

Information & Communication Technology B

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1995**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE 1095**

Report on the Components

January 2008

1995/1095/MS/R/08J

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education Information and Communication Technology B (1995/1095)

REPORTS ON THE UNITS

Component/Content	Page
Coursework Component for ICT B Syllabus 2378	1
Coursework Component for ICT B Syllabus 2379	4
2380/01 Paper 2 (Foundation)	7
2380/02 Paper 2 (Higher)	11
Grade Thresholds	14

Coursework Component for ICT B Syllabus 2378

General Comments

Candidates following this course were guided to submit coursework either based on a Health Centre or Travel in line with the guidance provided at INSET.

The vast majority of Centres followed either the Wage Slip scenario, e-ticket scenario or one of the sample assignments linked to advertisements found in the 'Approved Specification'.

Most Centres had taken more notice of the 2nd paragraph of 7.1, Marking Criteria for Internally Assessed Work on page 40. "Each successive statement builds upon the previous statement and candidates must have completed the lower statement before they can be awarded the next mark range."

In general, the standard of marking and internal standardisation by Centres for January 2008 was of a good standard.

Annotation

Most Centres used the Front Cover Assessment Sheets giving the page numbers where evidence could be found. This helped with cross-referencing and aided the moderation process.

Some Centres gave extra annotation within the coursework portfolios, and this was greatly appreciated by the moderating team. Some annotation or indication where tutors are allocating marks benefits both the candidate and the moderator.

Although annotation is not essential, its use is greatly appreciated and aids the moderation teams and is an example of best practice.

Arithmetic errors

A small number of Centres had different marks on the MS1 form (the form sent to OCR to record candidates' marks, and the form used by moderators to select their sample), to the mark on the Cover Sheet of the candidate's work.

Before posting the coursework sample to moderators, Centres are reminded to double check that the mark on the MS1 is the same as the mark allocated to the candidate on the Front Cover of the coursework portfolios.

MS1s

When completing the MS1s, Centres need to ensure that the intended mark is clear on the copy sent to the moderator.

Quite often Centres had written on the MS1 while resting on other pages, making the whole MS1 impossible to read, or they had not put sufficient pressure on to ensure that the moderator's copy was clear enough to request a fair sample. Again this slowed down the moderation process.

Marking Criteria

A small number of Centres had not used the OCR published marking criteria on pages 40 – 43 of the approved specification. Centres should not make up their own mark schemes, as this could damage the results of their candidates.

Communication Mark

Some Centres are being too lenient and awarding high marks for work that is below par.

Assessment Objective 1

Choosing and Describing Applications

Candidates performed well, the level of evidence for this section is getting better with every session.

Using Hardware & Using Software

Again the level of evidence suggested some very good teaching and learning, most candidates reached the higher mark threshold.

Inputting Data

Most candidates were in the 2/3 mark threshold. Candidates still need to give more evidence as to how their designed system reduces the possibility of data errors. Although there is now evidence of this being put right.

System Output

Depending on the assignment chosen, not all candidates were able to describe alternative outputs or the benefits and drawbacks of each.

Assessment Objective 2

Analysis

Possibly the most important aspect of coursework. Candidates who performed well here tended to perform well throughout the Unit. When done well, candidates maintained their focus and knew exactly what they were designing and why.

Design, Implementation, Testing

Centres should remember that the lower order marks relate to the Analysis and the candidate's ability to identify and complete their ICT system.

Most candidates performed well, but to secure the highest marks candidates should annotate their own work giving reasons as to why changes have been made, why some designs have been retained and others discarded.

Some Centres were very generous in awarding marks for AO2b without any of the above evidence. These Centres often had their marks adjusted.

Evaluation, Application and Effects

This was again the weakest aspect of coursework. Candidates did not compare ICT with other methods, or justify when and why using ICT is more appropriate.

Documentation

This could be improved by stating who the User Guide is aimed at. That will then focus the candidates into the type and detail of guide needed, e.g. is it for the worker, client or patient?

AO3

A number of candidates did not attempt this AO. Those candidates, who did, attempted this in various ways. Some had tried to meet the criteria within other reports, whereas some gave this a discrete section within the coursework. Moderators reported that those Centres who tried the former found annotation more difficult to follow.

If candidates identified the person/people who would benefit from their system, then again this focuses the candidate to meet the marking criteria.

AO4

Again those candidates who scored well on “the use of ICT in the wider world” did so using a discrete section of coursework.

