

Information & Communication Technology B

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1995**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE 1095**

Report on the Units

January 2009

1995/1095/MS/R/09J

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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 syllabus 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

General Comments

Standards have been maintained overall although coursework continues to improve, often still at the expense of the examined component. This is particularly evident in full course candidates. Judging by the questions where poor answers were given, a significant number of candidates appeared to have been ill prepared for the written examination component or are being inappropriately entered at the higher tier. Candidates achieving the higher grades had a balance of good coursework and technical knowledge required for the written component.

For the full course adequate preparation based upon the pre-release material is essential. Centres allowing staff to attend INSET and as such to explore both coursework marking and examination research with senior examining personnel, particularly for candidates undertaking 2380 were clearly at an advantage.

Teachers need to ensure that candidates are equally prepared for the written examination component of the course. It is important to ensure that candidates are able to demonstrate capability in all of the components of the qualification in order to raise overall standards.

Many candidates demonstrated a good standard of literacy and many answers were clear and well structured, however, some candidates expressed themselves very poorly. Teachers need to ensure that candidates are appropriately entered. Inappropriately entered candidates often expressed themselves poorly in the written component of the exam. Such candidates may have a better opportunity to fully demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, and achieve higher grades, if they are entered for an appropriately demanding tier.

Centres are urged to enter for the Foundation tier candidates who do not express themselves clearly in written English.

Most candidates attempted most of the questions on all of the papers. There were some excellent answers showing a good breadth and depth of knowledge.

When answering the questions on the extended written papers, a few candidates gave the answers 'quicker', 'cheaper', 'easier', etc. without further qualification, and credit was not given for these simplistic answers. 2380 is context based and more successful candidates explained, what is 'quicker', why it is 'quicker', what are the consequences in relation to the context of the question. In addition, one word answers were not usually awarded a mark when a description or explanation was required. Similarly, no marks were given for repeating the question without elaboration, and vague, repetitive or inaccurate answers. Better answers related well to the context of the question and the company, were detailed and accurate, used appropriate technical language, and had illustrative examples.

Centres need to be aware that 2380 is now marked on-screen. Whole written scripts are scanned and saved in electronic form, and each clip (subsection of a question) is marked separately. Centres need to stress to candidates the importance of keeping within the frame of the examination page. In questions where the candidate needs to draw lines connecting the correct boxes, as in question 4(a), Centres need to emphasise the need for clarity in drawing these lines. In answers where the lines were not straight and crossed over, the examiners experienced difficulties in determining which line went to which box, and so marks could not be awarded. The use of a ruler to draw the lines is strongly recommended. The comments below on specific questions are grounded in the judgement of the Principal Examiner; however, these are underpinned by reliable and accurate statistics.

2380/01 Foundation Tier (Written Examination)

General Comments

The examination papers allowed candidates to demonstrate their ability in this subject, and the questions catered for a differentiation in the level of the candidate's ability. The levels of achievement in this examination were wide ranging, with more candidates achieving higher marks than in previous examinations.

The majority of candidates were able to gain marks across the paper.

Some candidates mistook Travel-m8 to be a travel agency for people booking holidays, not a software company, as outlined in the pre-release document. This led to the candidates giving incorrect answers, referring to holiday bookings and holiday destinations, in questions 5(b) and 5(c). Such candidates were not penalised for this misunderstanding in question 5(d). Centres need to ensure that candidates fully understand the business and operations of the company provided in the pre-release materials.

Candidates are increasingly using the correct technical terms. This is an improvement on previous examinations. Centres should be congratulated on this and should continue to impress on candidates the importance of not using vague terms.

In general, candidates completed the paper in the time allocated, and answered it in a more competent manner than in the past. It is evident that more candidates now have a better understanding about what they have to do to gain marks for each question e.g. in question 1(b) nine ticks required for nine marks, in question 4(b) ten ticks required for five marks etc. In a few cases, candidates need to be encouraged by Centres to complete a question as requested. For example, in question 1(b), some candidates only gave seven or eight ticks when ten were required. If the candidate gives less than the required number of ticks, they should be encouraged to guess the remaining answers as they will not be penalised for giving the correct number of ticks, and may even gain extra marks if their guess(es) are correct. By the same token, candidates should be made aware that they will be penalised if they give more than the number of ticks required.

