

# **Information & Communication Technology A**

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1994**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE 1094**

## **Reports on the Units**

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**January 2010**

**1994/1094/R/10J**

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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## **Chief Examiner's Report**

The Full Course (Specification 1994) is comprised of four units: 2357, 2358, 2359 and 2360. The Short Course (1094) consists of units 2357 and 2358.

Units 2358 and 2360 are internally assessed coursework. Units 2357 and 2359 are externally assessed written papers.

### **General Comments on Internally assessed Units (Units 2358 and 2360)**

Centres are reminded that, while this comment applies to both coursework units 2358 and 2360, in Unit 2358 (Short Course coursework, Projects 1a/1b) there is a choice of four strands for Project 1b and therefore the accompanying documentation is essential in enabling the moderator to choose a representative sample in order to examine the work, any missing documentation causes moderators considerable extra work. Centres are again requested to ensure that the moderator receives all the required documentation by the deadline date; lateness may delay the publication of results to Centres.

It is a requirement for both Unit 2358 (Projects 1a/1b) and Unit 2360 (Project 2) that Centres submit a Centre Authentication Form (Form CCS160), signed by its teacher/assessors, and this form should be posted to the moderator with the mark sheets (MS1). Centres are also reminded that there must be internal standardisation of the coursework to ensure that all their candidates have their work marked to the same standard. Moderators who find that work has not been internally standardised are required to return their work to the Centre for remarking. Moderators noted that, particularly in Unit 2358, a number of Centres had not carried out internal standardisation.

Centres are referred to the published OCR documents relating to coursework administration, to the 1094/1994 Specification and to the Teacher's Guides. It is also a requirement for each candidate to sign a Candidate Authentication Form indicating that the work submitted is their own. These forms should be retained at the Centre unless requested by the moderator.

**Note also that OCR offers a Coursework Consultancy Service for those in any doubt of the suitability of the coursework being submitted.**

### **General Comments on Externally assessed Units (Units 2357 and 2359)**

For this specification, Centres are reminded to actively discourage candidates from using additional pages and to remind their candidates that all responses (answers) must be written on the lines provided and within the marked areas. If candidates do use additional pages or write elsewhere in the question paper they must make it very clear to the examiners which question they are actually answering. Responses that are not assignable to questions cannot be given credit.

## 2357/01 Paper 1 (Foundation)

### General Comments

A significant weakness was shown to be poor examination technique, e.g. if information is given in the question it is unlikely that marks will be awarded by repeating this as the answer alone. Generally responses were poor.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1) This was a question which seemed to give candidates confidence early on, and a large majority gained 5 or 6 marks. The wrong answers seemed randomly distributed.
- 2) This was answered well. Most candidates gained both marks.
- 3) This was answered quite well. Most candidates gained at least 2 marks. The most common error was to think a user ID stops others from seeing your files.
- 4) It seemed difficult for candidates to sort a sequence of steps into a logical order and very few gained full marks for this question. About half gained 3 marks, getting the last two steps the wrong way round. The order of answers for remaining candidates did not follow any pattern.
- 5) About half gained 3 marks or more. There was no pattern in which parts were answered incorrectly.
- 6)
  - (a) About three quarters of the candidates obtained 3 marks or more. Answers had to be different so repeated answers, such as virus transmission, were not given credit the second time. A significant number of candidates misread the rule numbers, and gave answers to Rules 5 and 6 instead of Rules 4 and 5.
  - (b) About half gained the mark, usually for an answer about damaging part of the system.
- 7)
  - (a) Only about half the candidates gained the mark. There were still a large number who wrote "it's quicker" and were not given credit. The most common answer involved accuracy, although candidates did not say which was more accurate – the readings themselves or the intervals over which they were taken.
  - (b) Three quarters of candidates failed to score anything on this question. Most answers indicated that few had any idea at all, and those that did obtain a mark got it for a very general answer such as "convert the data into a form the computer can understand".
  - (c) This was answered correctly by about three quarters of the candidates.
  - (d) There were very few full marks for this question and a large majority scored 0 marks. Few knew that there was an average function or that it was possible to represent a range of cells in an abbreviated way.
  - (e) This question had been answered well in the past, but this time half the candidates scored 0 marks. It is a standard question which has been asked several times before and has a large number of marking points in the mark scheme.
  - (f) Most candidates gained the mark by copying and pasting the chart.

