

# Examiners' Report

June 2017

Pearson Edexcel Functional Skills  
ICT Level 1 (FST01)

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## **Introduction**

The functional skills specification and examinations are firmly established. The content, layout and degree of difficulty of all previous papers, paper-based and online, was reflected in this series.

Despite Awarding Body support mechanisms, past papers and Principal Examiners' reports being in the public domain, large numbers of candidates appeared either ill-prepared for the examination or without the necessary skills to access the tasks. Although there were a handful of high scoring candidates the quality of work from the majority was disappointing.

Innumerable candidates appear to have problems understanding the instructions for collating their work. Scripts were submitted with holes incorrectly punched, upside down, incorrectly ordered etc. Centre based supervision and/or preparation would alleviate such issues and undoubtedly facilitate the marking activity.

There were five tasks to be completed by candidates based on a fictional cultural society and the recent release of a DVD of local sights and sounds. Large numbers of candidates could have secured far higher marks – and in many cases a resultant pass grade - by simply following and carrying out the specific instructions in the paper.

## **Task 1 – Internet research**

Candidates were required to search the internet and find a single image of a golden eagle. The image and the website from which it was retrieved were to be entered on the Responses document which was then to be printed as part of the candidate's evidence. The image was required for use in Task 3.

Large numbers of candidates provided the screen shot of a search engine within which appropriate key words were visible and recorded both the image and source used securing all 4 of the marks available.

As always, some candidates presented a screen shot of the result of the search rather than the search engine/key words in which case full marks were not accessible. A few presented a whole gallery rather than a single image and two or three candidates searched for gold eagle instead of golden eagle with the result that their retrieved image was not a bird. It was disappointing to note the numbers of candidates recording the search engine as the source at this series.

Areas for improvement and development:

- reading the task and instructions carefully
- providing the requisite evidence
- differentiating between a search engine and a web page.

## Task 2 – Spreadsheet

A spreadsheet was provided for the candidates use in Task 2. The spreadsheet gave details of monthly sales of DVDs. The main requirements of the task were to enter values into specific cells; calculate outcomes using addition, multiplication and an average function; format the spreadsheet and create a pie chart to display the total (of DVDs) sold by each member of the society. Although some candidates scored well on this task, there were a significant number with limited spreadsheet skills.

Most candidates entered the requisite three values into the correct cells on the spreadsheet and secured all three marks for 2(a). There were instances of the values being omitted or overlooked entirely but no reports of misplaced content at this series.

Tasks 2(b), 2(c) and 2(d) involved using formulae and functions to generate values, with most the marks gained from the formula view of the spreadsheet. A significant number of candidates failed to produce a formula view printout and were seriously disadvantaged in terms of the number of marks they could access in these sections of the task.

Most of those candidates who did produce a formula view printout evidenced all three calculations in some way or other although it was disappointing to note the regularity with which the unnecessary use of =SUM occurred. For example, =SUM(B4:F4) is all that was required in 2(b) yet the =B4+C4+D4 etc approach was often seen as was =SUM(B4+C4+D4 etc).

Task 2(c) required candidates to multiply the value calculated in 2(b) by the 10.75, the price of a DVD, as given in the question paper. The use of a specified figure rather than a cell reference appeared to confuse many candidates. Significant numbers of candidates omitted this calculation or calculated it manually and then entered their own values. The unnecessary use of =SUM was frequently encountered in this calculation. The final mark in 2(c) was for replication of columns G and H to row 12 only. Where this was directly evidenced it was usually correct although there were a handful of instances where the replication continued past row 12.

The use of an average function was required in 2(d). In the main, on the formula view printouts available, the syntax and format of this average was correct. The instruction required the average to be calculated for each month; several candidates incorrectly extended the calculation past the end of the months and under the totals.

There was a specific instruction to format the average sold values to 0 decimal places at 2e(i). Most candidates accessed this mark but some failed to apply the required formatting or used £2dp for some reason. As at previous series, a surprisingly significant number of candidates ignored task 2(e)(ii) altogether, did not remove the truncation or add any additional formatting whatsoever and, therefore, failed to secure the marks available.

