

# Examiners' Report

January 2017

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills  
ICT Level 2 (FST02)

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## **Introduction**

This paper was written to closely match the layout and the degree of difficulty of the previous series. Some centres had clearly worked hard to prepare their candidates for the test, however there are still some centres that entered candidates who clearly lacked the knowledge to access the higher marks. For example, task 2(a) required candidates to sort alphabetically by first name within surname whilst maintaining data integrity. A significant number of candidates could not complete this task correctly.

Centres should make sure that candidate 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 evidence was frequently not in task number order or attached correctly to the cover sheet.

Centres should remind candidates to check that screenshots submitted for tasks 1 and 4 are of a sufficient size so that the information can be read easily, especially the key words in the criteria box in task 1 and the email address in task 4.

There were five tasks to be completed by candidates based on the context of a boat trip on the River Thames and included finding information and producing an information sheet.

## **Task 1 – Internet research**

In task 1 candidates were asked to search the internet to find an image of the Thames Barrier. They were also asked to find the reason why the Old Royal Naval College was originally constructed and the name given to the Cutty Sark in 1895. This task was generally well done and most candidates gained either five or six marks. A small number of candidates failed to include a relevant web address for the source of the image and included the Google or a similar URL instead. Candidates should be aware that Google is a search engine and is, therefore, not appropriate as a source of the information. A small number of candidates failed to select a single image from the gallery of images found.

Areas for improvement and development:

- understanding the need for a screen shot of search criteria
- producing screen shots in which the critical information is easy to read
- selecting and including a simple image from the search results.

## Task 2 – Spreadsheet

In task 2 candidates were presented with a spreadsheet which contained details of prices for passengers on the boat trip. Candidates were asked sort the table, then use a spreadsheet function to display the ticket price for each passenger; the price was dependent upon the passenger's age. Candidates were then asked to use a spreadsheet function and information stored on the spreadsheet to display the meal price for each passenger and calculate the price of the trip for each passenger and the total price of the trip.

Candidates were asked to format the spreadsheet so that it was clear and easy to read. Finally, they were asked to produce a chart to display the price of the trip for each passenger.

A significant number of candidates failed to sort the data correctly. In some cases the correct columns were sorted but the candidate failed to maintain data integrity when sorting. Most candidates used an =IF function to display the ticket price, although some missed the fact that the criteria stated 'aged 16 or over' and search for 'greater than 16'. The majority of candidates attempted a =(V)LOOKUP function to display the meal price. The price of the trip for each passenger required the simple addition of two cells but there are still a number of candidates who use =SUM for this calculation. The final calculation required the addition of a column of figures and several candidates lost a mark because they included the blank row between the last value in the column and the cell for the total.

A small number of candidates lost marks because they failed to apply any formatting techniques. The majority of candidates who did apply formatting made acceptable improvements to the spreadsheet. Most candidates provided a formula view as requested but there were some who did not and thereby reduced the number of marks available for this task.

Most candidates produced the specified chart from the required data range. The charts produced were generally fit for purpose but there are still a number of candidates who do not include a suitable title or correctly label each axis.

Areas for improvement and development:

- formatting a spreadsheet
  - currency
  - decimal places
  - appropriate borders and shading
  - word wrapping
  - appropriate row heights and column widths
  - use of text formatting to enhance visual clarity e.g. bold, italics, font size
- using formulae
  - simple formulae using arithmetic symbols (+, -, / and \*)
  - using functions e.g. SUM, IF and VLOOKUP where appropriate
  - using efficient formulae (e.g. using SUM for adding up a range of cells)

- using absolute and relative cell references
- sorting and filtering
  - on one column
  - on multiple columns (secondary sorting)
  - expanding selection to include full table in a sort
  - ensuring data integrity when sorting
  - using appropriate filters to show selected data from a table
- creating graphs
  - pie charts, line graphs and column or bar charts with one or more series of data
  - inserting a suitable title on the chart
  - appropriate legends
  - axis labels where relevant
- printing
  - printing in data view
  - printing in formula view
  - adding footers with candidate details
  - fitting a spreadsheet to one page
  - making sure that formulae are not truncated when printing
  - making sure that colour schemes used are still readable when printed in monochrome.

### **Task 3 – Presenting information**

This task required candidates to produce an A4 newsletter for passengers of the boat trip. The newsletter was from Mark Costello who was running the trip on behalf of the Oxthorpe Community Association.

This task was well done by the majority of candidates who produced a newsletter that included the correct text. However, a small number of candidates failed to select all the relevant text, omitting the subheadings. A significant number included a paragraph about the Taj Mahal which was clearly not relevant. Some candidates did not position images near the relevant text or check that images maintained their proportions when inserted.

Almost all candidates selected the correct images including the image they found in task 1(a). Most candidates removed the brackets as instructed and inserted the correct information from task 1(b).

Candidates should be encouraged to check the document in print preview prior to printing to make sure that it fits to one page and that the layout is appropriate for the required purpose of the document.

Areas for improvement and development:

- selecting appropriate software for producing an on-screen or paper-based presentation of information
- integrating information from a variety of sources including text, images, tables and graphs
- considering of suitability in selection of text/images for an audience and purpose
- using formatting techniques appropriately, such as:
  - text enhancements – bold, italic, underline, font sizes
  - selection of font styles
  - selection of suitable font sizes for a presentation
  - hyphenation
  - columns
  - checking for consistency in font sizes and styles
- checking for truncation of text and/or images
- considering fitness for purpose and audience
- creating a folder with a given name
- moving or copying files
- giving documents appropriate file names.

#### **Task 4 – Communication: preparing an email**

Candidates were asked to prepare an email to Mark with a copy of the spreadsheet attached. The majority of candidates successfully demonstrated the use of email software. Most candidates entered the correct e-mail address and a suitable subject line.

Candidates were required to include a message asking Mark to check that the age of each passenger was correct and the majority of candidates did this; however, as in previous series, a significant proportion of candidates lost marks by using inappropriate salutations such as 'Hi' or 'Hey' or 'text speak' in a business email. Almost all candidates successfully attached the correct file to the email.

Areas for improvement and development:

- selecting appropriate offline email client software
- displaying and adding contacts or addresses
- copying carefully text from the question paper especially email addresses
- attaching files to an email
- using a suitable subject line for an email
- using appropriate salutations and language for email messages
- ensuring screen shot evidence is legible.

## **Task 5 – Using ICT**

Task 5(a) stated that Mark had received an email from someone he did not know. The email contained a link and candidates were asked to identify two risks of clicking on the link. The majority of candidates gained at least one mark in this task but some lost marks by giving an answer such as 'hacking' which is not sufficiently specific.

Task 5(b) stated that Mark had made a video of the trip that he wanted to send to the secretary, but the file was too large to email. Candidates were asked to give two ways the video could be sent. Most candidates gained at least one mark in this task. Some candidates lost marks by suggesting using email.

Areas for improvement and development:

- reading the question carefully
- understanding the risks of clicking on links in emails
- understanding how to send a large file by means other than email.

Pass mark for FST02 in January 2017

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Maximum mark	<b>50</b>
Pass mark	<b>36</b>
UMS mark	<b>6</b>

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