As the final version will need to be printed as the evidence of testing there is no requirement to print another copy without the testing annotation.

Evaluation

The candidate should start by evaluating the original objectives, a simple yes or no with page references to the evidence is enough.

A letter from the user stating whether they have solved the problem and maybe some things they would like to add or change. When the users are a group of people a questionnaire is a good method of getting user feedback. However the results of the questionnaire should be analysed by the candidate and presented as a report. A single copy of the questionnaire should be included with the report.

The candidate then needs to explain if the additions or changes are possible. They may also have some comments on how they would change it in the light of their attempted solution.

Multimedia Solutions (See notes for DTP)

Candidates often solved very superficial problems. Candidates who attempted a more demanding problem such as a kiosk type solution usually scored very well. This allowed them the opportunity to include a menu system, sound, graphics and video.

Teachers need to certify that features which can not be printed have been used. One of the simplest ways to achieve this is to add an extra column onto the test plan for the teacher to initial.

Test No	Reason	Data	Expected Result	Teachers Signature
4(MM)	Sound plays for 5 seconds when slide is loaded	William Tell Overture	Hear William Tell Overture for 5 seconds when slide loads	
5 (SS)	Check home button returns user to main menu page	Home button on profit sheet	Clicking on button will close profit sheet and open main menu	

Candidates should be encouraged to print slides out one per A4 page. As long as the text is readable the candidate can print out 3 or 4 to a page.

Animation is not an extended feature.

Web Page Solutions (See notes for DTP/Multimedia)

A web site should not be a one off, but will need updating by the user once it has been created. Far too many candidates were just making web pages by cutting and pasting from other sites and were not really solving a problem.

Web pages are very difficult to do justice to in hard copy and teachers should bear this in mind when setting this type of problem. Evidence for extended tasks must be clearly shown.

For example it is possible to show animated graphics by printing out the individual sequence which makes up the finished graphic.

Hyperlinks are not extended tasks when used in web pages.

Word Processing Solutions (See notes for DTP/Multimedia)

Centres should be very careful if submitting Word Processing and DTP solutions; they should concentrate on different skills. Several centres produced an advert via DTP and a flyer and letter headed paper via Word Processing. These are not significantly different skills and may lead to the lowest solution being marked as zero.

It is recommended that centres do not submit work from both of these software types, but if they do then the Word Processing problem should be based on a mail merge.

Grade Boundaries - June 2007

(1185/01 & 2F)- Coursework & Written paper

Overall Grades

The figures given below are the minimum subject marks required for each overall grade in the summer 2007 examination.

(Foundation Tier)

C	D	E	F	G
50	41	32	24	16

(1185/01 & 2H) - **Coursework & Written paper**

(Higher Tier)

A*	A	B	C	D	E
73	63	53	44	35	30

(3185/01 & 2F) - Coursework & Written paper

Overall Grades

The figures given below are the minimum subject marks required for each overall grade in the summer 2007 examination.

(Foundation Tier)

C	D	E	F	G
47	39	31	24	17

(3185/01 & 2H) - **Coursework & Written paper**

(Higher Tier)

A*	A	B	C	D	E
75	64	53	43	33	28

1185/01 - Coursework - Raw Boundary Mark

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	168	144	124	104	84	67	50	33	16

3185/01 - Coursework - Raw Boundary Mark

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	84	72	62	52	42	33	25	17	9

Note:

Raw Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

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