

November Test Series 2006

Chief Examiner's Report

Information Communication Technology

Level 3

General Comments

The test provided a good range of level 3 skills. Candidates responded well and although the entry numbers were slightly lower than in November 2005, the percentage pass rate improved. The focus of the paper was on a database and query followed by word processing skills, the ability to import and position a graphic, and mail merge.

Task A

Almost all candidates successfully imported the data and were able to produce the table design showing correct field names, although a few had an additional ID field. Most were able to set the primary key and data types including the logical fields.

The validation rule caused a few problems with some candidates using 'OR' instead of 'AND' and others unable to employ the correct operands.

A variety of records was produced for the query, although the majority managed the correct outcome. Others clearly had difficulty in using the correct search criteria with the result that the report contained either too many or too few records. Most had selected the correct fields. The ability to group and sort is improving although it continues to be an issue for a few.

Task B

With a few exceptions, the majority of candidates were able to import the data correctly. All but a few were able to import the graphic, position it and crop appropriately. The setting of tabs, including decimal tabs, was generally done well and there is a clear improvement in the candidates' ability to address this.

A very small number of candidates did not appear to be able to use mail merge but, apart from the few, the introduction and positioning of merge fields was well done. Some candidates used an address block which was not as directed by the question paper but it was clear from the subsequent printouts that fields were appropriately set. Some candidates lost marks for inappropriate spacing and quite a few did not manage to replace all the words with a merge field. A few failed to printout a copy of the unmerged letter which impacted on the marks for the printout of the merged letters.

The majority of the candidates were able to produce a printout of the selected letters required although a few simply printed copies of all the letters

Almost all were able to set up a new folder with the correct name and the correct file.

Task C

There is still a small number of candidates who continue to lose marks because their files do not clearly demonstrate the use of the appropriate software. Candidates are reminded that a simple list is no longer acceptable. The test paper specifies that the evidence of files saved must be in the form of a screen dump. Centres are reminded again that candidates should not have access to other files during a test.

Recommendations to centres

The setting of validation rules needs further practice

Candidates need to be able to produce a query using specified criteria

Further practice is needed in the insertion merge fields

Candidates must be able to set up folders and files with the correct names

Impress upon candidates the need to follow the test instructions carefully and accurately

Candidates need to have covered fully the criteria set out in the key skill test specifications which can be found on the QCA website.

Chief Examiner
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