Principal Examiner Feedback

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Functional Skills ICT (FST01)
Level 1

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Introduction
This was the sixth series of examinations for this specification. The paper was written to closely match the layout and the degree of difficulty of the previous series. As with previous series, it was felt that some candidates were not sufficiently prepared for the assessment.

It was a requirement that candidates had no further access to the internet or internet technologies after the first 15 minutes. However, there were several centres where this was not adhered to as there were instances where candidates had used images from the internet for later tasks. Centres are strongly advised to read the Instructions for the Conduct of the Examination (ICE) document, which can be downloaded from www.edexcel.com/fsict. This document should be read by the Examinations Officer, the ICT faculty staff and the network technicians, since it contains a wealth of guidance and information to enable them to deliver this examination successfully.

Centres should make sure that candidates' work is collated correctly before it is submitted to the examiner as many candidates did not hole punch the printouts correctly, some pages were upside down or back to front and they were frequently not in task number order. Also candidates' work should not be inserted into plastic pockets.

Candidates are prompted at the beginning and throughout the examination to enter their name, candidate number and centre details before printing, yet many scripts showed handwritten details added after printing. This practice should be discouraged and candidates prepared properly for the examination so that they know how to add the relevant details in the header or footer of a document as required.

There were five tasks to be completed by candidates; the background to which was TLC Activity Holidays.

Task 1
In this task the candidates were asked to search the internet to locate an item of safety equipment that would be used when white water rafting, they then had to record this information in the ResponsesJanL1 plus a screen shot of the search engine they had used showing keywords, and the URL of the website where they found the information. Most candidates opened the correct file and entered the correct information about the safety equipment and pasted the relevant screenshot and URL into the file. A significant number of candidates gained 4 for marks for this task, however some candidates took a screenshot of the website rather than the search engine which often resulted in a loss of 2 marks as no search criteria was evident. Some candidates entered the URL of the search engine (usually www.google.co.uk) rather than that of the website and a very small minority did not enter a complete URL.

Areas for improvement and development:
• recognising the difference between a search engine and a website
• recording a complete URL.

Task 2

In Task 2, candidates were presented with a spreadsheet which contained figures showing information about activities offered by TCL. They were asked to make 2 amendments to the data provided and to sort in alphabetic order of activity. All candidates achieved the mark available for opening the correct file, although a significant number did not amend the 2 data items as required or sort the data correctly. Candidates were then required to make sure that that the information was clear and easy to read and that the data view of the spreadsheet fitted onto one side of A4. The majority of candidates correctly printed the spreadsheet on 1 side of A4 but many failed to apply simple formatting techniques to make the information easier to read.

Next, the candidates were asked to calculate the income generated by each activity and total income for all activities. A significant number of candidates correctly calculated the income for each activity and total income; however many candidates did not include a printout of the spreadsheet in formula view and some had used incorrect or inefficient formulas such as =SUM(A1*A2).

The last part of the task was to produce a chart to display the income for each activity, the graph had to be clearly labelled and easy to understand. Most candidates attempted to produce the expected bar/column chart from the required data range and many scored well on this task. However, a significant number of candidates did not include a sensible chart title and either missed adding axes labels or included a legend which lost marks.

Overall, a significant number of candidates scored well in this question, however where
marks were lost it was usually as a result of not displaying formulas for the spreadsheet, making sure that the information was clear and easy to read, and not labelling the graph clearly.

Areas for improvement and development:
• adding sensible titles to spreadsheets
• adding effective formatting enhancements to improve the overall readability
of the data such as:
   gridlines/borders
   shading key information such as totals
   emboldening column headings
• printing data from a spreadsheet
• printing the formula view of the spreadsheet
• adding sensible titles and axes labels to graphs.

Task 3

In Task 3, candidates were asked to produce a fact sheet for teenagers about the activities on offer. A text file containing relevant text and an image bank which contained both appropriate and inappropriate images were provided. Candidates were asked to select appropriate software to create the factsheet and to insert all of the supplied text, an appropriate image for each activity, the company logo, and to ensure that this fitted on 1 side of A4.
Candidates were also asked to insert the item of safety equipment from Task 1 into the fact sheet. The majority of candidates both selected and used appropriate software, and inserted the text from the file provided. However, a number of candidates omitted the heading from the text provided. It is important for candidates to differentiate between the instruction to insert **all** of the information, as opposed to **selected** text.

Marks were awarded for candidates formatting key items of information to stand out; in this case, key information would have been the activity 'sub headings' and the 'safety gear' information. A significant number of candidates did not achieve these marks. In general, candidates did select the appropriate images i.e. those that matched the activities detailed in the fact sheet, however, a number of candidates included more that the required **three** images which lost them marks. Also, it was expected that images would appear adjacent to the activity that they related to; in fact, almost 50% of candidates did not position images appropriately. Font size had to be amended by candidates to ensure that the fact sheet fitted onto 1 side of A4, and almost all candidates selected a suitable font size that was large enough to read and allowed the fact sheet to fit on 1 page.

Most candidates achieved the final 3 marks for the task which was to save the file with a meaningful name in a sub-folder called TLC.

Areas for improvement and development:
• planning a suitable layout of text and images
• identifying key information and formatting it to stand out
• selecting appropriate images

Task 4
In task 4, candidates were asked to prepare an email to the Marketing Manager of TLC with their fact sheet attached and requesting feedback. The significant majority of candidates scored well in this question and it was encouraging to see the correct use of email.

Task 5
In task 5 candidates were asked set the TLC folder created in Task 3 to read-only. A significant majority of candidates set the fact sheet file to read only rather than the folder containing it. And those that did correctly select the folder properties often failed to provide a screenshot evidencing the fact that they had 'applied' the change to the folder.

Areas for improvement and development:
• producing a screen shot with the 'apply' button greyed out

Pass mark for FST01

Maximum mark	50
Pass mark	32
UMS	6

Note: Grade boundaries vary from year to year and from subject to subject, depending on the demands of the questions.