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Examiners' Report Summer 2008

GCSE

GCSE ICT (1185/3185)

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Section B

Comments About Individual Questions

QB1(c)

This question was generally well attempted by most and there seemed to be reasonable understanding. Many candidates were able to identify search / filter / query as part of their answer, although there were equal number who just used find. A large number of responses included edit / update etc.

A significant number also included sort which was given in the question and others gave spreadsheet functions.

QB1(d)(iii)

Many candidates included 'last visit' in their answer but a significant proportion also stated that some or all of the other personal data was also recorded.

QB1(e)

This question was not well answered with only a small number gaining full marks. A small number reproduced the search exactly as given in question. More frequently candidates gave a confused mixture of search criteria which indicated that they did not understand what was required for this question.

QB2(b)

Despite several similar 'Mail Merge' questions in recent years, very few candidates scored well on the question. Some candidates were able to describe the process but very few linked it to the case study. Many candidates referred to leaving gaps / spaces in the letter, rather than using the correct terminology.

The marks most frequently gained came from identifying database and mail merge, a large number lost marks for using brand names rather than generic names.

Common response were to describe setting up a letter by formatting fonts, adding logos, borders etc, or alternatively describing how a business letter should be laid out. A significant number also wrote out a letter, rather than describing the process involved.

QB2(c)

Most candidates gained marks on this question, but where candidates stated that e-mail is 'fast' without justification no marks was rewarded.

The responses were weaker for telephone and many concentrated on calls being expensive, however a significant number did identify the person not being available as a disadvantage.

QB3(a)

Responses in general demonstrated little understanding of templates. Many candidates repeated the question giving answers such as saving time entering address, logo etc. Others gave vague answers where it was unclear how the time was being saved. The most frequent correct responses related to consistency, very few responses mentioned ease of use for novices.

QB3(b)

This question was either quite well done or not at all. The most popular responses related to image manipulation, borders, backgrounds and text boxes. Some candidates repeated (a) and discussed templates, while others offered multi-media comments.

QB3(c)

Many candidates showed a good understanding of the advantages of having a magazine posted on the internet, saving costs of paper and postage being the most frequent responses. However, quite a number failed to distinguish between benefits that would accrue to 'Zest for Life' and those that would accrue to the members / users.

A minority of candidates ignored the context and gave general answers, which were inappropriate, such as attracting members from around the world.

QB3(d)(iii)

This question was well answered by majority of candidates although a large number gave floppy disc without specifying that files should be compressed. Many candidates also gave CD ROM and thus lost marks.

A minority of candidates gave answers such as on the hard drive, in My Documents and even in a database, showing that they did not understand the question.

QB3(e)

Most candidates attempted an answer and the full range of marks was seen. Most who scored 2 lost the 3rd mark by only having one arrow to or from the backing storage, and there were those who chose to draw arrows everywhere to try to cover all bases.

The logical flow was not always as expected. There were some blanks and a lot without any arrows, even some with arrows and no words.

QB4(b)

Most candidates made a reasonable attempt at the question and many gained both marks for formula and calculations. A minority mentioned graphs and charts.

Less able candidates discussed database functions.

GCSE ICT - 1185/2F

Section C

Comments About Individual Questions

QC1(a)(i)

There seemed to be a lot of confusion with candidates as to what types of software was suitable for each task, in particular there was confusion between database and spreadsheets. Many candidates lost marks for using trade names. Very few candidates were able to give CAD, often giving 'graphics'. There was also a tendency with weaker candidates to repeat a particular type of software for several of the tasks.

QC1(a)(ii)

Most candidates were able to identify keyboard and mouse, although a minority gave output devices.

QC1(d)(i)

This question was not well answered and where marks were gained it was usually for portable or small amount of storage. Re-writeable was sometimes mentioned.

QC1(d)(ii)

As in (i) many candidates gained one mark but very few got both. Correct responses usually included large amount of storage.

QC1(e)

This question was not well answered. There were many candidates who gave reasons such as 'lots of options', 'the writing being big enough to read', 'toolbars' and 'has a cursor'. Many gave 'clear' or 'easy to use'.

The mark scheme allowed candidates to answer without using the correct terminology but very few gained more than the minimum marks.

QC2(a)

Many candidates scored zero marks by giving vague responses such as 'large' / 'wide area'.

QC2(b)(ii)

This was poorly answered and there were a lot of blanks. The most frequent correct responses came from saving the time and cost of travel.