Candidates did not always read the questions carefully in order to understand what was required in the answer. For example, in question 4(c) many candidates did not relate the use of a screen or printer within Travel-m8.

Questions that were answered well include 1(a),1(b),4(a),5(a). Questions which were not answered well include 3(b), 3(c), 4(c), 6(a) and 6(b).

Comments on Individual Questions

Q No)

- 1(a) Very few candidates did not achieve four marks for this question.
- 1(b) The majority of candidates achieved nine marks for this question. However, there was a surprising minority who could not categorise the devices into the correct input, output and storage devices. This included monitors, printers and plotters. Other common misconceptions included a digital camera is an input device, a DVD writer is an output device, and a scanner is an output device. This is disappointing as it is an essential part of the specification, and was included in the pre-release for this examination. Some candidates lost marks for putting more than nine ticks, and other candidates did not put a tick anywhere

against particular devices. In such situations, where the candidate does not know the answer, they should be encouraged to guess the answer.

- 2 This question was not particularly well answered. Candidates were not always able to relate the question to Health and Safety issues but relied on their own experiences. For example, a common response for the base of the chair was so that they could move around more easily. For the adjustable height of the chair, many candidates stated that it should be comfortable. An easy chair or sofa at home is comfortable but not suited for use with a computer station. When candidates indicated that they were aware of a Health and Safety point they were unable to translate their knowledge into a response suitable for such a picture; responses were descriptive and interpretations of the picture. However, most candidates got the backrest (posture) and foot rest marks. Wires being tucked away to prevent tripping was often mentioned.
- 3(a) Most candidates had enough experience of using web browsers to be able to achieve some marks on this question. The answers did expose poor examination technique. Candidates appeared to recognise the use but gave inaccurate or incomplete responses, and were unable to express themselves clearly. Common errors include misuse of the terms website, webpage, window, screen or document. They often did not give the use but a definition which meant they lost the mark. The answers for 'sizing buttons' were often vague with references to big and small and 'the viewing pane' was mostly very poorly explained. Candidates could obviously use these items but were confused about the actual actions and effects.
- 3(b) This question was very poorly answered with only a very small minority gaining the mark.
- 3(c) This question was very poorly answered with only a very small minority gaining the mark. Candidates displayed a lack of knowledge about domain names.
- 4(a) This question was answered well with the majority of candidates scoring five marks, showing that candidates had taken the time to read the question, and could apply their knowledge and experience to this question.
- 4(b) Many candidates gained high marks for this question. A minority of candidates lost marks for either putting too many or too few ticks.
- 4(c) The majority of candidates responded reasonably well to the use of each device, but were unable to relate the use to the context of the pre-release material. As a result candidates lost marks for the examples. Centres need to ensure that candidates are familiar with the context of the organisation described in the pre-release material.
- 5(a) The majority of candidates were able to correctly describe a home page, gaining the mark.
- 5(b) Candidates responded reasonably well, but were unable to relate the use to the context of the pre-release material. Common answers related to an information page which was too vague or to pages associated with a travel agency such as booking pages or holiday pages. As a result, candidates lost marks. Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the context of the organisation described in the pre-release material.

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

- 5(c) This question was not well answered. Candidates generally showed a lack of knowledge about key words in order to gain both marks. Some answers implied an incorrect understanding of the type of company Travel-m8 is referring to it as a travel agency.
- 5(d) This question was generally well answered with some excellent web page designs, although the contents did not always relate to the correct type of company eg. not a travel agency. Candidates did not lose any marks for this. The labels were not always clear and relevant (especially to the design elements) and sometimes pupils forgot to include any labelling. Without the labelling it was not always clear whether the web page included any links
- 6(a) This question was mostly poorly answered with many pupils unable to give a good definition of a computer virus. This is most disappointing as this type of question has appeared on previous examination papers. Some pupils scored one mark for giving a valid point about viruses.
- 6(b) This question was generally not well answered with too many vague references (buying anti-virus software, instead of using anti-virus software) which suggested candidates failed to read the question carefully. Candidates missed the fact that the company already had anti-virus protection. Consequently many responses were giving advice that was unnecessary and did not relate to the company. Incorrect answers such as firewalls, backups and passwords appeared quite regularly.

