INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 0417/11
Written Paper

Key messages

Questions requiring one word or single sentence answers were handled fairly well, while the questions requiring more detailed answers needed to contain more explanation or discussion. Any question inviting the candidate to discuss advantages or disadvantages requires comparisons to be made. It is important that candidates spend time reading a question thoroughly so that they are sure of what is required.

General comments

A continuing issue is the use of brand names in answers. It is clearly stated on the front page of the question paper '*No marks will be awarded for using brand names of software packages or hardware*.' Although there were fewer opportunities in this paper to make this mistake, some candidates still did.

The question that required choosing options from a list, **Question 5**, was answered very well as were the tick-box questions. When answering other questions, it might be advisable for students to list their thoughts in rough before choosing the ideas that would be appropriate given the phrasing of the question.

There was still a tendency for some candidates to guess when they did not know the answer and they reproduced answers from past mark schemes that were completely unrelated to the question. This was particularly the case with **Question 13**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was well answered, with nearly all candidates scoring at least four marks and the large majority scoring at least five marks. The second icon caused the most problems, with many candidates repeating their answer to the first icon.

Question 2

This was generally answered well, though many candidates failed to achieve full marks. Industrial environments produced the most incorrect answers.

Question 3

This was not as well answered as expected, with a number of candidates having difficulty. There were quite a few candidates giving answers that indicated they did not know a great deal about the different types of storage methods. However, most candidates provided at least two correct answers. A surprising number answered magnetic tape for the first option.

Question 4

Although better answered than **Question 3**, there were a number of candidates who gave at least two incorrect answers, with environmental monitoring and what ifs the most frequently mismatched uses.

Question 5

Part (a) was very well answered, with the vast majority of candidates providing the correct answer.

Part (b) not as well answered as **part (a)**, though the majority of candidates gave the correct answer. The candidates with weaker responses throughout, confused RAM and ROM.

Part (c) was the least well answered part, with only about two thirds of candidates giving the correct answer. A number of candidates seemed to think that ROM or RAM was a medium to back up data.

Question 6

This question was well answered, with the majority of candidates scoring at least 4 marks. Those that did not score full marks often omitted the 'meaning' part of the answer. 'Repeat' was a popular incorrect answer, showing that these candidates did not read the question properly.

Question 7

This question was fairly well answered, with candidates doing better on **part (a)** than **part (b)**.

(a)   Candidates did well on this question, with the majority of candidates naming at least one of the correct sensors.

(b)   This was better answered than questions on this topic have been in the past; many candidates scored at least two marks. A large number of candidates, however, treated this as a question on control rather than monitoring. This area of the syllabus continues to be one where candidates seem less prepared when compared with other aspects of the syllabus.

Question 8

This question was, on the whole, answered quite well with most candidates gaining at least half marks. Common incorrect answers were 'wireless area network' for WAN and a 'wide local area network' for WLAN.

Question 9

This question was very well answered, with many candidates scoring full marks.

Question 10

This was fairly well answered, with most candidates able to score at least two marks but few achieved full marks. Candidates lost marks as they failed to understand that the question required them to identify the computer processes behind an ATM transaction, not to just explain the steps taken by a customer in using an ATM.

Question 11

This question was fairly well answered. Many candidates scored at least one mark, whilst the candidates with stronger responses throughout scored at least two marks. A surprising number of candidates, close to one in ten, did not attempt this question.

Question 12

Candidates had mixed success with this question. Most did very well on **parts (a)**, **(b)** and **(d)**, though they did less well on **parts (c)**, **(e)** and **(f)**.

(a)   The vast majority of candidates scored the mark. A minority of candidates gave the answer 9.

(b)   Candidates did even better on this part, with very few getting it wrong. A small minority of candidates gave the answer 5.

(c)   This was not well answered. Many candidates gave L5000 as an answer, which suggested that either the candidate ignored the first sort completely or did not know how to do a combined sort.

(d)   This was well answered, with the majority of candidates providing the correct answer.

(e)   This was not as well answered, with only just over half the candidates scoring one or more of the available marks. The majority of candidates failed to name the validation check correctly. A number of candidates did not even attempt this part of the question.

(f)   This part was also not very well answered, with many candidates ignoring the fact that the hard disk was fixed.

Question 13

This question was reasonably well answered, with many candidates gaining at least half marks. Candidates tended to do substantially better on **part (c)** than the other two parts, although **part (a)** was answered better than **part (b)**. Each part of the question produced responses that were unrelated to the question and appeared to have been learned to memory from past papers.

(a)   This part was fairly well answered, with many candidates identifying the method but finding it difficult to give the advantage. Some used observation as a method despite the wording of the question. Some candidates gave surprising answers concerned with implementing a new system, e.g. phased, parallel, and direct changeover.