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- (g) Most candidates gained at least 1 mark by choosing two from using a search engine, following hyperlinks or typing in a web address.
- 8) (a) Only a quarter of candidates gained the mark. The question was about using the computer so saying it was portable was not enough. The important fact was that it could be used anywhere.  
(b) This part was answered better with a majority gaining 1 or more marks. Popular answers were those which said it was easier to be dropped/broken or more vulnerable to being stolen.
- 9) A majority of candidates scored 2 or more marks. The best answers were those which followed through what needed to be done when using a scanner or a digital camera.
- 10) (a) Only a third of candidates scored 2 marks or more. Many candidates gave the answers relating to cost and the fact that emails arrive at the recipient sooner. These were given in the question and were to be ignored, so this ruled out two answers of many candidates. Popular answers which gained credit involved multiple emails or attachments  
(b) Fewer than half gained the mark, usually for an answer involving transmission of viruses.
- 11) This question was answered quite well, with two thirds scoring 2 marks or more. Candidates were aware of dangers in the use of chat rooms, but had difficulty in expressing this in a coherent manner.
- 12) Candidates did not answer this question very well, a large majority scoring less than half marks. Most answers were not about using a search engine, but which sites were good for giving information about mobile phones. Any marks gained were usually for stating a query was typed in, and giving an example.

## 2357/02 Paper 1 (Higher)

### General Comments

The paper discriminated well across the ability range and most candidates were able to access the questions. Candidates often gave superficial answers to questions that clearly demanded more than a few words e.g. the question on “Rules”, Q.4, 7 and 9.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1) This question was quite well answered by most candidates. However, there were some very superficial answers e.g. “computers might get broken” where more detailed answers were required. Also, it was noted that some candidates wrote answers for Rule 5 that were aimed at rule 6.
- 2)
  - (a) This question was quite well answered.
  - (b) Some good answers were seen for this question with most candidates scoring both marks.
  - (c) This question discriminated quite well with only the better candidates scoring full marks. There were some vague answers which was disappointing since this question has appeared in previous papers in various guises.
- 3)
  - (a) Many candidates gave answers that were too generalised. The question referred to the “use” of the laptop and not just to having one. Many candidates failed to score this mark.
  - (b) Most candidates scored at least 1 mark here and answers were of a better quality overall than in previous sessions.
- 4) Most candidates scored well on this question. However, some poor answers were seen and the lack of specific technical knowledge by many candidates shows in the incorrect use of the term “USB” e.g. many candidates wrote “use a USB” which is insufficient.
- 5) Given that email is now widely used, the responses to this question were disappointingly poor.
  - (a) This question was quite well answered by many candidates but few managed to score all 4 marks.
  - (c) This question was not well answered by many candidates.
- 6) Most candidates scored well on this question but many repetitive answers were seen.
- 7) Many candidates scored well on this question but there were few descriptions of advanced search techniques, most describing simple searches so failing to access all the marks available. Many answers were not about using a search engine, but which sites were good for giving information about mobile phones.
- 8)
  - (a) This question was not well answered by most candidates. Candidates appear to lack the knowledge to properly address this type of question.
  - (b) This was question was not well answered at all with responses being superficial.
- 9) Many candidates answered this question quite well with some good descriptions of how the use of cards could be advantageous.