Coursework Component for ICT B Syllabus 2379

General Comments

Candidates following this course were advised to submit coursework based on a Health Centre or Travel scenario – most used the guidance as provided during OCR INSET.

Most candidates designed a multimedia presentation, either an interactive website or self-diagnosis PowerPoint for their Health Centre.

Centres had taken notice of the 2nd paragraph of 7.1, Marking Criteria for Internally Assessed Work on page 40. “Each successive statement builds upon the previous statement and candidates must have completed the lower statement before they can be awarded the next mark range.”

Annotation

Most Centres used the Assessment Sheets giving the page numbers where evidence could be found. This helped with cross-referencing and aided the moderation process.

Some Centres gave extra annotation within the coursework portfolios, and this was greatly appreciated by the moderating team. Some annotation or indication where tutors are allocating marks benefits both the candidate and the moderator.

Although annotation is not essential, its use is greatly appreciated and aids the moderation teams and is an example of best practice.

Arithmetic errors

A small number of Centres had different marks on the MS1 form (the form sent to OCR to record candidates' marks, and the form used by moderators to select their sample), and then a different mark on the Cover Sheet of the candidate's work.

Before posting the coursework sample to moderators, Centres are reminded to double check that the mark on the MS1 is the same as the mark allocated to the candidate on the Front Cover of the coursework portfolios.

MS1s

When completing the MS1s, Centres need to ensure that the intended mark is clear on the copy sent to the moderator.

Quite often Centres had written on the MS1 while resting on other pages, making the whole MS1 impossible to read, or they had not put sufficient pressure on to ensure that the moderator copy could be read.

A significant number of Centres had not used the OCR mark scheme and/or Cover Sheet. Centres must not make up their own mark schemes.

It would also help if Centres would get their MS1 to the moderator by the January deadline. Then send the coursework promptly.

Digital Submission

Not many Centres submitted work on disk. I was hoping that by now, more Centres would be submitting work on a different media than paper.

Moderators look for a complete working system, and Centres should be encouraged to send in digital evidence of websites rather than paper based portfolios. It is becoming apparent that some Centres are producing more and more reports. Centres should be encouraging their candidates to show more flair in their design and working system.

Assessment Objective 1

Choosing and Describing Applications

In the main candidates performed well. Although, few candidates commented in detail on the benefits and drawbacks of a selection of different types of hardware and software that could have been used, for the 4/5 mark threshold.

Using Hardware & Using Software

Again candidates performed well. Although some candidates did not describe the benefits and drawbacks of their chosen hardware very well.

Inputting Data & System Output

Candidates linked these sections together and provided some excellent evidence.

Overall the performance at AO1 level was greatly improved from the summer session.

Assessment Objective 2

Analysis

Candidates who performed well here tended to perform well throughout the coursework. When done well, candidates maintained their focus and knew exactly what they were designing and why. Overall those candidates who scored highly had put in a lot of work into this section. Probably more than the 5 marks merited but candidates benefited in the final mark.

Design, Implementation, Testing

Most candidates performed well, but to secure the highest marks candidates should annotate their own work giving reasons as to why changes have been made, why some designs have been retained and others discarded.

Some Centres were very generous in awarding marks for AO2b without any of the above evidence. These Centres were more likely to fall outside of tolerance and have their marks adjusted.

Evaluation, Application and Effects

This was the weakest aspect of coursework. Candidates did not compare ICT with other methods, or justify when and why using ICT is more appropriate.

Documentation

Candidates performed well here, there was some good evidence of testing and refining user guides.

AO3

Candidates attempted this in various ways. Some tried to meet the criteria within other reports, whereas some gave this a discrete section within the coursework. Moderators reported that those Centres who tried the former not only found the annotation more difficult to follow, but in some cases the Centre had not given the candidate their full credit.

Candidates need to link their discussion of AO3 to their task, some are too generic to score in the top range. If candidates identified the person/people who would benefit from their system, then this focuses the candidate to meet the marking criteria.

AO4

Those candidates who scored well on “the use of ICT in the wider world” did so using a discrete section of coursework.

2380/01 Paper 2 (Foundation)

General Comments

The examination paper allowed candidates to demonstrate their ability in this subject, and the questions catered for a differentiation in the level of the candidate's ability. The levels of achievement in this examination were wide ranging, but only a few candidates achieved very high marks.

The majority of candidates were able to gain marks throughout the paper, with no one question proving to be overall well answered or poorly answered.

There was evidence that candidates are now using correct technical terms instead of using vague words like 'stuff', 'things' and 'something' for which they cannot be awarded marks. This is an improvement on previous examinations, and should continue to be encouraged by all Centres.