(b)   This part of the question was not particularly well answered, with most candidates struggling to gain more than one mark. File structure, and input/output formats were the most common combination of marks. Candidates with weaker responses throughout often struggled, some confused it with expert systems and system implementation.

(c)   Many candidates answered this question well and achieved good marks. Candidates with weaker responses throughout were unable to identify two types of documentation and gave a variety of responses, on a variety of topics, seemingly from past exam papers.

Question 14

This question produced generally weak responses, where candidates gave answers that related to sending and receiving emails despite the question asking for four 'other' ways in which emails can be managed on a smart phone.

Question 15

This question was fairly well answered, with the majority of candidates scoring at least three marks. Hub, switch and bridge scored many candidates marks. A number gained the extra marks for distinguishing how a hub and a switch handle the data. Few managed to describe how a bridge uses the data. Many seemed to know what the devices were without being able to describe how they use the data.

Question 16

This question proved challenging for many candidates. It produced the weakest responses of any question on the paper. Most candidates did not compare advantages and disadvantages, just stating facts about tablet computers. The 'discuss' feature of the question was frequently ignored by most students and answers overall were very superficial. Many candidates gave answers about the features of a tablet computer without comparing it to other computers. Most candidates concentrated on costs, battery life and students' use, but none were able to put themselves in the position of the teacher and fully understand what a tablet could bring to him or her.

Question 17

This question was not particularly well answered on the whole. However, the vast majority of candidates were able to make at least one good point, with candidates who scored well throughout gaining reasonable marks. Many candidates did not seem to know the different properties/uses of DVDs and often confused them with CDs. Some candidates answered in respect of DVD players rather than types of DVD. Many included Blu-ray in the discussion. A number of candidates were uncertain on the difference between DVD ROM and DVD R.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

| Paper 0417/12 |
| Written Paper |

Key messages

Questions requiring one word or single sentence answers were done fairly well, while the questions requiring more detailed answers needed to contain more explanation or discussion. Any question inviting the candidate to discuss advantages or disadvantages requires comparisons to be made. It is important that candidates spend time reading a question thoroughly so that they are quite sure what is required.

General comments

A continuing issue is the use of brand names in answers. It is clearly stated on the front page of the question paper '*No marks will be awarded for using brand names of software packages or hardware.*' Although there were fewer opportunities in this paper to make this mistake, some candidates still did.

The question that required choosing from a list, **Question 5**, was very well answered as were the tick-box questions. When answering other questions, it might be advisable for candidates to list their thoughts in rough before choosing the ideas that would be appropriate given the phrasing of the question.

There was still a tendency for some candidates to guess when they did not know the answer and they reproduced answers from past mark schemes completely unrelated to the question. This was particularly the case with **Questions 7(c)** and **15**. In **Question 19**, many candidates did not answer the question as set but instead reproduced answers that appeared to have been learned to memory from a previous mark scheme. In this paper, candidates are required to show a level of understanding as well as knowledge. As has been highlighted in previous reports, this cannot be achieved by simply repeating mark points from previous mark schemes.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was quite well answered, with most candidates gaining at least two marks and some candidates gaining 5 or 6 marks. Stronger responses used appropriate terminology, while the weaker responses produced vague statements like 'click the word and split the word using enter'.

Question 2

There was good understanding of the uses of application software and a number of candidates achieved full marks. Producing a business card was the most frequently misunderstood use. Most candidates who did not gain full marks tended to suggest modelling would be used for this.

Question 3

This was another high-scoring question and many candidates gained full marks. Incorrect answers were fairly evenly distributed amongst the different statements.

Question 4

For some candidates, this question proved more challenging than the preceding multi-choice questions, with the second and fourth options causing the greatest difficulty. However, other candidates answered this just as well as, if not better than, the preceding two questions.

Question 5

Candidates did well on this question. However, they appeared to find **part (b)** a lot more difficult than **part (c)**, which in turn seemed to be a little more difficult than **part (a)**.

(a)   The vast majority of candidates gave the correct answer.

(b)   Many candidates gave the correct answer but other candidates had not read the question carefully enough and gave 'bar code reader' as their answer.

(c)   Very well answered with the large majority of candidates giving the correct answer; for those who did not give the correct answer, a common error was 'touch screen'.

Question 6

Candidates did very well on this question. The majority of candidates gained at least half-marks. Most could give three instructions but many then gave inadequate descriptions and some included multiple instructions on the same line. Few candidates who used the END REPEAT instruction gave a good description of what it meant.

Question 7

This question was not well answered, with **part (a)** producing good answers while **part (b)** was the weakest answered and **part (c)** only a little better.