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- 10) This question was not well answered. Many candidates appeared not to appreciate that call centres overseas do not rely on ordinary telephone calls and quoted “overseas call charges being high”, or that call centre staff will speak the language of the customer. Also, many candidates stated that they would face increased travel costs to visit the call centre, missing the point entirely.
- (a) This question was not answered at all well, most candidates giving generic answers that failed to address the advantages to the *company*.
- (b) This question was not answered at all well, most candidates giving generic answers that failed to address the implications to the *customer*. There were some good answers that referred to the use of FAQ’s, email etc being available as and when the customer wished but these were few.
- (c) Some good answers were seen but many candidates gave generic answers relating to on-line shopping and to customer support.

## 2358 (Short Course Projects 1a/1b)

### General Comments

Although there was an increased understanding of the requirements of the coursework, there were still a number of causes for concern.

As has been noted in previous reports, where Centres failed to apply the assessment specification accurately it was mainly in the marking of Project 1a. There was still a number of Centres where teachers failed to annotate the candidates' work with regard to where the evidence for meeting the criteria could be found.

It is apparent that not all Centres are taking advantage of the Teacher's Guide published by OCR. This should be used in conjunction with the criteria for assessment, the notes for guidance as well as this report. If all four were used when assessing the work, this would remove many of the problems apparently experienced by Centres.

The training courses which OCR organises also provide opportunities for individual Centres to raise issues specific to their own candidates' work.

There was still, however, a number of Centres failing to send Coursework Summary Forms. This delays the whole moderation process and can result in Centres failing to have their results published on time. It is in the Centre's own interests to adhere to deadlines and to also provide the coursework sample within the 3 working days deadline.

The lack of internal standardisation carried out by some Centres appears to be increasing. Centres are reminded that they have a responsibility to carry out internal standardisation of marking; if this is not carried out it can lead to inconsistencies in marking and can result in an invalid order of merit. In such cases, moderators are required to return the work to Centres and ask the work to be re-marked. Such action obviously can result in a delay in publication of the Centre's results.

### Project 1a

A number of Centres still fail to understand the need for candidates to meet all the criteria in a given mark range. This process has always been applied for Project 1a and so should have been fully understood by Centres.

Most Centres now realise that, for marks above 10, candidates must produce a significant piece of work. This means that a booklet or website of eight pages, or a presentation of eight slides is required as a minimum.

Centres are still failing to realise the importance of the use of non-IT sources. Candidates fail to get even the lowest ranges of marks if they fail to include information from non-IT sources and at least one IT source in their final document. Just collecting leaflets and booklets or magazines is insufficient. Information from them, whether it is text, images or numbers, must be incorporated into their final product. All non-IT sources must be hard copy. The use of the candidates' own knowledge, memory or 'my teacher' is not considered to be using non-IT sources. It is not acceptable simply to show an image or some text and then give the name of the book or magazine it came from. The evidence should be in the form of the original but where this is not possible, such as using books, candidates must include photocopies.

The requirement for the inclusion of numbers is also mandatory to achieve the lower mark levels. Candidates cannot base their use of number on graphs if they do not show the table of numbers which their graph is based on. Some Centres have candidates which copied and

pasted graphs which were really images from their sources. Any confusion is easily removed if the original numbers are included and the method of graph production is demonstrated. The easiest approach is to use a table of numbers (as requested in the Teacher's Guide at 8-10 mark level) in the final document and also showing, in their write up, where these numbers came from.

**Examples of misconceptions:**

For any marks at all to be awarded, candidates must provide evidence that they have collected, and then incorporated into their final products, information from non-IT sources. It is not sufficient to just collect information from non-IT sources. Candidates must take this information and incorporate it into their work, i.e. the final product. It is not sufficient for candidates to look at the Internet or CD ROMs, or in magazines, books and newspapers for 'research' purposes. Many candidates think that the point of collecting non-IT sources is to provide ideas for layout and presentation. It is not; it is so the information collected can be used.

