

Principal Examiner Feedback

March 2013

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, improved spreadsheet skills, including the ability to sort and to format a spreadsheet plus producing a functional chart, allowed these candidates to gain high marks for Question 2. But as in previous series, there are still centres that entered candidates who lacked the knowledge to access the higher marks.

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 the Edexcel website. 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 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 or attached to the cover sheet.

There were five tasks to be completed by candidates; the background to which was a garden services company.

Section A

Task 1

In Task 1 candidates were asked to search the internet for the address, including postcode, of the Chelsea Flower Show. This task was generally well done and most candidates gained either three or four marks although a small number failed to copy a full or relevant web address, this was generally when candidates included the Google ULR. Candidates need to be reminded that Google is a search engine and is therefore not appropriate when requested to enter the website address of the source of the information required in the test.

The majority of candidates were able to identify the required information, however there was a frequent lack of understanding of the requirement to produce a screen shot to show the search engine. Some candidates produced a screen shot of a website instead. Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that their screenshot evidence is clearly readable. Many examiners noted that candidates had produced the correct screenshot, but some of the marks were not gained because it was not possible to read the text they had typed in. Candidates should be reminded that the Google website is a search engine and is therefore not appropriate when requested to enter the website address of the source of the information required in the test.

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
- copying website addresses accurately and completely

Section B

Task 2

In task 2, candidates were presented with a spreadsheet which contained figures for the cost of cutting customers lawns. Candidates were asked to correct data for one customer and then calculate the total cost per visit and the monthly charge for each customer. They were then asked to sort the spreadsheet in ascending order by customer name and format the spread sheet to make it clearer and easier to understand. Finally they were asked to produce a chart to display the monthly charge for each customer.

Almost all candidates entered the correct data into the spreadsheet. Most candidates used a workable formula to calculate the total cost per visit and replicated it correctly. A significant number used addition instead of multiplication to calculate the monthly charge. It is common for candidates to include 'Sum' in a formula when it is superfluous. A minority of candidates lost marks because they failed to produce a formula printout. Most candidates sorted the spreadsheet in ascending order by customer name but not all sorted all the data correctly.

More candidates formatted the spread sheet appropriately compared to previous series. They were asked to format currency to £ and two decimal places and many candidates did this successfully, however some applied this formatting to the non currency column. There is still a number of candidates who did not apply any formatting who did not check that the printout has been produced without truncation.

Most candidates produced the bar chart from the required data range. A small number of candidates produced a pie chart. However, titles and axes labels were not well done, candidates should be encouraged to use the wording of the question to guide them to add a suitable title and axis labels.

Areas for improvement and development:

- checking data entry for accuracy
- checking that data is formatted appropriately
- adding appropriate borders and shading
- using font enhancements to improve layout of spreadsheets
- appropriate use of the =SUM function
- replication
- sorting data in a spreadsheet
- printing the formulae view of a spread sheet
- selecting data for graphs
- adding titles and axis labels to graphs
- removing unnecessary legend from graphs
- printing data from a spreadsheet
- printing a chart using appropriate size and proportions, on a separate sheet

Task 3

This task required candidates to produce an A4 flyer for Summer Garden Services. They were then asked to create a new folder and move the flyer into that folder.

There is still a general lack of understanding about the purpose of different types of document and how these meet the needs of a task and are made fit for purpose. Consequently, many candidates created a poster rather than a flyer and some used the term 'poster' in the file name.

Many candidates did not delete the selection of given text about carpets and curtains steamed cleaned. Despite feedback in previous reports and guidance within the mark scheme regarding the use of WordArt, candidates continue to use this feature for their titles. Candidates should be taught that WordArt is rarely appropriate in business documents.

Most candidates inserted the logo and positioned it in a suitable location and inserting suitable images did not cause many difficulties for candidates. Those who lost marks for this generally inserted too many images or distorted the images when resizing.

The address of the Chelsea Flower Show was generally inserted in the correct place although some candidates deleted the information regarding the stand at the Flower Show. Candidates need to check that they have met all the criteria for the document using the questions to guide them.

Only a small number of candidates generated a document that was of sufficient overall quality to be fit for purpose.

Most candidates created a new folder with the correct name and successfully moved the flyer into the folder.

Areas for improvement and development:

- selecting appropriate software to produce a flyer
- using page setup to ensure correct size and orientation
- selecting appropriate text from a text file
- selecting appropriate images from an image bank
- maintaining image proportions
- using appropriate image sizes
- using appropriate font sizes and styles
- considering suitable layout of text and images
- checking a document for fitness for purpose

Task 4

Candidates were asked to produce an email to the Manager of Summer Garden Services. The majority of candidates successfully demonstrated the use of email software. Most candidates entered the correct e-mail address and subject heading.

Candidates were required to include a message asking if the flyer included all the necessary information, majority of candidates did this, however many 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
- using a suitable business tone in the message

Task 5

This task required candidates to give one reason why Joel was concerned about viruses and one way he could minimise the risk from viruses. The majority of candidates gained one or two marks in this task but a minority gave answers related to human or plant viruses.

Areas for improvement and development:

- relating questions in the paper to the subject ICT

Pass mark for FST01

Maximum mark	50
Pass mark	35
UMS	6

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

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