In general, candidates completed the paper in the time allocated, and answered it in a more competent manner than in the past. Candidates now understand what they have to do to gain marks for each question e.g. in question 4 drawing lines to connect the software to the task, in question 5 five ticks required, in question 6(a) two points need to be made in order to gain two marks etc. In a few cases, candidates need to be encouraged by Centres to complete a question as requested. For example, in question 5, some candidates only gave three or four ticks when five were required. By the same token, candidates should be made aware that they will be penalised if they give more than the number of ticks required.

Although candidates were better prepared in terms of examination techniques, candidates did not always read the questions carefully in order to understand what was required in the answer. For example in question 3, many candidates drew very good posters but many posters did not focus on the three main headings as outlined in the question. In question 6(d), very few candidates labelled their design of the home page, as instructed in the question, and therefore missed two possible marks.

Centres need to stress to candidates the importance of keeping within the frame of the examination page. On the whole candidates kept their answers within the frame of the page; however there were some instances on the poster and website questions where annotations had clearly gone over the frame.

Comments on Individual Questions

Q No)

- 1
- (a) This question was generally well answered, although a surprising number of candidates did not gain the mark. This was usually due to the candidate's confusion between records and fields. These candidates subsequently got 1(c) wrong.
 - (b) This question was not well answered with many circling a single data item instead. This is concerning, since the majority of candidates who achieved the mark in 1(a) for identifying the number of records could not circle a record for this question.
 - (c) This question was generally well answered, although a surprising number of candidates did not gain the mark. This was usually due to the candidate's confusion between records and fields. These candidates also got 1(a) wrong.
 - (d) This was well answered, with the majority of candidates able to identify one field. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and gave a first name or surname from the database e.g. Smith as their answer.
 - (e) This was either well answered or the candidate did not answer the question.
 - (f) In this question only a minority of candidates could define the term adequately. Those who did were able to give a 'textbook' definition but most answers were too vague having used the words *main* or *most important* rather than *unique* in terms describing the field
 - (g) This question generally was well answered although a minority of candidates stated the Post Code field.
 - (h) This question was not well answered. Often no answer was given by the candidate or the code from the database e.g. SP1 was reproduced as an answer, which indicates a lack of understanding. A few candidates wrote linear measurements e.g. 3cm.
- 2
- (a) This question was well answered with the majority of candidates achieving around 5 out of 6; this includes candidates who had struggled significantly with earlier questions. This may suggest that there is a real growth in the candidate's use of the internet as a social tool.
 - (b) The large majority of candidates indicated correctly that they are very aware of the potential problems associated with using on-line chat rooms. However there was considerable repetition within the answers from a significant number of candidates, listing different types of personal information for each point. There was a tendency to write personal details, address, age, name etc as four points but this is simply repetition. Some answers were too vague to be awarded marks e.g. using phrases such as *don't accept anything, any information, open anything* rather than *don't open files* etc. Many candidates gave *don't talk to people you don't know* as an answer although this is part of the purpose of chat facilities. On a few scripts the word 'safety' in the question led to answers about Health and Safety. Responses included comments such as, *don't sit too close to the monitor and take regular breaks* etc.

- 3 The majority of candidates did not achieve good marks for this question. Many candidates lost marks on this question as they failed to focus on the three points given in the question i.e. Correct posture, correct use of input/output devices and Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI). There were some well drawn posters but there was not enough content and information to earn marks. Most pupils earned marks for the layout, design and pictures. Adopt a good posture was the most successful point with many pupils earning the two marks allocated with most getting *sit up straight* and many also referring to the need for a *foot rest / feet flat on the floor*. RSI was adequately managed with frequent mention of *taking breaks*. Correct use of input and output devices were not well addressed – many candidates simply wrote out lists of the devices.
- 4 On the whole this was answered well with the majority of candidates achieving 5 out of 6 and showed confidence about the software used for various tasks. Some candidates who did not earn full marks seemed to miss the instruction that they could select a type of software more than once. Candidates should be advised that it is to their advantage to draw their lines carefully. The answer where the candidates consistently dropped marks was *Produce a poster – Graphics software* all choosing Word Processor instead. This could be because candidates at this level are more used to using word processing than DTP in the classroom for this task.
- 5 The majority of candidates answered this question well with the majority of candidates gaining 4 or 5 marks. The most common lost mark was where candidates had selected *look for sites only available through search engines* and omitted *check spelling and grammar* or occasionally only placing 4 ticks. Most pupils only ticked 5 boxes as instructed with a very few candidates giving more than 5 ticks.
- 6 (a) The majority of candidates were able to gain at least one mark here but very often explanations of a home page were too vague in order to gain the first mark with many candidates failing to specify *first / index / welcome page*. This was unfortunate as most candidates were able to go on to describe the features of a homepage e.g. *links / basic info etc* but could not be awarded any marks. Those candidates who were confident about the definition of a Home Page and were able to expand on their answer earned two solid marks.
- (b) This question was generally well answered with the majority gaining at least two marks. There was significant repetition such as *Tour details, hotels, facilities* which only gained one mark. Some candidates gave vague references to content or information pages which could not be awarded marks.
- (c) Most candidates were able to gain two marks in this question, simply giving the words *Exotic* and *Holiday* in their answer. Other answers provided were either not keywords (i.e. single words) or words related to the company within the case study. Candidates should be encouraged to write one word only per line in such a question. Many incorrect answers given would not result in successful searches.

