

Examiners' Report

June 2016

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills
ICT Level 1 (FST01)

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EXAMINER'S REPORT TO CENTRES ON FUNCTIONAL SKILLS ICT LEVEL 1 – JUNE 2016

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 test. However, the spreadsheet skills demonstrated by some candidates showed a lack of ability to use formulae efficiently and to format a spreadsheet effectively or to include a formula view 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 owner of Greyfriar's Bobby, the well-known Edinburgh dog. In general, this task was well done with most candidates gaining either three or four marks. A minority of 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.

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

Areas for improvement and development:

- understanding the need for a screen shot of search criteria, and producing the screen shot in a size that the criteria can be easily read
- 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 covering the costs and payments of members of Hoxton Book Club and their families visiting Edinburgh. Candidates were asked to change one incorrect piece of data – the cost for the Nazad family. They then had to use a formula to calculate the total cost paid (to the end of May). The next formulae was to calculate the balance for the June payment and give this column an appropriate heading. They were also asked to calculate the total for each month. Candidates were required to produce a formula view of the spreadsheet to show they had used appropriate formulae and replicated them across the two columns. Candidates were asked to format the currency to £2dp and add to any other features to make the spreadsheet easier to read and understand.

Finally, they were asked to produce a chart to display the total costs for each of the families with an appropriate title and axis labels, saving the chart as a separate worksheet.

Virtually all candidates scored the first two marks available for opening the correct spreadsheet and editing the data. Those candidates who produced the formula view were able to go on and score well, though some did get the balance owing as a negative number, because of the way they had selected the data.

Most candidates calculated the total cost correctly but some lost one 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 failed to add any enhancing features to the spreadsheet, or remove the truncation that was present in the names column. Candidates should be encouraged to add effective formatting which improves the spreadsheet as, in many cases, multi coloured shading rendered the spreadsheet unreadable. They must also be encouraged to look for truncation and remove it to make their spreadsheets more meaningful.

Replication caused little problems for most.

A significant number of candidates lost marks for this task because they failed to produce a formula view printout, although they received some credit for correct calculated values.

Most candidates produced the bar chart from the required data range with only a very small number producing a pie chart. A number produced their charts using all the data and so had to include a legend which was not necessary had they just used the data to produce six columns in their 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 as stated on the question paper
- using font enhancements to improve layout of spreadsheets
- using the =SUM function appropriately
- including the correct cells in a formula
- selecting the correct data for graphs
- adding suitable titles and axis labels to graphs and removing unnecessary legends
- printing a chart using appropriate size and proportions, on a separate worksheet.

Task 3 – Presenting Information

Task 3 required candidates to produce a single A4 fact sheet about Edinburgh from given text. Candidates were instructed to include the name of the owner of Greyfriar's Bobby found in Task 1 in a specified location, the logo of the Hoxton Book Club, insert two suitable images. A layout plans was provided that indicated that some information should be formatted in a table. Most candidates inserted the images in the given text, though not always collocated with the relevant text. The table caused problems for many candidates. There was also a lack of formatted subheadings in the given text.

The fact sheet was required to be printed on a single A4 page in portrait orientation, which most managed to do. Candidates were instructed to make the fact sheet clear and easy to read. The layout specified the position of the logo, text and table. Candidates should 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 fact sheet that was of sufficient quality overall to be fit for purpose and audience.

Areas for improvement and development:

- inserting text from a text file and following a given plan
- selecting and inserting appropriate images from an image bank
- maintaining image proportions
- using appropriate image sizes – larger than the logo
- 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 create a new folder called 'Edinburgh Trip' and move the spreadsheet and fact sheet into it. A significant number of candidates scored only the second mark here as they failed to use the specific file name with the capitalisation as given.

Task 4 – Email

Some centres are still fail to ensure that the internet is not available for this task.

Candidates were asked to produce an e-mail to the treasurer of the Book Club including a message that informed him that the attachment contained the details of the amount paid by each member. The majority of candidates successfully demonstrated the use of email software. Most candidates entered the correct email address, although some continue to make this so small a magnifying glass is required to read it. A common mistake was to leave the subject blank, although the spreadsheet was invariably attached.

The majority of candidates included a suitable message about the spreadsheet being attached. Some candidates lost a mark by using inappropriate salutations.

Areas for improvement and development:

- copying an email addresses accurately, and ensuring that it is readable without a magnifying glass
- adding suitable subject lines
- including the correct information and capitalisation in the message.

Task 5 – Using ICT

Candidates were asked to suggest two features that made 'edinburgh' a weak password for the spreadsheet.

Most candidates gave two answers for this task, but were often repeated and from the same mark point so only gained one mark.

Areas for improvement and development:

- understanding of what makes a good password in an ICT context
- checking that answers are specific to the question.

Pass mark for FST01 in June 2016

Maximum mark	50
Pass mark	36
UMS mark	6



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