(a)   Many candidates were able to identify at least two of the correct sensors. There were, however, numerous unusual sensors given, such as pollution, animal and time sensors as well as irrelevant sensors for sound, humidity and pressure.

(b)   Candidates did not do well on this question, with a few having no sensible ideas about placing the sensors and many suggesting placing them to avoid colliding with wildlife or being swept away by the current.

(c)   There were some weak answers here, despite the majority of candidates making at least one good point. Answers often ignored how the computer is used to monitor the pollution and some described ways of controlling pollution. Many failed to notice that this question was about monitoring and not computer control. Where marks were gained it was usually for "sensors send data to the computer" and the use of an ADC.

Question 8

This question was not particularly well answered.

(a)   Few candidates gained more than one mark, with most answers about services that could be provided by other means and no explanation of why the school would use an online system as well. Most answers concentrated on attendance, behaviour and the weak reasoning of the benefits of not having parent consultation meetings.

(b)   Many candidates failed to provide accurate descriptions of the purpose of User id/Password and most attempts were too vague. Regarding the purpose of the password, there was a failure to appreciate that this was about allowing access to the system.

Question 9

This question produced the weakest responses on the paper. One in five candidates did not even attempt this question. Of those that did attempt it, even the strongest responses struggled to get more than one mark. The majority of candidates obtained the mark for "internet access" but very little else due to a lack of description. There were many one word or repeated answers and, in general, many struggled with the concept of what an ISP actually is.

Question 10

Apart from **part (e)**, this question was well answered.

(a)   The vast majority of candidates gained the mark.

(b)   The majority of candidates gained this mark but there were a number of incorrect guesses of 4, 5 and, most popular, 6.

(c)   Again, the majority of candidates, more than for **part (b)**, gave the correct answer. Those that didn't, were divided between those that used the × symbol instead of * and those that just used the wrong cell references.

(d)   The majority of candidates gained both marks. Those that didn't either used the wrong cell range, or repeated addition instead of using the SUM function. Some tried to use the SUMIF function.

(e)   There were some very weak answers here, with one in ten candidates not attempting this part of the question. Many responses involved paraphrasing the question. Some candidates attempted to describe the use of such a model but failed to give reasons why one would be used.

Question 11

One in ten candidates did not attempt this question. The candidates who did attempt it tended to do fairly well, with some gaining at least two of the three marks available. It seemed that many candidates knew what encryption is without explaining why it is needed.

Question 12

This question was quite well answered, with the majority of candidates gaining at least four marks overall. **Part (a)** was the most well answered, with **part (b)** being not very well answered but candidates then did better with **part (c)**.

(a)   The vast majority of candidates produced at least one correct answer, with some candidates gaining both marks.

(b)   One in seven candidates did not attempt this question. Those that did were unable to suggest a suitable method. Validation checks of all descriptions were frequently mentioned as was verification and double entry. Setting the field type to Boolean was also not uncommon.

(c)   Candidates did well on this part of the question, with the large majority gaining at least two marks and some gaining at least four marks; though not many candidates mentioned the formatting of the report. An interesting aspect of the responses was the number of candidates who described the use of a spreadsheet.

Question 13

This question was well answered, with the vast majority gaining at least three marks. However, **part (a)** produced much better responses than **part (b)**.

(a)   The vast majority of candidates gained two of the three marks. A surprisingly large minority of candidates gave no correct answers at all.

(b)   Not nearly as well answered as **part (a)**, with a significant number of candidates seeming to have failed to read the question and answered with diagnosis-based applications. A number of candidates seemed to have no idea of what an expert system was.

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Question 14

This question was not well answered, with **part (a)** being better answered than **part (b)**.

(a)   One in eight candidates did not attempt this question. Many of those who did attempt it managed to gain half-marks or more, with some candidates gaining at least three marks. A number of candidates seemed to know the methods but some simply named them without any description and failed to gain marks because of this.

(b)   One in six candidates did not attempt this question. The majority of candidates who did attempt the question failed to make more than one valid point. Most of these answers were variations of the mark point 'problems with the existing system' sometimes repeated in a number of different ways.

Question 15

Candidates did not do as well as had been expected, with only a few achieving more than one mark. The question was about safety issues but a significant number of candidates wrote about health issues. Many failed to describe the issue sufficiently, giving vague descriptions instead.

Question 16

This question was not particularly well answered, although many candidates made at least two good points. The most common points related to reliability, up-to-date information, multimedia or the need for Internet connectivity or hardware.

Question 17

This question was not well answered. Many candidates failed to make even one relevant point. A number concentrated on what an intranet is, without saying why they are needed. Candidates who were successful wrote about enhanced security and controlling internet access by staff.

