

GNVQ

Chief Examiner's Report

**GNVQ Foundation Full Award
Information & Communication Technology**

June 2004

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Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

This report provides detailed individual feedback for the units externally examined in the summer 2004 series.

The examination might include questions on any part of the unit content as defined in the Assessment Evidence Grid and the What You Need To Learn section of the unit specification. It was clear that candidates in some centres were ill-prepared to answer such questions. In particular, they were unable to use, identify or understand technical terms as used in the subject specification.

There was evidence of some improvement in performance by candidates when compared to previous examination series. These general points on the performance of candidates across all units apply.

- It was apparent that some candidates were entered before they were ready.
- Some candidates limited their answers to stating/ naming/ identifying when the question asked for descriptions or explanations.
- Many candidates did not read questions carefully enough. Key words were often missed with candidates seemingly answering the question they would like to answer rather than the actual question on the examination paper.
- Some candidates appeared to have learnt specific answers which they then used in response to the best-fit question. Often these were responses to questions in the January examination paper.

The following points are again made to help in the preparation of students for future GNVQ examinations.

1. The papers will expect students to have a good knowledge and understanding of the syllabus specification. Papers will be testing the application of such knowledge to real or simulated situations.
2. Delivery of courses should include instruction on concepts, terminologies and techniques and should also follow the vocational philosophy of learning by doing and by studying what is happening in the real world.
3. Papers will be constructed to test, wherever possible, the following aspects of each unit:
 - the full content of the What You Need to Learn.
 - the Assessment Evidence Grid
 - any additional points from the Essential Information for Teachers which relates to the content or assessment evidence grid
 - the generic grading criteria, which highlight the general qualities that distinguish between grades.
4. The assessment evidence grid provides an example of what might be tested at each grade. The generic grading criteria will be used, with this, to allow all parts of the content to be tested at any grade. Questions will be differentiated according to the skill being tested and the level of understanding, analysis, reasoning etc., required by the question.

Pre-prepared Work

The pre-prepared work (PPW) is intended to support the candidate's learning and provide an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their abilities.

However, there were some common problems associated with this work.

- In a few centres the work of all candidates was similar, indicating too much guidance being given. In these centres, candidates were able to gain high marks on their PPW, yet would be unable to transfer skills and/or knowledge to answering the examination paper.
- The authentication statement is an important document and should be treated with respect. In some centres Teachers either did not sign the authentication statement for all candidates or allowed an authentication statement with a photocopied signature to be submitted.
- Teachers signed authentication statements for a few candidates where a cursory glance by the examiner indicated collusion between those candidates.

Common administrative problems

In the summer series, centres were asked to send paper 01 (examination paper) and paper 02 (pre-prepared work) to two separate examiners. This was often not done, with one examiner being sent both papers from many centres, accompanied by just one attendance register that reflected the candidates who sat paper 01.

Where no pre-prepared work was being submitted for marking in the summer series, the paper 02 attendance register should be sent to the appropriate examiner indicating that all candidates were absent. This was generally not done.

In addition:

- sticky labels were not affixed to the authentication statement
- scripts were not always sorted in the same order as the attendance register. a few centres are still submitting PPW in plastic wallet
- in some centres, printouts were not each clearly identified with the candidate's, name, number and centre number.
- some candidates submitted multiple printouts for a task or printouts of tasks that were not set for this examination.
- some centres did not include signed authentication statements for all candidates.
- PPW is a part of the examination. "Clean" copies should be submitted. Teachers should not permit candidates to submit marked PPW.

Unit 1: Presenting Information

General

Generally candidates answered all questions, but did not attempt all parts of each question. There was evidence of plenty of time allocated for the paper.

There was little use of technical language.

There was evidence that some centres had not fully covered the What You Need To Learn section of the unit specification. Candidates should be able to recognise the terms used in this section so that they can respond appropriately.

Paper 01

It was easy to see the centres where candidates had been taught how to produce correct layouts for documents and those that just left the candidates to “get on by themselves”.

There is still a lot of confusion between writing styles and presentation techniques, candidates did not seem to understand the meaning of these and lost marks because of this.

The one question that was generally badly done was question 6, based on Standard Ways of Working. It was obvious that many centres had done little or nothing on this subject and a lot of the answers relied on guess work.

Question 1

Surprisingly few candidates scored all six marks for part (a). The most popular answers were Clip Art, Word Art and different fonts. Candidates are still too vague, giving answers such as 'images', 'bold' and 'italics', others use the wrong terminology, eg 'bold writing' and 'big headings'. Many candidates wrongly identified logo, which is content, as a presentation technique.

Candidates were often too vague to gain full marks, many referred to 'on top' or 'overlapping' without reference to what was on top or overlapping. 'All squashed' was another vague answer given.

The majority of candidates managed to gain at least one mark here by stating 'easier to read' or 'eyecatching'.

Question 2

The majority of candidates managed to score highly in part (a), many with full marks. Date, time and place at the top were the lowest scoring items.