2380/02 Higher Tier (Written Examination)

General Comments:

The majority of candidates scored full marks on Q1. Several questions attracted a significant number of null responses, particularly Qs 4c, 8b and 8c. Many centres do not seem to have covered terminology very well; there was lack of distinction between spam and scam email, a confusion between phishing and phishing filters, and a widespread use of the term “hacking” with no glimmer of understanding.

Generally it was felt that standards of demonstrated knowledge were slightly lower than in previous sessions.

Q Comment

- 1a Most scored full marks
- 1b Not many candidates put more than 10 ticks, a surprising number put fewer. Greatest misconceptions regarded the use of DVD disks.
- 1c A large number of vague answers, less than half used the term “hard copy”, and a significant number named hardware items instead of uses as their examples.
- 2 Monitor height commonly associated with eyestrain instead of neck strain, less than half mentioned circulation associated with footrests, and a general vagueness of responses. Some candidates included RSI in almost every response.
- 3 Most candidates scored more than half marks, though some repeated themselves. A few misunderstood the questions and produced a feedback sheet for the company to use on clients of their own website. Some referred to security features associated with on-line booking sites.
- 4a Many vague answers gaining only one mark, usually for the threat of viruses. Many responses referred to “filling your inbox”.
- 4b A disconcerting lack of understanding was demonstrated by many candidates, who could not distinguish between scam and spam (No Monty Python jokes were in evidence).
- 4c Generally answered badly or left blank. Many confused phishing emails with phishing filtering.
- 4d Many vague answers where candidates struggled to find appropriate words, many allusions to non-electronic ways in which passwords may be disclosed.
- 5 Candidates either produced responses worth three or four marks, or fumbled in the dark with references to cross-platform software migration. Perhaps some centres did not teach the concept?
- 6 Widely misunderstood and poorly answered.
- 7 Most candidates gained at least half marks, though some struggled to find the most appropriate vocabulary.
- 8a i) Most gained at least one mark through their awareness of mobile phone applications.
ii) Much weaker responses, with a vague awareness of accessing the internet.

Report on the Units taken in January 2009

Q Comment

- 8b Candidates tended to either gain two marks through an awareness of Skype or displayed their complete ignorance of the topic.
- 8c Many candidates gave very full responses and were quoting from their pre-release research notes, though they should have tried to adapt the wording a little better. Some candidates (or centres) had apparently ignored this topic in their preparation.
- 9a Those candidates who included no borders or annotations lost most marks.
- 9b The range of responses indicates that bitmaps are more widely understood than vector images. Among the candidates who did appreciate the nature of vectors it was encouraging to see an awareness of their mathematical nature.

2378 Coursework Component

General Comments

Candidates following this course were guided to submit coursework based on the use of ICT in the Travel Industry, in line with the guidance provided at INSET.

The vast majority of Centres followed either the E-ticket or a Wage Slip scenario or one of the sample assignments linked to advertisements found in the 'Approved Specification'.

Most Centres had taken more notice of the 2nd paragraph of 7.1, Marking Criteria for Internally Assessed Work on page 40. "Each successive statement builds upon the previous statement and candidates must have completed the lower statement before they can be awarded the next mark range."

In general, the standard of marking and internal standardisation by Centres for this series was of a high standard.

Although a number of issues did arise :-

Annotation

Most Centres used the Front Cover Assessment Sheets giving the page numbers where evidence could be found. This helped with cross-referencing and aided the moderation process.

Some Centres gave extra annotation within the coursework portfolios, and this was greatly appreciated by the moderating team. Some annotation or indication where tutors are allocating marks benefits both the candidate and the moderator.

Although annotation is not essential, its use is greatly appreciated and aids the moderation teams and is an example of best practice.