Some candidates described what video conferencing is rather than the benefits to the bank and commented on such things as the ability to see who you are talking to and body language. Others described benefits as though it was a means of communicating with customers.

QC2(c)

Many candidates were able to identify e-mail, although very few gained a second mark, often giving telephone or chat room.

QC2(d)(i)

Generally well answered. Most marks were gained for 'not having to leave home' and 'not having to wait in queues'.

QC2(d)(ii)

The majority of candidates were able to pick up some marks on this question. The most popular response was to identify the fact that staff would lose jobs. Very few mentioned the need for retraining.

A significant number of candidates were able to identify that customers may a) not be able to use a computer / internet or b) not have a computer.

The lower ability candidates seemed to believe that customers would lose their money. They often gave responses that customers would have to change banks without any reference to internet access.

QC3(a)

Marks were most frequently gained for taking readings in dangerous conditions, or accurate readings. Unfortunately many candidates gave quicker / cheaper / easier without explanation and there was a great deal of discussion from some candidates about predicting weather conditions.

QC3(b)

This question was very poorly answered with a significant number of candidates making no attempt at all.

Many candidates described damage to equipment, often due to severe weather conditions, with no qualification. The most frequent correct response was the cost of the equipment, however many gave an unqualified answer, 'expensive'.

QC3(e)

Many candidates made a good attempt at this question, demonstrating a good understanding of the use of graphs and the appropriateness of types. However, candidates lost marks by simply using the terms chart or graph.

QC4(a)(i)

A well answered question with many candidates gaining three or four marks, showing a good understanding of the need to keep passwords private. Unfortunately there were a significant number who believed that passwords should be written down.

C4(a)(ii)

Many candidates gave very confused responses. The most frequent response was 'to check that no mistakes had been made' or 'to make sure it is correct' but few mentioned checking 1st and 2nd.

C4(b)

A well answered question with many candidates scoring three or four marks. Viruses and hackers were the most commonly identified risks and candidates often correctly identified the subsequent actions to be taken.

C4(c)(ii)

Many candidates picked up high marks for this question, many giving more points than the six marks allocated. Unfortunately many candidates lost marks by giving jumbled descriptions which frequently led to candidates confusing the logical order of steps. Other candidates gave detailed descriptions of the process of getting the photo into the computer despite the fact that this was given in the question.

QC4(c)(iii)

There were some good responses often related to accidental deletion / overwriting of data. However many candidates discussed 'lost photos', referring to losing physicals copies or the e-mail.

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Section B

Comments About Individual Questions

QB1(a)(iii)

The majority of the candidates included 'last visit' in their answer but a significant proportion also stated that some or all of the other personal data was also recorded.

QB1(b)

This question was generally answered well indicating that most candidates understood the implications of OR and AND operators. Some candidates did not pick up that since the original query did produce a list of results, the syntax was correct. Quite a few produced queries that bore little resemblance to the original format.

QB1(c)(i)

Candidate performance was similar to previous years – the use of valid, accurate and correct was common. Checks on data would be quoted but often with no mention of hardware/software and very few mentioned on data entry, some mentioned checking the data but did not imply that it was a data that was being entered.

QB1(c)(ii)

Majority of candidates scored marks on this question, often by giving an appropriate example, giving the name of two checks but without any explanation and conversely described two checks without naming. Some candidates also described verification.

QB1(d)

Few candidates seemed to understand the term 'test data', those that did generally scored well. Many candidates described general testing strategies or discussed validation methods. Some candidates related their answers to part (c)(ii) and gained a mark by describing different types of invalid data to test out different validation checks.

QB1(e)(i)

Candidates often had a grasp of the difference between "flat file and relational" but couldn't express it effectively enough to earn marks. There was a great deal of confusion over terminology, using 'database' as a general term for a set of data instead of table or file. Surprisingly at Higher Tier a significant number of candidates did not seem to understand the differences between data, file, record and field.

Inference to linkage was the mark most often awarded, although candidates lost marks by using 'relates to' relative to nothing in particular. Only a very small minority mentioned less duplication of data or faster editing / searching.

QB1(e)(ii)

Many candidates gained a mark for identifying the key field as a unique identifier or identifying its role in linking tables. Relatively few offered answers relating to primary and foreign fields.

