Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE In Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (4IT1) Paper 2: Practical Paper

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General Comments

This was the second series of the 2017 Specification of Pearson's International GCSE ICT.

There were approximately **4700** students for the practical paper in this series. Most students submitted work for all tasks. Tasks where work was not always submitted were Presentation Software and/or Word Processing Software.

Some students lost marks due to a lack of attention to detail. For example:

- 13 marks were available for entering correct formulae into a spreadsheet. Some students failed to gain marks for this because they did not submit a formula view of the spreadsheet. Often, other printouts suggested that they may have done correct calculations but there was no evidence to support this. A small number of students lost marks because they failed to submit a printout of the data view when required. In these cases, it was not possible to award all of the formatting marks.
- Where screen shot evidence was required, many students lost marks because their screen shots were too small to be read.

Examiners were pleased to note that there was little evidence that students accessed the internet during the examination. Internet usage during this examination is a breach of the regulations and may result in students being disqualified.

Examiners noted that most students were able to complete all the tasks required, though a small number did not complete all activities.

Data files

There were very few issues with the data files reported to Pearson.

These files are produced in different formats so that centre staff can make sure that the files open using the software available during the examination. It should also be noted that only the appropriate version of the files should be available for students.

Centre staff are reminded that the data files must remain confidential until after the end of the examination window printed on the front cover of the paper. It is a breach of the regulations for staff to discuss the contents of the data files with students. They are made available before the examination in order that a member of staff can check that the files work with the hardware and software available during the examination. After they have been checked, the files should be copied into the students' examination folders. A second copy in a sub-folder of the students' exam folder is useful to enable them to re-start tasks should they wish to do so.

Labelling and printing

Centre staff should remind students that it is a requirement of this examination that typed students' details are expected on all printouts.

Some examiners noted that the quality of printout varied considerably. Centres should try to ensure that the printer is capable of producing satisfactory output during the examination window. The poor quality of some printout is often to the disadvantage of the student when the examiner cannot read or distinguish what the student has produced. Students need to

check that the quality of the printout provides the evidence necessary to give credit to their work.

Examiners reported that only a few students did not collate their work in the correct order or in the correct manner. The cover sheet, when opened, has a punched hole in the top left corner. Students should punch a hole approximately 1cm from the top left corner of the front of each printout, then attach the printouts to the cover sheet so that when the cover sheet is opened by the examiner the students' work is face up on the left with the marking grid on the right.

A few centres did not sort the students' work into the same order as the attendance lists.

Resources
There are two sets of Sample Assessment Materials and the June 2019 examination paper available on the Pearson website. In addition, centre staff are reminded that Pearson offer the 'Ask the Expert' facility on its website where Senior Examiners can answer questions from staff about the specification and examinations.

Specific Comments

The examination consisted of five activities based on the theme of holiday accommodation available in the UK.

Activity 1: Graphics Software

Task A1a required students to create a logo using lines and shapes and to include the company name or Lang. Most students completed this task as required and achieved the two marks available.

In A1b, students were asked to edit an image to remove the tower, increase the size of the satellite dish, crop to remove the top third of the image and to add the name of the company.

Most students attempted to remove the tower, crop the image and add the company name but few successfully increased the size of the satellite dish.

Activity 2: Database Software

Students were provided with a database file with three tables of data about the holiday accommodation available in the UK.

In Task A2a, students were asked to create a data entry form for the ACCOMMODATION table. Most students created the form, but these did not always match the house style with the logo placed bottom centre or include the date. Most students entered the correct data for A2b and most students completed the sort activity correctly to be awarded the mark for A2c.

Task A2d required students to perform a query to find all accommodation that was available in a Yurt, for 3 days in Cornwall. Once the query had been completed, the results were required. Students were expected to display certain fields in order (Accommodation ref, Maximum guests and Accommodation name) with the Accommodation name in descending order. Most students achieved the marks for this task.

A2e required students to create another query for clients who signed up to receive and e-letter who booked to stay in a Shepherd's Hut or Caravan. This should have resulted in ten clients and the details should have been presented with the fields in order of Member name, Member ref and Email in descending order of Accommodation ref. The report should have been formatted to use a suitable heading and include the logo (bottom centre). Some students included a title that was not appropriate and did not inform the viewer of the report content whilst others included too many records to meet the required criteria.

