

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
in Applied ICT (6953)  
Paper 01 The Knowledge Worker

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## General

The examination paper this series continues the move away from pre-ordained, predictable activities of past papers towards a situation where the candidates can be prepared but not over-prepared. Our aim is to ensure that it is the candidate's knowledge and understanding which is tested. The 'banker' activities (one and two), while these remain the simplest and easiest to prepare for, for this series they include sections that cannot be fully predicted. They were not difficult but did involve a careful reading of the paper. The challenging activity, the one which cannot be prepared, was on the face of it, fairly simple and did not involve the knowledge of any function not used in activity 2. It did, however, mean that the formulae used in activity 2 had to be understood, rather than just remembered.

The paper will continue to evolve. The preparation of candidates in future series should **not** assume the same format.

## Activity 1

This should be an activity in which most candidates can score well, especially the first part of the activity.

- a) For section a, 10 bullet points were requested and very few candidates provided more this time. Eight or nine of these were fairly straightforward. The thing to grasp in this section was that we were looking for things important in **creating** the model were what was required. The targets that the designer tries to achieve while **using** the model are required in section b and not in section a. Some candidates used up some of their bullet points detailing the financial constraints in this section. Some used up three bullet points in this way and then couldn't figure out what was required in section b because they had already used it. Oddly some candidates answered section b correctly but did not go back and replace these in section a. The importance of reading the question should be emphasised to all candidates.
- b) This part of the activity was answered fairly reasonably and apart from the problems detailed above did not tax the candidates too much.
- c) This section caused the candidates a lot of trouble. Although about half the candidates could figure out that it was something to do with the amount of gem powder they related it to the designs and not to the amount of Pixie Plates produced.

## **Activity 2**

In this series the modelling was less about what functions you knew and more about simple mathematical formulae. This did seem to cause a problem with many candidates and a lot of errors were made in those parts of the activity which could have been well prepared by the teacher.

### **Stones**

The vast majority of candidates were able to import the file

**GemPowder\_exam.txt** along with entering a working formula. Some candidates lost marks by multiplying by 0.2 or dividing by 5.

### **Designs - Parts 1, 2 and 3**

The three formulae in this section were fairly straight forward and most candidates managed a reasonable set of formulae. There was some confusion over replication, both in applying it for downward and lateral replication and also in selecting cells rather than constants to represent the gem code. Consequently few marks were allocated in the third and fourth section of this activity.

The selection of the price of the stones was sometime overcomplicated by using a vlookup. This tended to be by centres rather than individual candidates.

### **Stock Control - 1**

We expected this section to cause a few problems as it would be difficult to predict prior to reading the exam paper. The IF part was fairly straight forward but the majority of candidates made a pretty good stab at the rest. Those that didn't know the ^ operator used a certain amount of ingenuity in providing the division by  $D7^2$ , either by dividing by it twice or dividing by it multiplied by itself. Although there were often extra brackets most of these methods worked. There was also a lot of use of the POWER function.

### **Stock Control – 2**

The print out for this worksheet was frequently displayed on two pages, with columns A and B on the first page, some candidates failed to include columns A and B. Again many candidates had difficulty converting, dividing instead of multiplying or vice versa. Some even used the wrong conversion factor e.g. 5 instead of 0.5. Candidates often displayed truncated formulae in cell J9, earning them no marks.

### **Designs – Part 4**

This section proved reasonably easy to most candidates, although some tried to put in complicated formulae again.

### **Use of the Model**

The majority of candidates were able to create three designs. Unfortunately they couldn't be deemed to have met all the constraints because of previous errors in formulae which left certain calculations invalid.

### **Printouts**

Row and column headings were frequently omitted, in some cases this was for whole centres, where they need to take heed of previous Principal Examiner's reports. Occasionally printouts were in the wrong order.

### **Activity 3**

Although this series 'principal's surprise' this section did not require the candidates to know anything they didn't need for the previous activity. Once they had recognised the fact that the gem stones for the wall mount were 1 carat rather than the half carat of the plates then they should have had no trouble. Even those that didn't recognise this could pick up some marks. The candidates did, however, make the same conversion mistakes in this activity as in the last. Many didn't attempt it and perhaps a reason for this was that they didn't really understand what they did in activity 2.

### **Activity 4**

The majority of candidates described what they had done when they used the model, very few produced a user guide. Most made some attempt to indicate the data the designer would need with a brief description of how they used the design worksheets. Evaluations were usually of the type that the spreadsheet worked well. Some candidates included tips. Surprisingly few candidates made use of useful screenshots in discussing how to use the model. It was obvious that by the time most of the candidates got to this activity they were running out of time. Despite the warning in the exam paper many candidates spent a lot of time creating masterpieces in their designs. We had Union Jacks, Saltires, Initials, Trees and many others. Very nice, but it didn't get extra marks and it wasted time. Candidates should be encouraged to stick to the suggested times for each activity. As such, high marks were rare but there were some examples of excellent user guides which had had a lot of thought put into them.

### **Overall Comments**

This paper is into its second decade now and it seems odd that candidates still have trouble in getting their papers in the correct order and entering them correctly into the folder. The mark they get for this may tip them over into the next grade as well as making it easier for the marking. The cover sheet is

supplied with a hole in the correct place, it does not need any extra holes punched in it. The papers need a hole punched in the top left hand corner. One hole will suffice. The treasury tag needs to go through each page (including the cover sheet) only once and should not be knotted.