It was rare for candidates not to achieve the marks for parts (b) and (c).

Many candidates gained three marks out of a possible four marks in part (d); many gained full marks.

Question 3

The majority of candidates recognised two presentation techniques in part (a)(i).

Most candidates still do not appear to understand what is meant by 'writing styles'. Part (a)(ii) was not well done with many candidates writing about font styles, bold or large fonts. Because of this, few scored well.

Part (b) was generally well answered with high marks.

Question 4

Many candidates were unable to clearly identify mistakes in part (a)(i), simply putting circles around words or groups of words without identifying the actual mistake, as asked by the question. Very few candidates scored full marks for this question.

Many candidates did not read part (a)(ii) correctly and gave answers involving presentation rather than responses concerning accuracy.

Part (b) was well attempted by the majority of candidates. Most gained four or five marks.

Question 5

The vast majority of candidates obtained the mark in part (a)(i). In part (ii) most candidates did not expand and consequently obtained just one mark, usually for 'table'.

Part (a)(iii) caused quite a lot of problems with many candidates not understanding what was wanted. The most popular wrong answers were 'Internet' and 'leaflets'.

Many candidates gaining full marks in part (b), correctly labelling the missing parts of the table.

Part (c) was also answered successfully by most candidates, with 'Internet' and 'teletext' being the most popular answers.

Question 6

Many candidates gained the mark in part (a)(i) for referring to 'catching viruses'.

In part (a)(ii), many candidates gained the mark for referring to sending photos, but there were some strange answers that were family orientated. Obviously some candidates had not understood the question.

Most candidates gained a mark for stating 'check who the e-mail is from' in part (a)(iii), however fewer gained the second mark for saying 'checking it for viruses'.

Part (b)(i) was only attempted well by the more able candidates. Most candidates were unable to discuss the importance of meeting deadlines.

The majority of candidates gained the mark for saying 'finding files more easily' in part (b)(ii). In part (iii) many candidates scored one mark for answers to do with passwords but few were able to gain the second mark.

A minority of candidates gained the mark in part (b)(iv). A few were able to say 'making files read only' but most referred, wrongly, to use of a password. They were unable to differentiate between reading files and changing files.

The majority of candidates gained the mark for saying 'recovering from loss' in part (b)(v).

Paper 02

General

Overall the standard of presentation of the work was generally much improved over previous sessions.

A surprising number of candidates only provided one or two documents, particularly in the summer examination series.

Task 1 – Information Sheet

Almost all candidates produced a single sided, A4 sheet. Candidates within some centres had obviously been taught about layout, but in many other centres there was poor use of white space by most candidates.

Many candidates had trouble with the spelling of the band members' names and in many cases marks were lost because opinions about the band members were produced instead of facts. In a few cases information was only produced about two or three members of the band.

Almost everyone included a picture or pictures, Abba being the most popular, and a few candidates went to the trouble of using their own digital image.

The logo was included on the majority of the work but some candidates did not use the given logo, preferring to design their own.

Task 2 – Invitation

Very few candidates cut out the invitation. Most of the invitations were A5 size but a few produced two fold A6 invitations, some of which were left folded.

The majority of candidates included the logo but most left out the names of the band. The date and start time of the party were usually correct but the Nitro Nightclub caused a lot of problems, usually because candidates spelt Nightclub as two separate words.

Virtually all the candidates lost the fourth mark because they did not include contact details of the promoter.

The majority of the candidates produced black and white invitations, but in most cases care had been taken to make sure that the invitation could be read and was not too dark.

Task 3 – CD Cover

The CD cover was, in the majority of cases very well designed, but some candidates lost the first mark because they did not identify the front and back cover.

With few exceptions both the front and the back were printed on the same A4 sheet of paper.

The name of the single was usually included but the band's name was often only present in the logo.

Most candidates gained credit for Sandy Lean, track listing, Starstruck or a bar code although the majority only produced a track listing.

The presentation of the cover was usually good. Fewer candidates are using a dark graphic overlaid with colour and examiners are generally able to read the writing on top of the graphic.

Task 4 – Letter

This was the least well done of the four documents. Some candidates had been taught how to produce a letter, but others had obviously been left to their own devices.

Candidates from some centres were consistent in their failure to include full sender details and very few candidates included a reference or a subject for the letter. A date was also missing in many cases.

The company logo was usually present in the correct place but sometimes it had been added as an afterthought at the bottom of the letter or was missing altogether.

The main body of the letter was in most cases brief and to the point, but a lot of candidates missed out the date of the show and some put the wrong year.

Some candidates thought Suresh Patel was female, although it was clearly indicated in the candidate notes that Suresh was male.

The opening salutation was often wrong. Dear Suresh Patel was the one most wrongly used, and those who got the salutation correct then often lost the mark because sincerely was spelt with a capital S or they used the wrong closure, often "Yours truly".