For marks above 2 to be awarded there must be evidence of numbers in the candidate's work. This was a major failing amongst many candidates. As has been stated in previous reports, the rationale behind the use of text, images and number is that in any given document the formatting of each of these is done differently. There is a requirement that candidates are aware that numbers are formatted differently to the other two forms of information. One example is the use of currency, where each one would have a currency symbol in front of it and each number would have the decimal point in line with its predecessor etc. An awareness by the candidates of the need for the different formatting requirements of numbers is all that is required. A number of candidates are still using phone numbers as their evidence of number. Telephone numbers do not meet the criterion for any skill which mentions number. Numbers are those which can, or have been, mathematically manipulated. Where data such as dates, times or prices are used they cannot have dashes, slashes or the word to (as in opening times) as this makes them text. Graphs can be construed as images unless the manner in which they are produced is documented fully.

For marks above 4 to be awarded candidates must make a statement about the purpose of the work. Centres seemed to struggle with the concept of purpose. As it mentions in the Teacher's Guide, the purpose must include identification of an audience and a description of the information to be communicated as well as the reason for undertaking the work. The reasons are often omitted by candidates. Some Centres still seem to think that it is in order to get the candidates to produce a booklet on their favourite football team, music artists or other pastime without giving thought as to why this might be needed.

For marks of 7 or higher candidates must relate the development of the work to this audience. As it says in the Teacher's Guide, development must be evidenced by at least printouts of three different stages of the development. Where candidates are producing a significant piece of work there will obviously be more stages of development. The audience must be referred to at each stage of development. The purpose of the work is the reason for producing the documents and should not be construed as the task itself.

The inclusion of a purpose is a requirement of even the lower mark ranges, failure to provide a reasonable purpose could lead to a large reduction in marks. Most candidates who were successful concentrated on identifying an audience, usually a specific age group; the purpose of the work being to attract that type of audience. A number of candidates specified an audience which was far too wide ranging to be categorised when describing the development. Phrases such as "the picture/work was eye-catching or professional looking" would apply to the vast majority of publications and so cannot count in this context. In addition, just writing that they have made changes as they felt it would suit their audience is not enough. Candidates need to say why they feel it would suit their audience.

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Some Centres mistakenly think that the reference in the specification and in the Teacher's Guide to a 'piece of work' includes their documentation. This is not so; checking the work and showing consistency apply to the product, not to the candidate's write up.

For marks above 10 candidates must produce a significant piece of work. A significant piece of work is deemed to be one of at least eight sides of A4 or even A5. The eight sides is the actual product and this does not include accompanying documentation. A number of Centres ignored this.

For marks above 13, information from a minimum of two different IT sources must be included in the booklet or presentation. The internet is considered to be only one IT source. Candidates must actually incorporate a minimum of the four pieces of information (one from each source) into their final booklet/presentation and at least one piece should be numeric, at least one should be text and at least one should be an image. In addition, searching using multiple criteria requires the use of Boolean operands or the use of Advanced Search features. The resulting information found must be included in their final product. If the second source is clipart, the source must be clearly shown. Many candidates just show images and claim they came from clipart. To avoid any confusion, candidates should provide evidence that the work did not come from the internet. Many software packages allow candidates to use them to insert clipart. It is important that the option which is selected to connect the package to the internet is switched off.

It still appears that certain Centres allowed candidates to spend a lot of time producing a booklet and then, at the end of this process, tried to identify the skills which had been awarded. A more structured approach is suggested whereby candidates are advised how and where they can obtain credit for skills. One simple way of structuring the work is to allow candidates to produce between two and four pages of a booklet confining them to the use of in-house clipart and scanned images as their pictures. The candidates can then complete their booklets by moving on to use the Internet as a source of further information. At the other end of the spectrum, as GCSE candidates must work independently, a structure which involves worksheets which clearly define each step in the process and dictate to the candidate what they should do is also advised against. Such an approach or other on-line methods such as writing frames, can limit a candidate's ability to produce their own work.

Again, the single biggest shortcoming in the work seen was the inability of candidates to meet the hyperlinks/refined search criterion, required for marks above 16. It cannot be achieved by candidates simply following a number of hyperlinks. Candidates have to relate their choice of which hyperlinks to follow to their purpose and audience. Many candidates do not refer to their audience when considering which hyperlinks to follow or indeed which information to use as a result of following the hyperlinks. This leads to a reduction in marks. A number of hyperlinks must be followed and the resulting information they find must be used in their final product.