QB2(a)

The majority of candidate gained some marks however, despite several similar 'Mail Merge' questions in recent years, few candidates got close to full marks. Some candidates were able to describe the process but didn't link it to the case study. Many candidates referred to leaving gaps / spaces in the letter, rather than using the correct terminology.

The marks most frequently gained came from identifying database and mail merge, disappointingly a large number lost marks for using brand names rather than generic names.

Common response were to describe setting up a letter by formatting fonts, adding logos, borders etc, or alternatively describing how a business letter should be laid out.

QB2(b)(i)

Candidates did better with this question than in the past – reference to templates etc, frames etc appeared regularly. However, a minority of candidates went for 'professional looking', or 'DTP has more features than WP' without stating what these features were.

QB2(b)(i)

Many candidates showed a good understanding of the advantages of having a magazine posted on the internet. However, quite a number failed to distinguish between benefits that would accrue to 'Zest for Life' and those that would accrue to the members / users.

A minority of candidates ignored the case study and gave general answers, which were inappropriate, such as attracting members from a round the world.

QB3(a)(i)

This question was not as well answered as should have been expected, given that the case study had been in centres for almost two years.

It appeared that where centres had used the case study, candidates were able to pick up both marks. In other cases candidates lost marks for:

- using mathematical symbols rather than those required by software
- missing brackets
- using $C5^2$
- using figures rather than cell references
- using the wrong row number.

QB3(a)(ii)

To some extent the success of candidates followed on from (i). Many candidates were able to identify 'If statements' a smaller number identifying 'Lookup'.

QB3(b)(i)

Those candidates familiar with macros, presumably from coursework, gave very clear answers and gained high marks. Many candidates described what a macro is, or what it is used for, rather than describing how it is created. Many confused recording with running the macro.

Only a very small number described the creation of a macro in visual basic.

QB3(b)(ii)

Some responses required a little more detail; answers like 'automatically' or 'manually' frequently appeared. 'Click on it' or 'click on macro' were popular responses, reflecting the fact that they did not distinguish between macros and buttons. A significant minority did not attempt this part.

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Section C

Comments About Individual Questions

QC1(a)

Many candidates lost the marks by giving vague responses such as 'large / wide area'.

QC1(b)(ii)

On the whole this was well answered with few candidates failing to score. The most popular answers were related to saving the time and cost of travel. There were very few answers related to being able to arrange meetings at short notice.

Weaker candidates mentioned doing it from home, better than phone and benefits of video conferencing without reference to the case study.

QC1(b)(iii)

Candidates were often able to identify technical problems and sound / image problems, unfortunately answers were often repeated in different terms and consequently marks were lost. There were many answers related to hacking, the cost of the equipment and the need to have the right equipment.

Very few responses mentioned the inability to sign documents or view products.

QC1(d)(i)

The most popular answers to this question was 'from home' and 'at any time'.

QC1(d)(ii)

The majority of candidates were able to pick up marks on this question. The most popular response was to identify the fact that staff would lose jobs. Very few mentioned the need for retraining.

A significant number of candidates were able to identify that customers may a) not be able to use a computer / internet or b) not have a computer.

The lower ability candidates seemed to believe that customers would lose their money. They often gave responses that customers would have to change banks without any reference to internet access.

QC2(a)

Most candidates earned a mark for record/store but often left out 'automatic' for capture/collection, future use and timing issues hardly ever appeared.

QC2(b)

Marks were most frequently gained for taking readings in dangerous conditions, monitoring possible 24 hours a day or accurate readings. Unfortunately many candidates gave quicker / cheaper / easier without explanation and there was a great deal of discussion from some candidates about predicting weather conditions.

QC2(c)

This question was not well answered with many candidates describing damage to equipment due to severe weather conditions. The most frequent correct response was the cost of the equipment.

QC2(d)

This question was generally not well answered with many candidates answers relating to where the equipment should be placed. However, where candidates demonstrated an understanding they frequently gained two marks.

QC2(e)

Whilst candidates scored for presentation, usually for mentioning charts, fewer marks were gained for analysis. Few candidates mentioned comparing the data and marks were usually picked up by stating that information was stored in a spreadsheet where averages could be worked out. Only the more able candidates mentioned comparison of data against time or comparing different types of data.

QC2(f)(i)

This question was not well answered, with many candidates giving modem, although there were also imaginative answers such as WIFI, CPU and GUI.

