

Examiners' Report

January 2015

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
ICT Level 1 (FST01)

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Introduction

This paper was written to closely match the layout and the degree of difficulty of the previous series. It was clear that some centres had worked hard to prepare their candidates for the exam, however the spreadsheet skills demonstrated by some candidates showed a lack of ability to use functions efficiently, to sort and to format a spreadsheet effectively or to include a formula printout. Although many candidates accessed high marks, as in previous series, there are still centres that entered candidates who lacked the knowledge to achieve a pass.

Centres should ensure 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. In some cases the candidates' work was not attached to the cover sheet.

Task 1 – Internet Research

In Task 1 candidates were asked to search the internet to find the date, including the year, when Catherine Howard married Henry VIII. In general, this task was well done with most candidates gaining either three or four marks. Some candidates lost a mark because they failed to provide a relevant website address, this was generally because they included the URL of a search engine such as Google. Candidates should be reminded that Google is a search engine and, therefore, does not fulfil the requirement to enter the website address used to find the required information. The majority of candidates were able to identify the required information, however, some candidates produced a screen shot of a website, instead of the search engine used including the search criteria.

Some candidates failed to include a screen shot which mean they lost two marks, one for the screen shot of the search engine plus one for the criteria they used.

Areas for improvement and development:

- understanding the need for a screen shot of search criteria
- recognising the difference between a search engine and a website
- copying website addresses (URL) accurately and completely.

Task 2 - Spreadsheet

In Task 2 candidates were presented with a spreadsheet relating to a sale of books for children. Candidates were asked to enter the name of the author for a specific book and then calculate the remaining stock, the income for each book and the total income from the sale. They were then asked to sort the spreadsheet in descending order of income and to format the spreadsheet to make it clearer and easier to understand. Finally, they were asked to produce a chart to display the number sold for each book.

Some candidates lost a mark as they did not enter the required data into the spreadsheet. Most candidates used a workable formula to calculate the total remaining stock and replicated it correctly. Most candidates used the correct formula to calculate the income for each book but, in some cases, candidates used addition or an average function rather than multiplication for this calculation. Some candidates also lost a mark as they included =SUM in their multiplication formula. Most candidates calculated the total income correctly but some lost a mark as they included a blank row in the formula or added the individual cells rather than using the =SUM function. A significant number of candidates lost marks for this task because they failed to produce a formula view printout.

Many candidates sorted the spreadsheet correctly; however, some candidates sorted in ascending rather than descending order or did not attempt the sort. Candidates should be encouraged to add effective formatting which improves the spreadsheet as, in some cases, shading rendered the spreadsheet unreadable. Most candidates produced the bar chart from the required data range with only a very small number producing

a pie chart. In some cases candidates failed to add suitable title or axis labels. Candidates should be encouraged to use the wording of the question to guide them as to the wording of a suitable title and axis labels.

Areas for improvement and development:

- producing formula view printouts
- checking that data is formatted effectively
- using font enhancements to improve layout of spreadsheets
- appropriate use of the =SUM function
- including the correct cells in a formula
- sorting data in a spreadsheet
- selecting data for graphs
- adding suitable titles and axis labels to graphs removing unnecessary legend from graphs
- printing a chart using appropriate size and proportions, on a separate sheet.

Task 3 – Presenting Information

Task 3 required candidates to produce an A4 newsletter about the March book club meeting. Candidates were instructed to include the information found in Task 1 in a specific place in the text and most candidates inserted the text correctly; however, some positioned this information in other places or deleted some relevant text when inserting the information.

Candidates were instructed to insert two suitable images from the given set and most met this requirement, but some inserted an image which was not relevant to the text or inserted an incorrect number of images. The text includes a reference to an image which should be located next to that reference. However, most candidates either did not select that image or insert it in with the relevant text. Candidates should be encouraged to read the text and insert images in appropriate locations where possible.

Candidates are instructed to make the newsletter clear and easy to read; however, a significant number of candidates failed to format the title and sub headings so that they stood out from the rest of the text. The formatting added to subheadings was often inconsistent and, in some cases, the subheadings were omitted from the copied text.

Candidates need to check that they have met all the criteria for the document using the question criteria to guide them. Only a small number of candidates produced a document that was of sufficient quality overall to be fit for purpose and audience.

Areas for improvement and development:

- inserting text from a text file
- inserting additional text in the correct location
- selecting appropriate images from an image bank
- maintaining image proportions
- using appropriate image sizes
- positioning images with appropriate text

- using appropriate font sizes and styles
- considering the suitable layout of text and images
- checking a document against given criteria and for fitness for purpose.

The second part of Task 3 required candidates to answer a question about ways to reduce the risk of the newsletter being changed by others. Most candidates gave at least one correct answer for this task, but some gave answers that referred to copyright rather than preventing the file being edited.

Task 4 – Email

Candidates were asked to produce an e-mail to an author who was invited to give a talk at the bookshop. The majority of candidates successfully demonstrated the use of email software. Almost all candidates entered the correct e-mail address and most used a suitable subject heading. Candidates were required to include a message telling the author that everyone was looking forward to her visit; a significant number of candidates did not include this message. Some candidates lost a mark by using inappropriate salutations or 'text speak' in a business email. Areas for improvement and development:

- copying email addresses accurately
- adding suitable subject lines
- including the correct information in the message
- using a suitable business tone in the message.

Task 5

Some standards require the setting of a direct question. Candidates were asked to suggest two things the owner of the book club could check when he played a film clip and there is a picture but no sound. Most candidates gave two correct answers for this task. Some lost a mark as they gave two answers which meant the same thing.

Areas for improvement and development:

- understanding of how to solve problems in an ICT context
- checking that answers are specific to the question.

Pass Marks

Pass marks for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html?Qualification-Family=functional-skills>

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