Standard Ways of Working

The majority of candidates obtained maximum marks for this as the work was spell checked and presented in the correct order. Virtually all candidates had put their name and centre number on their work, either handwritten or typed.

Most of the PPW was presented with a treasury tag although there were a couple of centres who still used plastic wallets.

A very few candidates presented more than the required number of printouts.

Unit 5: Information Resources

General

Candidates generally attempted all questions and there was evidence that candidates had enough time to complete the paper.

Paper 01

Question 1

Part (a) was answered well by most candidates.

Most candidates achieved full marks in part (b)(i), although some did not understand the term 'keyword'. Very few candidates picked up the mark for part (ii); the search condition proved difficult for most candidates.

Most candidates managed to achieve at least three marks for part (c)(i). Many however mentioned specific software and thus lost a mark; e.g. "Open Word" instead of "Open document".

The vast majority of candidates identified the Copyright law in part (c)(ii), but a few confused it with the Data Protection Act.

There was some confusion regarding what was required in part (c)(iii). Some candidates thought the question referred to the process of handling the picture rather than permission to use it. For those that did realise it related to permission, very few picked up the mark awarded for checking if copyright applied.

Question 2

Part (a) was very much a three or nothing question. The majority of candidates identified the answer from the preamble or scenario; hence the majority scored full marks.

Given that there have been similar questions on previous papers, part (b) was surprisingly poorly answered. The majority of candidates scored some marks but frequently repeated "post", which seemed to show that some candidates did not know what communications options were available.

Question 3

This question was the one completed best overall. With the exception of part (b)(ii) candidates scored well on all parts of the question. They did particularly well on all parts of (a) and (b)(i). However, for part (b)(ii) many candidates scored zero marks, as presumably they did not know how to create a selection/criteria. Additionally quite a few candidates did not attempt this part of the question.

Question 4

Part (a) was reasonably well answered by most candidates as they could identify places to obtain information about currency exchange rates.

Most candidates did well on part (b)(i), although a few lost marks for not identifying the department as 'Research and Development'.

Some candidates lost marks in part (b)(ii) because, although they may have sent e-mails, they will not necessarily have performed the tasks the 'academic' way. There were lots of variations.

Some candidates thought parts (b)(iii) and (iv) were a repeat of one of the answers for question 2 part (b) and produced the same answers. A large majority failed to gain full marks, often because they did not follow through their answers.

Question 5

The majority of candidates designed a 'data capture' form in part (a) and were awarded six marks for the fields that were given in the question. A relatively small number gained the additional marks for the extra fields. The layout of the data capture form was often disappointing as there was little consideration given for 'white space' in which to write the information. Some were similar to a questionnaire, others a letter. A few candidates thought the company's name was Stirling Props. A small number of candidates decided not to attempt to design the form.

Part (b) was answered well by most candidates.

Paper 02

Many candidates included a lot of research documentation, sometimes up to 20 extra pages. Candidates should be encouraged to submit only those tasks required.

Task 1

There was generally a good response to part (a); the majority of candidates knew what they had to do. Some students used the Internet but made no reference to whether it was an encyclopaedia they used or just a search.

Part (b) was again well answered by candidates, the majority achieving full marks for this part of the question.

Part (c) caused more problems; it was poorly answered by many candidates. In addition, a sizeable number of candidates ignored it.

Task 2

Part (a) was generally answered better than last year's itinerary. There was clear evidence of research work through interrogating on-line databases by many students. However, in some instances, although a total price was given, it was not always realistic to the journey.

A significant minority of candidates lost the mark for part (b) by showing a search engine but no search criteria.

Task 3

Few candidates achieved full marks for this question. The response by centres varied, some produced good quality responses but others achieved few marks.

Very few candidates included a statement regarding what the purpose of the notice was, such as Staff Notice. A significant number of candidates just listed the ten major categories without explaining fully the Dewey System.

Task 4

On the whole this task was well attempted, although some candidates still named a search engine as their source. A small number of candidates did not name an encyclopaedia in relation to task 1, and some candidates did not know how to evidence their sources of information.

Task 5

There was generally a reasonable response to this question, although many candidates missed marks through not fully evidencing their backups – a lot of students forgot to provide information about where the assignment was saved. Some candidates only displayed the folders where the files were stored. In addition, many candidates do not know the value of backing up to different storage sources. Many backed to the same drive.

Standard Ways of Working

Very few problems as the majority of candidates had the tasks in the correct order.

Grade Boundaries

Y101T ICT Presenting Information

Unit no		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N	U
Y101T	Upper	98	74	56	39	22
	Lower	75	57	40	23	
	Cumulative % of candidates	3.9	33.7	72.6	89.9	100.0

Y105T Information Resources

Unit no		Distinction	Merit	Pass	N	U
Y105T	Upper	98	76	60	44	28
	Lower	77	61	45	29	
	Cumulative % of candidates	4.2	36.6	71.5	88.9	100.00

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