- (d)** This question was generally well answered. Some very good home pages were designed and many candidates were able to get 7/9 marks by including the key design and layout elements. Many candidates lost two marks for no annotation at all. Some candidates designed a page which was not a home page, thus losing marks. In order to gain the marks for contact and holiday details candidates needed to include more information than just a hyperlink (for which one mark was awarded separately). Other marks were lost by candidates who designed the web page without using differing font sizes and font styles

2380/02 Paper 2 (Higher)

Introduction

It is pleasing to see an increase in the number of candidates taking the course and the standard of coursework continues to improve. Standards overall have remained constant this year, although there is a clear need for a greater emphasis by centres upon the examination components especially 2380 where subject knowledge, particularly at the higher levels, was not strong this session. Centres entering candidates for the full course should study carefully the pre-release sheet. Centres also need to ensure that candidates are entered for the correct tier in examination paper components. Generally candidates are clearly improving in the range of knowledge of new technologies and this was observed in both the range of coursework and answers on the examination papers.

It is clear that centres providing staff to attend training sessions have a better understanding of the requirements of the course and this can have a significant effect upon candidates ability to undertake the examination components successfully.

Q Comment

- 1** The spectre of brand names still haunts questions like this. Candidates are still using trade names including Word and Excel. What ever is said to them and written on the paper does not seem to make any difference. The candidates seemed least familiar with software for creating web pages.
- 2a** Most candidates obtained one mark by making reference to the uniqueness of the customer number and some commented on customers with the same name. There is a trend in some centres to teach that the customer number's main use to search for the customer's details.
- 2bi** Many had not understood about the lookup and what it is was and what it is used for. There was a deal of confusion over terminology in this question. Many candidates interpreted "look-up" as searching the database and thus missed the point completely.
- 2bii**
- 2c** Very few candidates gained more than 2 out of the 4 marks and appeared to have little knowledge of how lookup and how validation works. There were a large number of inappropriate responses to this question. Many suggested cumbersome drop-down lists or unsuitable multi-choice age ranges. A large number proposed avoiding the problem of validating age by asking for date of birth instead.
- 2d** Most candidates could suggest two security measures but failed to amplify on them. Most candidates understood passwords and that they restrict access. The better candidates explained about firewalls or encryption, but it is still a weak area that needs improvement. The weakest area was an awareness of using different levels of access. Weaker candidates suggested locking the office doors or keeping the data on removable devices, which suggested they had not read the question or the pre-release material.
- 2e** Most candidates have now grasped the fact that the DPA is important to ICT. However, candidates had NOT read the question and NOT related their knowledge/notes to the company/Exotic holidays.
- 3a** Generally this question was completed to a high standard and most candidates gained at least 4 out of 6 marks.
- 3b** Considering this generation use Internet chat rooms, many had little awareness of what they should do when in a chat room. It seemed they were using common sense ideas

and not IT. Chat rooms may be seen as a bad thing within schools where their use is often not allowed, but candidates should be aware of the IT issues and their personal problems that may arise from their use. The majority of candidates made two good responses, but a number went on to repeat themselves or go completely off the subject.

4 Most candidates gained at least half of the available marks. The reference to use of input and output devices was frequently misunderstood, and some candidates seem unable to distinguish between school rules and genuine HSAW guidance. Candidates often demonstrated no knowledge of RSI or a good posture. Input and output devices were mostly misunderstood and details about cables, drinks etc were usually given. It seemed this angle of the topic was not reviewed or understood by most.