It is very strange to see a sample of coursework, with no teacher comments or marking at all.

Arithmetic errors

A small number of Centres had different marks on the MS1 form (the form sent to OCR to record candidates marks, and the form used by moderators to select their sample), to the mark on the Cover Sheet of the candidates work.

Before posting the coursework sample to moderators, Centres are reminded to double check that the mark on the MS1 is the same as the mark allocated to the candidate on the Front Cover of the coursework portfolios.

MS1s

When completing the MS1s, Centres need to ensure that the intended mark is clear on the copy sent to the moderator.

Quite often Centres had written on the MS1 while resting on other pages, making the whole MS1 impossible to read, or they had not put sufficient pressure on to ensure that the moderators copy was clear enough to request a fair sample. Again this slowed down the moderation process.

Marking Criteria

A small number of Centres had not used the OCR published marking criteria on pages 40 – 43 of the approved specification. Centres should not make up their own mark schemes, as this could harm their candidates results.

Communication Mark

Most candidates should be gaining at least one mark for the communication mark. Some Centres were being too harsh and awarding zero marks for candidates who should have been given some credit.

Assessment Objective 1

Choosing and Describing Applications

Candidates performed well, the level of evidence for this section is getting better with every session.

Using Hardware & Using Software

Again the level of evidence suggested some very good teaching and learning, most candidates reached the higher mark threshold.

Inputting Data

Most candidates were in the 2/3 mark threshold. Candidates still need to give more evidence as to how their designed system reduces the possibility of data errors. Although there is now evidence of this being put right.

System Output

Depending on the assignment chosen, not all candidates were able to describe alternative outputs or the benefits and drawbacks of each.

Assessment Objective 2

Analysis

Possibly the most important aspect of coursework. Candidates who performed well here tended to perform well throughout the Unit. When done well, candidates maintained their focus and knew exactly what they were designing and why.

Design, Implementation, Testing

Centres should remember that the lower order marks relate to the Analysis and the candidate's ability to identify and complete their ICT system.

Most candidates performed well, but to secure the highest marks candidates should annotate their own work giving reasons as to why changes have been made, why some designs have been retained and others discarded.

Some Centres were very generous in awarding marks for AO2b without any of the above evidence. These Centres often had their marks adjusted.

Evaluation, Application and Effects

This was again the weakest aspect of coursework. Candidates did not compare ICT with other methods, or justify when and why using ICT is more appropriate.

Documentation

This could be improved by stating who the User Guide is aimed at, that will then focus the candidates into the type and detail of guide needed, eg is it for the worker, client or patient.

AO3

A number of candidates did not attempt this AO. Those candidates, who did, attempted this in various ways. Some had tried to meet the criteria within other reports, whereas some gave this a discrete section within the coursework. Moderators reported that those Centres who tried the former found annotation more difficult to follow.

If candidates identified the person/people who would benefit from their system, then again this focuses the candidate to meet the marking criteria.

AO4

Again those candidates who scored well on “the use of ICT in the wider world” did so using a discrete section of coursework.

2379 Coursework Component

General Comments

Candidates following this course were advised to submit coursework based on the use of ICT to Aid Travel – most used the guidance as provided during OCR INSET.

Most candidates designed a multimedia presentation, either an interactive website brochure or brochure using Power Point for a Travel Agent.

Annotation

Most Centres used the Assessment Sheets giving the page numbers where evidence could be found. This helped with cross-referencing and aided the moderation process.

Some Centres gave extra annotation within the coursework portfolios, and this was greatly appreciated by the moderating team. Some annotation or indication where tutors are allocating marks benefits both the candidate and the moderator.

Arithmetic errors

A small number of Centres had different marks on the MS1 form (the form sent to OCR to record candidates' marks, and the form used by moderators to select their sample), and then a different mark on the Cover Sheet of the candidate's work.

Before posting the coursework sample to moderators, Centres are reminded to double check that the mark on the MS1 is the same as the mark allocated to the candidate on the Front Cover of the coursework portfolios.

MS1s

When completing the MS1s, Centres need to ensure that the intended mark is clear on the copy sent to the moderator.