For marks in the top mark range candidates must provide evidence of having used a proof reader as well as a spell checker. A proof reader must be a suitable adult who must be identified. They must then annotate a version of the booklet or presentation to indicate errors in spelling, grammar and factual information and sign that they have done so. It is not sufficient for the proof reader to just sign the work and say they have found no errors. The candidate must then produce a final version of the booklet or presentation with these errors removed.

### **Project 1b**

A number of Centres are still not following the requirements of the specification that, in order for a candidate to be awarded a mark within a given mark range; they must match all the criteria within that mark range.

## Comments on Individual Strands

### Data Handling

Centres are reminded that, in order for a candidate to be awarded a mark within a given mark range; they must match all the criteria within that mark range. A number of Centres disregarded this requirement and had their marks reduced accordingly. In this specification the criteria are hierarchical and so if a candidate fails to verify their database, for example, they are going to get very low marks no matter how many of the higher criteria they have met.

There was still a very small number of Centres awarding marks for this strand despite there being little evidence of searches (interrogation) performed on the database used. This leads to a mark of zero being awarded. The evidence required for this is a printout of the matching records.

For marks of 8 and above, candidates must produce a manually completed data capture form. This was confused by some Centres as being equivalent to the data entry form as used in packages like Microsoft Access, for example. This is not the case. A data capture form is a grid like table with field names as headings and data copied manually from the collected sources for 14 to 16 marks, or just completed with known data for 8-13 marks. Candidates showing screen dumps of data being entered into data entry forms on the computer do not fulfil this requirement. For 14 to 16 marks to be awarded candidates must provide evidence of using a range of sources. This must include evidence of the actual magazines or web sites. Where candidates interview people to gather information for inclusion in the database, the completed questionnaires must be included. There must also be clear evidence that the people interviewed come from a range of ages and backgrounds. Printouts must show the data that has been transferred to the data capture form. They must also give reasons for selecting the data for inclusion in the database. The Teacher's Guide for the specification explains in detail what is required. Reasons for choosing fields cannot be based on the proposition that these were what were required by a 'user'. It can be a list of possible questions (queries) which the database is required to answer which the candidate uses to deduce the fields required to answer such questions. It could be a survey of a number of possible users as to what fields would be needed and then deducing from the response what fields are required.

For marks above 16, candidates must use Boolean operands in their searches. The criterion refers to complex searches (plural) and so requires an absolute minimum of two complex searches. A minimum of two different Boolean operands must be used. Some Centres are still confused over the requirements for validation. Proof that validation has worked is required. This is done by producing screen dumps showing error messages being produced as a result of the candidates setting up their own routines (plural – one is insufficient). The requirement is for candidates to use routines. Just ticking a compulsory field option or 'must be answered' option is not writing a routine. Defining range checks, however, is equivalent to writing a routine. The entry of text into a numeric field does not count; neither does designing field types which limit data entry. The criterion requires the candidates to write their **own** validation routines.

A disturbing trend in much of the work seen was the lack of annotation by candidates. Many often failed to include a description of the task they were undertaking. For marks above 19, candidates must describe their choice of software in terms of the features required to solve the problem and compare it with an alternative piece of software. Many candidates lose marks because they give a list of features which are not required by the solution or fail to give a list of features required by the solution or, indeed, give a list of features required by the solution but are equally available in the package they are rejecting. If candidates have not specified a task they are unable to relate their choice to the task. It is apparent that many candidates have little experience of using alternative data handling packages to the one they used to create their database.

For marks in the highest ranges, candidates are expected to give reasons why they have chosen the fields included in their database but left out others. Some of the reasons given are rather trivial, often stating what information the field contains rather than the reason why it is needed. They will also need to give reasons for their choice of field types and explain their choice of field lengths. A number of Centres think that it is sufficient for candidates to list these rather than give reasons for their choice. This is not acceptable. Just saying that they think the customer needs to know the information is not enough.