Tasks A2fi to A2fvi required learners to show their understanding of databases. Few students achieved marks for this section as although they showed use of the skills required to carry out the practical tasks, they achieved very few marks for the theory behind the use of databases. Where marks were awarded, they tended to be for the reason why tables are linked together with a relationship before entering data and for identifying a foreign key in the linked tables.

Students tended to achieve one mark for explaining one problem that could occur if the Limit to List had a value of 'No' in the lookup property but very few achieved the second

mark. Students should be reminded that where there is a two mark 'explain' question, they are awarded one mark for the identification (in this instance the problem that could occur) and the second mark for the expansion (of why this would be a problem).

Most students did not provide a reason as to why a query may require a logical operator.

Activity 3: Presentation Software
There were a few centres where learners did not complete this task so no marks could be awarded. Students should use the SAMS, AddSAMS and past paper to practice completing a paper to allow sufficient time to complete all tasks.

For A3a there were seven marks for editing the master slide, inserting the logo and changing the footer. Few students followed the house style for the company name and did not change the font style to sans serif, but most inserted the logo and changed the footer. Some students included the footer on the title slide which was not required. An appropriate darker background for the title area was used by most students and they also used white text.

Task A3bi asked students to enhance the text 'follow the links to find out more' but very few students did this. The term enhance is in the specification so students should know it's meaning.

Task A3biii required the completion of the other three slides using images and text provided and most students completed this appropriately to achieve the three marks available.

Students had taken the time to present the slides following the given designs and to evidence two slides on one page.

Where students had attempted the theory section of this question, most showed an understanding of the use of speaker notes.

Activity 4: Using Spreadsheet Software
For this activity, students were provided with a spreadsheet that included two worksheets. When students were required to use formulae/functions, it was intended that they used both worksheets with references rather than copying content from worksheet one and including it into worksheet two.

Most students achieved marks for the inclusion of a heading and the formatting of the merged cells although few used a serif font or a double border.

B1bi required students to use functions to work out the Cost per night and Breakfast costs for one of the accommodation listings and the Total number of bookings made in 2019. The latter required the use of COUNTA although there were a limited number of students who understood the use of this function. Most tended to use the SUM function which was incorrect but the correct range. The use of VLOOKUPS was done well and most students used the link between the worksheets to reference the correct lookup values, table arrays and column index numbers.

B1bii required students to include four formulae using the one or both worksheets to do so. Most understood how to use data from one worksheet to include in another and where this

was done, it was usually done well. The if statement for the Discount for early bookings was successfully completed by many students and they either used the multiplication here or in the Final income which was acceptable.

The Average cost per night and Total income for 2019 were completed correctly by most students.

Most students achieved a mark for the replication of the formulae or functions.

Formatting of the spreadsheet to be shown in data view was usually done well for all but the headings being wrapped to use space efficiently and ensuring all data was visible. Most students included a printout to show the filtered results to show the accommodation for Peak Season.

Most learners included a suitable chart with correctly named axes labels but some did not reference Peak Season 1 in the title.

A3b required students to display two columns showing they could hide rather than delete cells. Where this was attempted, it was usually done well.

The theory part of spreadsheets was done quite well although the explain question usually only achieved one mark as students provided the identification (advantage of using SUM) bit did not include the expansion of why this was an advantage.

Activity 5: Word Processing Software
Students were provided with a hand drawn design of a newsletter that they had to create using appropriate software.

Areas of the design that were completed well were:
- columns and bullets
- contrast for the text box (and table)
- sans serif font
- creation of table
- heading for 'Newsletter'
- inclusion of appropriate images, lines and overlapping circles

Areas that were not completed so well were:
- merged cells on the table
- text wrap
- text placed on the image

Overall, this task was completed very well, and most students followed the designs to produce the final product.

The theory section of this task was completed fairly well, and marks tended to be awarded for the standard conventions and sensible filenames. One mark was usually awarded for the explain question (benefit of using mail merge) and although an identification was included, few expanded on why it was a benefit.

General comments
Most students presented their work well and in the correct order.

In some instances, the quality of the printouts was poor, and this did not allow students to access all marks as quite a lot of the work could not be seen.

Where screenshots are requested, please ensure they are not inappropriately cropped and are large enough to be read.