5 Candidates found this question very hard to understand what was actually required of them. Usability and content were often muddled up, so candidates gained low marks here due to their poor understanding. This question produced a large number of vague responses, such as "Usability – is it easy to use?" The questions on bias were frequently left unanswered. Very few understood about bias from a business viewpoint and marks were rarely awarded in this section.

There were many N/R (no response) for this question or one word answers.

6 The most common misunderstanding was that Exotic Holidays were manipulating someone else's photographs, attracting references to copyright law and even the Data Protection Act. Many candidates went off on a tangent here and wrote about copyright and how it is illegal to amend and use photos taken by others without their permission. A small minority grasped the fact that the question was talking about how the changes in a photo could affect the holiday they actually got. Many candidates gained one mark through reference to misrepresentation, though the number of specific examples e.g. retouching were few and far between.

7 This should have been a question where most candidates gained high marks as it is an easy topic area and common sense enables many correct answers. Most candidates attempted to present a balance of advantages and disadvantages, gaining at least half of the marks available. However, many candidates wrote about staff not doing the work, family members or others seeing the work, and for some reason by using your own computer it stops the problems of RSI.

8 The majority of candidates gained three marks by identifying the key issues, but in general the standard of amplifications related to the needs of the company was weak indeed. Most candidates gained the 3 main marks. It was a rarity for a candidate to gain full or near full marks, but when this happened, it wasn't always the higher scoring candidate as you would expect.

9 The quality of the responses seemed to vary between centres; certain patterns were discernable even when examiners do not see the centre details. Many candidates had little understanding of the use of translation software. One group of candidates wrote about the benefits of translation in global communication, with no reference to the use of software. Another group argued that the use of such software was detrimental to language learning.

10 Responses varied from the sublime, though the indifferent and the ridiculous, to the completely blank page, with a sprinkling of website home pages for variety.

Features included almost universally were drop-down lists, page titles and entry boxes. Features commonly left out were compulsory fields, help and security. Half of the candidates did not include more than one field for address and did not allow adequate space. Higher paper candidates should be able to review the paper first and complete (a) the questions they can do easily first and then (b) complete those questions with a high mark.

Report on the Units taken in January 2008

The question was often misread and a booking form was not produced. Very few candidates were aware of the security feature. I felt many candidates had not looked at what a data entry form would look like on the internet and many drew out a paper based form. What should have been a 5/10 mark question as a minimum for most wasn't and it was a question where so many easy to gain marks were just thrown away due to poor understanding.

Any other comments, which might include reference to the following matters:

- a) An indication of any questions which failed to achieve the intended differentiation;
- b) The use of time by candidates;
- c) Common misinterpretations of the rubric.

Many candidates do not seem adequately prepared to apply their general knowledge of ICT to the specific contexts of the questions, even though they have access to pre-release materials and their own notes. Some are apparently not used to selectively extracting appropriate material from their notes when composing responses.

Some candidates created problems for examiners by writing their responses outside the scanned areas of the page, or continuing their responses in blank spaces on nearby pages.

Question 5 seemed to fail to achieve any differentiation between the lower grades and the A or A* candidates. Bias was rarely answered correctly as very few candidates understood what was required of them.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT Syllabus B (Specification Code 1095/1995)
January 2008 Assessment Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit		Maximum Mark	a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	u
2377F	Raw	40	-	-	-	37	32	27	23	19	0
	UMS	55	-	-	-	48	40	32	24	16	0
2377H	Raw	40	38	34	30	27	23	21	-	-	0
	UMS	80	-	64	56	48	40	-	-	-	0
2378	Raw	64	62	53	44	36	30	25	20	15	0
	UMS	120	-	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0
2379	Raw	64	62	53	44	36	30	25	20	15	0
	UMS	120	-	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0
2380F	Raw	55	-	-	-	41	36	31	27	23	0
	UMS	55	-	-	-	48	40	32	24	16	0
2380H	Raw	80	55	48	41	34	26	22	-	-	0
	UMS	80	-	64	56	48	40	-	-	-	0

Specification Aggregation Results

Overall threshold marks in UMS (i.e. after conversion of raw marks to uniform marks)

	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1095	200	180	160	140	120	100	80	60	40	0
	Maximum Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
1995	400	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80	0

The cumulative percentage of candidates awarded each grade was as follows:

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	Total No. of Cands
1095	2.1	18.0	42.6	68.3	81.4	89.3	95.7	99.8	100.0	839
1995	1.4	22.9	58.6	82.9	97.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	76

For a description of how UMS marks are calculated see;
http://www.ocr.org.uk/exam_system/understand_ums.html

Statistics are correct at the time of publication

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