QC2(f)(ii)

Despite the poor response to (i), candidates were able to pick up the marks on this part of the question. Most candidates understood that computers need a digital input.

QC3(a)(i)

The candidates who knew what backup is gained up to 3 marks for identifying suitable media, the need for regular backup, and keeping the backup in a safe place. Very few candidates gained more than 3 marks.

Many candidates used their own experience of backup and assumed that a USB stick, CD or even a floppy disc would be adequate.

There was confusion with security and reliability, many candidates mentioning passwords, firewalls, anti-virus software, locks on doors, spare hardware, star networks etc.

QC3(a)(ii)

Candidates made a reasonable attempt at this question, with many scoring 2 or 3 marks.

Most mentioned making sure the network, especially the computers, were working correctly. Security and updating anti-virus software were frequently mentioned. A number of candidates talked about keeping records of software licences.

Perhaps relying on their own experiences, many candidates felt Niraj was responsible for safe guarding the equipment and making sure people used the machines correctly.

QC3(b)(i)

Many candidates picked up high marks for this question, many giving more points than the six marks allocated. A significant minority did lose marks for confusing the logical order of steps and others described the process of getting the photo into the computer despite the fact that this was given in the question.

QC3(b)(ii)

Surprisingly few candidates demonstrated any knowledge of how the email system works and there were many who made no attempt to answer the question at all.

Marks were gained for mentioning the Internet and using broadband / modem / telecommunication system. Few candidates mentioned ISPs or mail servers and the recipient's inbox was mentioned by only a tiny minority.

QC3(c)(i)

Many vague answers were given and it seemed that candidates used common sense rather than 'taught knowledge' to answer the question.

QC3(c)(ii)

This question was well answered and showed that candidates have developed a good understanding of what leads to many links appearing after executing a typical query. Candidates frequently gave additional keywords and restricting the search to UK sites as responses.

GCSE ICT - 1185/01 & 3185/01

General Comments

The standard of work this year was of a higher standard overall than previous years. Centres that gave candidates clear guide lines and focused projects gave their candidates the chance to maximise their marks. There are however still a significant number of centres that fail to give clear instructions or allow their candidates to attempt unsuitable 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, the project report should repeatedly make reference to the problem the candidate is attempting to solve.

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.

An increasing number of centres are seem to be awarding marks on the candidate's perceived ability and not on the evidence contained in the project work. This makes it very difficult to moderate and can affect the marks for the whole centre.

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 very little extra annotation apart from the extended marking features.

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 they should be replaced by other candidates
- OPTEMs
  - Marks not written on OPTEMs
  - Marks on OPTEMs were not the same on candidate's work
  - Teacher had failed to sign OPTEMs
- CCCS
  - No indication of whether the work was standard or extended.

Standard and Extended

While the majority of centres now understand the concept and which skills are required to make a project extended there is still a lack of evidence provided in the project report by a lot of candidates. 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 mark grids on the Edexcel website have space for this.

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

Evidence

Moderators have commented that it appears that teachers have been awarding 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. Some candidates are still including 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.

Candidates should not be using technical terms at this stage but should be describing the objectives in user terms.

Analysis

General – C grade and below candidate find it very difficult to produce anything other than generalised bookwork answers in this section.

Hardware – more able 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 related to the problems solution.

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 often lacks 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 the designs 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	

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 hardcopy 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 hardcopy evidence gains no marks.
- Evidence of the problems solution
    - These needs to include any evidence that has not already been printout.
    - If the test plan fully tests the solution then further hardcopy 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. Spreadsheets were especially a problem if the moderator cannot see the row and column headers.

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. For example, 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. For example, 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 quantative objects often got candidates 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.
- Free needs to be able to search the database by manufacturer.
- Free 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.

Simply 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 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. 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 not 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 hardcopy 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 2008

Overall Grades

The figures given below are the minimum subject marks required for each overall grade in the summer 2008 examination.

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

(Foundation Tier)

C	D	E	F	G
54	44	34	24	14

(1185/01 & 2H) – Coursework & Written paper

(Higher Tier)

A*	A	B	C	D	E
76	66	56	46	37	32

Overall Grades

The figures given below are the minimum subject marks required for each overall grade in the summer 2008 examination.

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

(Foundation Tier)

C	D	E	F	G
52	43	34	26	18

(3185/01 & 2H) – coursework & Written paper

(Higher Tier)

A*	A	B	C	D	E
82	70	58	46	35	29

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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