For the highest mark range of all the required output must be stated. This must be in terms of the format of the output as well. As one of the criteria is to comment on how easy it was to produce tables and graphs candidates must obviously stipulate these as being part of the required output and then produce this output. This must be done at the outset not as an afterthought somewhere towards the end of the work. This will usually be the **output** from a list of queries which the candidate surmises they will use to test their database. Candidates must relate all the reasons for the choice of all the various features listed in the 26 to 28 mark range to this required output.

It is to be remembered by Centres that only the most gifted of students should be awarded marks in this range as it is intended to be a true discriminator for grade A/A\* candidates.

### **Modelling**

Predictions are required at every mark range above 7. Some Centres take the meaning of simple to be just indicating a general increase or decrease in variables. It is expected that even at low levels candidates will quantify these changes to a degree. For marks above 19 candidates are expected to make more complex predictions (the word simple is not used in the teachers' guide at these mark ranges). The requirement for 'Use the software to provide the answers required to solve the problem' is that predictions are made.

Centres are still using writing frames as prompt sheets for candidates and worksheets with very prescriptive instructions. As it said earlier in this report, GCSE candidates must work independently, a structure which involves worksheets which clearly define each step in the process and dictate to the candidate what they should do is advised against. Often this leads to candidates being unable to truly explore the model. More Centres are now aware of what a complex model is but validity of a model is still causing problems. Candidates are required to compare the model with a real life situation in order to secure credit. Candidates who just write about what their model is made up of and say that they have met their original aim do not meet this requirement. Some candidates failed to design a complex model but were still awarded marks above 19. It is not sufficient to make a design and then go on to create a complex model; the original design should be complex.

A number of Centres fail to understand the requirement for justifying the choice of software. Candidates should define their problem, then produce a list of software features required to solve the problem, followed by a description of their choice of software and how well it meets the required features. The description of how they created their spreadsheet should contain a number of screenshots illustrating how these features were used and must also show a number of steps in its creation not just write about the finished model.

### **Measuring**

Only one centre submitted work for this strand.

### **Control**

No centre submitted work for this strand.

## 2359/01 Paper 3 (Foundation)

### General Comments

The majority of candidates attempted all of the questions on the paper. The multiple choice questions were generally well answered.

### Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 Few candidates scored both marks.
- 2 Most candidates scored 4 or 5 marks here.
- 3 There were few incorrect answers to this question.
- 4 Parts (a) to (e) were generally well answered. In (c) Student Number was usually selected as the most appropriate key field. For part (d) some candidates were unsure of the most suitable data type and while they knew that letters and numbers were involved they were unable to give the correct data type. Part (f) was badly answered; the correct validation checks were not well understood.
- 5 Full marks were common for this question. "Light" was sometimes missed and "Rain sensor" was a common error.
- 6 (a) The majority of candidates produced good responses.
- 6 (b) This question was very badly answered. A few candidates managed to gain marks for screen layouts or data structures but the majority of responses gained no credit. Usually answers were vaguely about software or hardware.
- 6 (c) There were some good descriptions of parallel running and direct changeover but some candidates failed to give enough detail to gain both marks.
- 7 The Data Protection Act was well understood and many gained all 4 marks.
- 8 (a) Merely stating that data was entered twice did not gain marks. It must be clear that the computer checked whether there were discrepancies between the two sets of input data.
- 8 (b) There were many vague answers which did not make clear that original documents were checked against the screen data.
- 9 Both parts of this question were very well answered.
- 10 The most common multimedia features given were 'video' and 'sound' but few candidates could explain how these could be related to a presentation about volcanoes. A few candidates misunderstood the question and described features that were available in hard copy presentations such as text size or colour.
- 11 Most candidates were able to gain some marks for saying how the checkout operators might be affected but very few gained marks for how the manager might be affected. The affect on the IT staff was also not understood by many. Responses which did gain credit usually referred to the number of jobs having increased or the need to work longer hours.