2(f) required candidates to create a pie chart to display the total sold by each member using the values calculated in 2(b). Many candidates appear

confident with pie charts and some high marks were secured on this task. Omission of data labels on the segments meant it was frequently impossible to determine whether the correct data range had been selected. Despite the wording of the task and clear indication of an appropriate title, frequently candidates omitted a title entirely whilst others were often ill conceived, incomplete or inappropriate. There were instances of omitted, duplicated or incorrect legends and superfluous data and spreadsheet content on the page.

Despite the specific instruction to create a pie chart, it was disappointing to note the significant numbers of bar charts presented.

Areas for improvement and development:

- printing in formula view
- efficient formulae
- correct syntax
- consider calculated values in context
- check legibility and content of printouts
- appropriate and effective formatting
- selecting specific data
- creating appropriate charts correctly labelled with titles and legends.

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

In Task 3(a), candidates were asked to create an advert to increase sales of the DVD.

They were required to include: the text from the give data file AdvertTextL1, the price of a DVD (10.75) from the question paper, the image of a golden eagle retrieved from the internet in Task 1, the logo and one other image from the ImagesJun17L1 folder.

Although there were some very good attempts at this task and some reasonable marks secured, the independence this task presents seemed outside the scope and skillset of many candidates.

Very few candidates omitted the task entirely. Most used word processing or DTP software but there were a number of adverts created in presentation software. Selecting A5 portrait as the size and orientation for the advert proved problematic to many candidates; there were innumerable A4 adverts together with other odd shapes and sizes including landscape orientation.

Most, but not all, candidates secured the marks for incorporating the provided title and text, price, logo and images as expected but there were notable errors and omissions. The most frequently recurring issues were lower case title, missing final sentence of the text, omitted logo, more than one image and inappropriate choices of image.

The logo was often cropped or distorted and seldom positioned suitably at top or bottom. Frequently candidates failed to consider placement of the images and few were co-located with related text.

The overall presentation of the adverts was disappointing. There were a handful of borders and some examples of bullets and centre alignment but many candidates failed to incorporate any formatting whatsoever within their document.

Very few candidates secured the fitness for purpose mark due, usually, to omitted content.

Areas for improvement and development:

- improved skills in accessing different page sizes, layouts and design
- following instructions in respect of incorporating provided and sourced material
- incorporation of consistent and effective formatting.

Task 3(b) required candidates to use the Responses document to record their answers. In task 3(b) candidates were required to identify two features of a strong password. Although omitted entirely by some and poorly answered by a few others, this task was answered reasonably well with mixing capital letters and numbers as the most frequently recurring answer.

Many of the answers were single words or phrases eg numbers, capital letters, symbols which, on their own, are insufficient to constitute a correct answer in the context of the question and thus could not secure marks.

Areas for improvement and development:

- knowledge of a range of features of a strong password
- devising a phrase/sentence identifying and describing such a feature.

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

Task 4 required candidates to email the advert created in task 3 as an attachment to Elaine Campbell, the secretary of Glenachulish Cultural Society. The email address to be used was provided.

Most candidates appeared to have access to offline email software as expected but still examples of personal email accounts being used were reported. It was good to note that there were very few instances of word processed documents being submitted for this task this series.

Most candidates scored reasonably well on this task but as always there were examples of misspellings in the address, inaccurate or incomplete subject lines and, in a few cases, the wrong attachment or none at all.

Most candidates included both elements in their message, asking Elaine to send the advert to local tourist information centres. Some of the language and tone of the messages was totally inappropriate and out of context. There were omitted/superfluous salutations. 'Hi' or 'Hey' was used regularly and a handful of candidates used text speak.

Areas for improvement and development:

- copying the addressee details as given
- including a suitable subject line
- writing appropriate message
- using business like language and tone in the message
- producing a screen shot of a sufficient size to enable it to be read.

## **Task 5 – Using ICT**

Task 5 required candidates to create a new folder called Sights and Sounds and move their spreadsheet and advert into that new folder; providing a printout of a screen shot to show this had been done.

Many candidates secured both marks available, although a surprisingly large number incorrectly capitalised Sights and Sounds or omitted one or other of the final letter 's'.

Some of the screen shots were inappropriately sized and difficult to decipher.

Areas for improvement and development:

- reading the task and instructions carefully
- copying the name as given
- producing a screen shot of a sufficient size to enable it to be read.

Pass mark for FST01 in June 2017

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

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