

Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2013

Applied GCE ICT 6953

Unit 3: The Knowledge Worker

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General

In preparing candidates for this examination, teachers should cover all of the content in the specification. While, it is important that candidates have used past examination papers in order to hone their examination technique, it is important to remember that they are being tested on their ability to demonstrate the skills detailed in the specification content and not to just replicate what has been tested in past papers. This question paper followed the overall approach of past papers, but there were some minor differences in the structure of the paper and the specifics of the activities.

Good examination technique remains important. Candidates were able to use pre-release data to prepare for this examination; however, it was evident that some candidates were not sufficiently familiar with this.

Too many candidates in this series did not read the exam paper carefully and, instead, provided answers to questions they had seen in previous papers. At times, instructions on how questions are to be answered were not followed accurately by a significant number of candidates.

Activity 1

This activity was fundamentally similar to previous series, but there were been a few minor changes. Overall the question was well answered. The "Understanding the situation" part of the question was followed by a section on the "Data Sources".

The question specifically asked for a set number of bullet or numbered answers. The best candidates responded to this by providing carefully thought out answers which gained maximum or near maximum marks. Weaker candidates, who did not follow these instructions, often supplied an essay style answer which was largely a reprint of the scenario. Some candidates included in their 12 points issues which did not affect the task they had to perform. This often meant that they "ran out" of bullet points. This task is about the candidate's ability to select the key information. Candidates who simply list everything are not showing this important skill and will not be able to achieve high marks.

The second part of the question was about data sources and it was obvious from the answers that a great many candidates did not know what a data source is. This is a recurring theme through all the series of this examination. When the definition of a data source was known then the question was well answered, but too many gave examples of data and not the sources.

Activity 2

The modelling activity is traditionally the one in which most candidates score particularly well. Most candidates were able to get some kind of working model even if the model did not always work as it was designed to do. However, it was rare to find perfect working models.

The majority of candidates were able to import the data without problems and the simple IF formulae to calculate the offset for weekend and weekday matches were also well done in most cases. The main area of difficulty was associated with calculating and applying the percentage reductions due to distance and price. The formulae required were not taxing however many candidates were unable to produce a simple mathematical formula to solve this part of the problem. A significant number of candidates produced a solution using a number nested IF functions. This method was significantly more difficult than the expected solution.

A lot of candidates did not identify that "Havering Whitecaps" had to be selected on the teams' page and consequently solutions for other teams were provided. The scenario stated that the aim was not to make a profit so the modelling marks were awarded even if some of the formulae were not completely correct.

The activity requires row and column headings on each printout and also headers, footers and gridlines. Many candidates did not do this on **ALL** printouts and so did not gain these marks. It should be noted that candidates are required to print their worksheets and not used screenshots.

Activity 3

This activity tested the ability of candidates to report to others and this was done by instructions on how to use the completed model for a different team. The best candidates identified the following:

- The drop down box would need to be changed to show the new team.
- The fixture data and the distances applied to all teams so didn't need to be changed.
- The survey was of "Havering Whitecaps" fans and would not apply to a new team and as such a new survey would have to be undertaken.

The question was not answered well with a significant number of candidates missing the focus of the task. These candidates simply produced a report based on the type of answer they were expecting from previous series. Candidates should read carefully what is required as a lot of time was used up providing information that was not required. This resulted in time pressures on the examination as a whole.

Activity 4

This activity was looking at how to enhancement the model, as such the task and the answer to it was not predictable from the pre-release data. The vast majority of candidates made a good attempt at this and this was one of the activities in the paper where they performed best.

The first part of the question required them to replicate a formula along and down having worked on the absolute addressing. Answers sometimes showed a lack of understanding of how the "\$" signs worked. Many candidates seemed to think that if absolute addressing is applied it had to be

on both rows and columns. Correctly applied absolute addressing to rows or columns only was rarely seen.

Overall Comments

Candidates need to cover all aspects of the specification, including all the functions and formulae that are listed in the specification. Examination technique is also important. The activities have recommended times given and candidates should use these so they complete all of the tasks in the time given. Candidates should also take care to read the questions carefully, and ensure that they provide their answers in the format required.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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