## 2359/02 Paper 3 (Higher)

It is pleasing to note that there was, again, some improvement in candidate performance compared with previous examination series and that most candidates attempted most of the questions.

It is disappointing, however, once again to see that many candidates fail to answer, and to score well on questions which only require a basic knowledge of ICT. Many candidates appeared not to have even the most basic grasp of technical terms.

### General Comments

There was an improvement in candidate performance compared with previous years.

Most candidates attempted the majority of the questions and made a reasonable effort throughout the paper.

It is still disappointing, however, to see so many candidates failing to answer questions well which only require fairly basic technical knowledge. The majority of candidates appeared not to have even the most rudimentary grasp of technical terms.

Below is a description of the main points of misunderstanding on the part of the candidate. Where candidates performed as expected the question has not been included.

### Comments on Individual Questions.

- 1 Most candidates gained 3 or 4 marks on this question but many thought that data holders can hold the data for any purpose.
- 2a This question was poorly answered with candidates often just rephrasing the stem for part (i) and many candidates did not mention the role of the computer.
- 2b This question was also poorly answered. Candidates did not realise the importance of comparing the data with the original source.
- 3 Most candidates gained full marks for both a and b.
- 4 Most candidates were awarded between 2 and 4 marks with few being able to expand on the uses.
- 5 Candidates did slightly less well on this question than expected with most scoring between 1 and 4 marks. Few were able to give the effects on managers.
- 6a The majority of candidates scored 3 or 4 marks for this part but more candidates could define parallel running than could define direct changeover.
- 6b This question was badly answered with many unable to understand what documentation consists of. A few candidates scored highly but most did not.
- 7 Most candidates were unable to describe these. Those that used diagrams didn't label them and just tended to draw shapes. Many only managed to gain a mark for saying that if one computer broke down in a star network the others would still work.

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- 8 Candidates did not know what each was used for and fewer could give advantages or disadvantages. A poorly answered question.
- 9 This was a better answered question though there were still some very weak answers. The use of tick boxes and data being well spaced out were popular correct answers.
- 10 This was well answered with a number of good answers. Most candidates mentioned flexible hours, no transport costs and distractions.
- 11 Answers were very variable. Some candidates know what ROM and RAM are but could not explain why they are needed. Most extended the mnemonics but wrote little else.

## 2360 Project 2

As normal for the January session, the entry numbers for this module remained low. However, it was found to be rather disappointing that the misinterpretations of the requirements for this specification remained consistent, despite reports, training and consultancy highlighting the evidence required to award marks for certain criteria.

There seems little understanding that the Analysis Section is about finding out about the present problem and from the information collected deciding on the most suitable solution. Therefore we continue to find that candidates are awarded marks for describing a problem when in fact they almost immediately begin their project by stating "For my database project ....." At the same time, we have consistently stated that for A2 there must be evidence that the candidate understands the whole process of collecting information from users and that it is insufficient to simply include completed questionnaires, especially when it is obvious that these have been completed by the candidate themselves. The comments regarding Inputs, Processing and Outputs should also reflect how the present system provides the user with answers to a range of tasks, with comment about how the new system would also work being an added bonus; it should be noted that these comments are vital and have a knock-on effect throughout the rest of the work. Only at this stage is it relevant for the candidate to then describe the solution that they feel is most suitable.

Design work must be appropriate: i.e. the data structure must allow the system to produce the required answers as listed in A3, the user interfaces (where a database solution is to be implemented) must allow the chosen data structure to be populated (i.e. the same fields must be included) and all the required outputs described in A3 must be considered. We also continue to find that comments about office type packages are awarded marks in D4, where as the requirement is to discuss relevant applications which may, or may not, be included in these. It is irrelevant to comment on operating systems, virus checking packages, internet browsers, etc, which are not actually to be part of the system to be implemented.

Within the Implementation Section, changes made must be as a result of unforeseen circumstances and not be the same as changes made during the design work. For I4, where a mail merge process is implemented, then the moderator must be able to see: the data to be transferred existing in the original database, a template document showing the positioning of the fields from which data is to be transferred and at least one completed document.

