

Principal Examiner's Feedback

January 2012

Applied GCE

6953 01 – The Knowledge Worker

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Unit 3: The Knowledge Worker (6953)

The style of the paper was different, in some respects, to previous series. Activity 2, for example, required more in-depth answers to gain full marks rather than simple lists.

Once again possible solutions to the model appeared in various online forums; often these gave wrong or misleading information. Centres are reminded that no information should be published relating to any of the content of the examination before the end of the examination window, without the permission of Edexcel.

Candidates are best prepared for the examination by thorough and detailed preparation using the specification to ensure full coverage of all of the "What you need to learn" sections.

Activity 1

Most candidates performed well on this task, although some candidates did not give enough detail in their answers. The mean mark for this section was lower than in most previous series.

Candidates often used bullet points (statements expanding and explaining the point being made) and successfully gained the marks. Single word answers with no detail or explanation did not gain credit. It is important for candidates to demonstrate that they understand the scenario and can extract the relevant information, rather than merely copy most of the scenario. Candidates should be encouraged to look at the number of marks available for the question and use this as a guide to the number of points required.

Activity 2

This activity required candidates to use analysis techniques to look for situations which would cause the data used in the model to produce inaccurate predictions. Whilst some marks were available for simply stating a factor, more marks were available for an expanded answer which explained how that factor would introduce the inaccuracy.

The question was in two sections; the first of which was about factors which would affect the rental price. The question was seeking answers that compared one place to another. Many candidates gave the weather as a factor, however the weather would not be known at the time of booking the holiday so this was not an accepted answer. The local climate *was* accepted as an answer; for example if a location is known for high winds then it would be less popular, impacting on the rental price.

The second section was concerned with the data used to predict costs, mainly the utility costs. The data used in the model was based on previous years' bills. The question was asking why this might not be accurate this year. In this section the weather was a factor: if the weather were to be colder than last year then more heating would be used, and thus costs would rise.

Candidates who did not make the connection between the situation and the impact on costs were limited in the marks, as they failed to explain the impact of situations they identified.

Activity 3

This activity was slightly different this series. The formulae needed, however, were relatively simple and candidates could work them out from the information given in the paper. It is advisable for centres to prepare candidates by using a wide variety of examples during the pre-release period. Candidates would then have the necessary experience of completing and working with the model.

The import task was slightly different in that data was imported in sections rather than as a block of data.

The "Ratings" sheet required the use of the "Average" function and two other formulae described in the text. Well-prepared candidates had little difficulty in working out the correct formulae. Not all candidates used the average function and some credit was given for alternative solutions such as adding the two values and dividing by two. A number of candidates were unable to convert the words in the question into the correct formulae. Many candidates still used the sum function incorrectly for every formula. The number of brackets used in the formulae was often far more than needed; however full credit was given where a working formula was used.

The "Period weeks" worksheet required the use of an IF statement. Candidates produced a wide variety of statements, both working and non-working. The question gave, in words, the formula required; some candidates ignored this and entered incorrect formulae that they had clearly prepared in advance. The printout required columns A, B and D only on one page, a surprising number of candidates were unable to do this.

The "Totals" worksheet was on the whole completed well, although few candidates gained more than three marks for using the model to produce a profit.

Marks are awarded for the printouts; the activity requires row and column headings on all printouts along with headers, footers and gridlines. A significant number of candidates did not gain full credit because this was not done. Centres should note that the candidates must produce printouts, screenshots are not acceptable.

Activity 4

This activity required a report to be written which should include the candidate's recommendations, justification of these, other factors that might affect the outcome together with a graphical representation. On this occasion the exact chart required was specified in the question, however a number of candidates did not provide the correct chart, and chose to provide a chart of their choice.

Some candidates still produced letters and memos rather than a report. Candidates who had experience of report writing performed much better in this task.

This activity also tests the quality of written communication. Poor spelling and grammar were evident in many reports.

Activity 5

Once again candidates found this evaluation activity difficult, but it was encouraging to see examples of good practice. Candidates frequently made simplistic comments that showed no understanding of how to evaluate the model. Many gave 'rote' responses such as "it was easy to enter the numbers..."

Centres should encourage candidates to practice this important exam skill. The majority of students gained the marks for ease of use. Comments for improvement still tended to focus on the cosmetic concerns and outcomes rather than the functionality of the model. Too many candidates failed to explain *why* this would improve the model or how they would do it.

Grade Boundaries

Centres are reminded that the GCE in Applied ICT is an Awarded qualification. As such, grade boundaries are subject to review each series for both written paper and coursework units.

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