Quite often Centres had written on the MS1 while resting on other pages, making the whole MS1 impossible to read, or they had not put sufficient pressure on to ensure

A significant number of Centres had not used the OCR mark scheme and/or Cover Sheet. Centres must not make up their own mark schemes.

It would also help if Centres would get their MS1 to moderator by the May deadline. Then send the coursework promptly.

Digital Submission

Unfortunately very few Centres submitted work on disk. It was hoped that by now, more Centres would be submitting work on a different media than paper.

Although it is possible for candidates to submit one portfolio for both 2378 & 2389, candidates **MUST** identify where the extension task begins.

The full portfolio can be assessed for the 2378 mark, but only the extension task can be assessed for the 2379 mark. Therefore it is possible for these candidates to get different marks for 2378 & 2379. If the extension task is not clearly identified then the whole of the portfolio will be assessed as 2378 only.

Producing A System

Moderators look for a complete working system, and Centres should be encouraged to send in digital evidence of websites rather than paper based portfolios. It is becoming apparent that some Centres are producing more and more reports. Moderators look at work using the marking criteria not volume of work.

Centres should be encouraging their candidates to show more flair in their design and working system.

Assessment Objective 1

Choosing and Describing Applications

In the main candidates performed well. Although only a few candidates commented in detail on the benefits and drawbacks of a selection of different types of hardware and software that could have been used, for the 4/5 mark threshold.

Using Hardware & Using Software

Again candidates performed well. Although some candidates did not describe the benefits and drawbacks of their chosen hardware very well.

Inputting Data & System Output

Candidates linked these sections together and provided some excellent evidence.

Overall the performance at AO1 level was greatly improved from the summer session.

Assessment Objective 2

Analysis

Candidates who performed well here tended to perform well throughout the coursework. When done well, candidates maintained their focus and knew exactly what they were designing and why. Overall those candidates who scored highly had put in a lot of work into this section. Probably more than the 5 marks merited but candidates benefited in the final mark.

Design, Implementation, Testing

Most candidates performed well, but to secure the highest marks candidates should annotate their own work giving reasons as to why changes have been made, why some designs have been retained and others discarded.

Some Centres were very generous in awarding marks for AO2b without any of the above evidence. These Centres were more likely to fall outside of tolerance and have their marks adjusted.

Evaluation, Application and Effects

This was the weakest aspect of coursework. Candidates did not compare ICT with other methods, or justify when and why using ICT is more appropriate.

Documentation

Candidates performed well. There was some good evidence of testing and refining user guides.

AO3

Candidates attempted this in various ways. Some tried to meet the criteria within other reports, whereas some gave this a discrete section within the coursework. Moderators reported that those Centres who tried the former not only found the annotation more difficult to follow, but in some cases the Centre had not given the candidate their full credit.

Candidates need to link their discussion of AO3 to their task, some are too generic to score in the top range. If candidates identified the person/people who would benefit from their system, then this focuses the candidate to meet the marking criteria.

AO4

Those candidates who scored well on “the use of ICT in the wider world” did so using a discrete section of coursework.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT B (1095/1995)
January 2009 Examination Session

Unit Threshold Marks

	Unit	Maximum Mark	a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
2377F	Raw	40				37	32	27	23	19	0
	UMS	55				48	40	32	24	16	0
2377H	Raw	40	39	35	30	26	23	21			0
	UMS	80	72	64	56	48	40	32			0
2378	Raw	64	63	55	47	39	33	28	23	18	0
	UMS	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0
2379	Raw	64	63	55	47	39	33	28	23	18	0
	UMS	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0
2380F	Raw	55				40	35	31	27	23	0
	UMS	55				48	40	32	24	16	0
2380H	Raw	80	57	50	43	36	28	24			0
	UMS	80	72	64	56	48	40	32			0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1095	200	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40	0

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1995	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
1095	3.7	21.1	40.8	61.3	74.4	83.4	90.9	97.2	100	1218
1995	1.8	8.5	30.8	65.2	87.5	95.5	97.8	100	100	243

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication

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