Thorough testing requires the candidate to refer back to their A3 work and demonstrate, by selecting relevant data that their system can do, at least, all that they have described there. Comparison of actual results and expected results requires candidates to accurately identify expected results and not simply to make sweeping statements such as "I expect 4 records to be found."

The User Documentation was found to be done fairly well, but for the final part of this section, error messages refer to those things that the candidate builds into their system and not ones produced either by the operating system or the chosen software package. Without evidence of thorough testing, it cannot be accepted that candidates can comment on how their system works, compared with the requirements commented on during the Analysis section.

Finally, it was noted that many of the projects submitted ran to 100+ A4 pages; experience of moderators shows that it is quite possible for candidates to produce the evidence required to be awarded full marks in a project which covers between 50 & 60 A4 pages, i.e. there are a significant number of candidates who are not being guided sufficiently well and consequently are wasting valuable time and energy including work that fails to meet any of the required assessment criteria. These projects are then awarded high marks, which moderation cannot support, and this consequently leads to reductions being applied to the centre's marking.

# Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education  
ICT A (1094/1994)  
January 2010 Examination Series

## Unit Threshold Marks

| Unit    |     | Maximum Mark | A*  | A   | B   | C  | D  | E  | F   | G   | U |
|---------|-----|--------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|-----|-----|---|
| 2357/01 | Raw | 60           | n/a | n/a | n/a | 39 | 35 | 31 | 28  | 25  | 0 |
|         | UMS | 55           | n/a | n/a | n/a | 48 | 40 | 32 | 24  | 16  | 0 |
| 2357/02 | Raw | 60           | 39  | 35  | 31  | 27 | 23 | 21 | n/a | n/a | 0 |
|         | UMS | 80           | 72  | 64  | 56  | 48 | 40 | 36 | n/a | n/a | 0 |
| 2358    | Raw | 60           | 58  | 53  | 45  | 38 | 32 | 26 | 20  | 14  | 0 |
|         | UMS | 120          | 108 | 96  | 84  | 72 | 60 | 48 | 36  | 24  | 0 |
| 2359/01 | Raw | 60           | n/a | n/a | n/a | 38 | 34 | 30 | 26  | 22  | 0 |
|         | UMS | 55           | n/a | n/a | n/a | 48 | 40 | 32 | 24  | 16  | 0 |
| 2359/02 | Raw | 60           | 37  | 32  | 27  | 23 | 19 | 17 | n/a | n/a | 0 |
|         | UMS | 80           | 72  | 64  | 56  | 48 | 40 | 36 | n/a | n/a | 0 |
| 2360    | Raw | 60           | 54  | 45  | 36  | 28 | 24 | 21 | 18  | 15  | 0 |
|         | UMS | 120          | 108 | 96  | 84  | 72 | 60 | 48 | 36  | 24  | 0 |

## Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (ie after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

|             | Maximum Mark | A*  | A   | B   | C   | D   | E  | F  | G  | U |
|-------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|---|
| <b>1094</b> | 200          | 180 | 160 | 140 | 120 | 100 | 80 | 60 | 40 | 0 |

|             | Maximum Mark | A*  | A   | B   | C   | D   | E   | F   | G  | U |
|-------------|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----|---|
| <b>1994</b> | 400          | 360 | 320 | 280 | 240 | 200 | 160 | 120 | 80 | 0 |

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

|             | A*  | A    | B    | C    | D    | E    | F    | G    | U   | Total No. of Cands |
|-------------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|--------------------|
| <b>1094</b> | 4.1 | 18.2 | 42.1 | 66.9 | 82.9 | 91.4 | 95.5 | 98.2 | 100 | 666                |
| <b>1994</b> | 6.5 | 26.1 | 55.1 | 84.8 | 96.4 | 99.3 | 100  | 100  | 100 | 158                |

**824 candidates were entered for aggregation this series**

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/learners/ums/index.html>

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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