Question 18

This question produced better answers. The majority of candidates made at least one good point. Most good answers referred to deletion or corruption of data. The candidates who did better across the paper as a whole, tended to gain at least two marks here.

Question 19

This question was well answered, with many candidates gaining at least two marks. Unfortunately, there were a sizeable group of candidates who wrote about the advantages and disadvantages of using robots as this had been a question that was asked in a previous paper.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Key messages

Questions requiring one word or single sentence answers were done fairly well, while the questions requiring more detailed answers needed to contain more explanation or discussion. Any question inviting the candidate to discuss advantages or disadvantages requires comparisons to be made. It is important that candidates spend time reading a question thoroughly so that they are quite sure what is required.

General comments

The question that required choosing from a list, **Question 5**, was very well answered as were the tick-box questions. When answering other questions, it might be advisable for candidates to list their thoughts in rough before choosing the ideas that would be appropriate given the phrasing of the question.

There was still a tendency for some candidates to guess when they did not know the answer and then reproduce answers from past mark schemes completely unrelated to the question. This was particularly the case with **Questions 12** and **13**. Many candidates did not answer the questions as set but instead reproduced answers that appeared to have been learned to memory from a previous mark scheme. In this paper, candidates are required to show a level of understanding as well as knowledge. As has been highlighted in previous reports, this cannot be achieved by simply repeating mark points from previous mark schemes.

The topic of file structure seems to have been neglected in many centres.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This was not as well answered as expected, with only a few candidates gaining 5 or 6 marks. A number of candidates struggled to correctly name the use of subscript and superscript.

Question 2

This was generally very well answered, with many candidates gaining full marks. Surprisingly, the use of the keyboard produced the most problems for candidates.

Question 3

Nearly one in every three candidates did not attempt this question. Of those that did, most were able to provide examples without necessarily explaining what the term meant.

Question 4

This was generally very well answered, with the majority of candidates gaining full marks. Of those that did not, the majority found line 2 the most difficult to answer.

Question 5

Candidates did well on this question, though they did better on **part (a)** than **part (c)** and this in turn was answered better than **part (b)**.

(a)   The vast majority of candidates gave the correct answer. For those candidates who did not, a common error was 'web authoring package'.

(b)   This was not well answered, with many candidates giving 'control program' as an incorrect answer.

(c)   A large number of candidates gave the correct answer. For those who did not, there was no distinct pattern of incorrect responses as candidates chose a variety of answers.

Question 6

This question was not as well answered as expected; even those candidates with stronger responses throughout the paper tended to gain only one mark. Where candidates gained marks it was for naming at least one example of authentication techniques. However, candidates struggled to describe authentication and incorrectly gave vague responses related to how correct, true, real, or accurate the data is. Many talked about verification and validation here; lots of good examples of this but not answering the question. One in six candidates did not attempt this question.

Question 7

Over one in four candidates did not attempt this question. There were some very weak responses. Even those candidates with stronger responses throughout the paper struggled to gain even one mark. Of those that did gain a mark, it was usually for mentioning double booking.

Question 8

This question was not answered as well as expected. One in ten candidates did not even attempt to answer the question. Of those that did attempt it, the candidates with stronger responses throughout the paper did well but many candidates failed to gain half marks. Some candidates failed to describe the instructions that required the turtle to turn or rotate. Some descriptions for PENUP and PENDOWN were very vague.

Question 9

This question was not well answered, with most candidates failing to gain more than two marks. **Part (a)** produced better answers than **part (b)**, particularly with those candidates who did less well throughout the paper.

(a)   Nearly all candidates managed to give one correct variable and many gave two correct answers.

(b)   This part was not well answered, with many candidates failing to give the detail required. Many candidates failed to make even one correct point.

Question 10

This question was quite well answered, with many candidates making two good points. Unfortunately, very few candidates went on to gain full marks.

Question 11

This question produced some of the weakest responses on the paper; even those candidates with stronger responses throughout struggled to gain more than two marks. The majority of candidates failed to make one relevant point. One in four candidates did not even attempt the question. Many candidates either mixed the two media up or appeared to guess what the differences were by providing vague answers. Some candidates appeared to have no understanding of what these media were.

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Question 12

This question was poorly answered. Many candidates gave incorrect responses that related to the advantages and disadvantages of online supermarket shopping from the customer point of view, instead of the supermarket. They appeared to have learned answers to a previous exam question and answers therefore related to the customer. The very few that looked at the correct perspective, managed to write about more customers and some said fewer workers but did not elaborate.

Question 13

This question was not particularly well answered, with many candidates failing to gain marks for **part (b)**. A sizeable number did not attempt either **part (a)** or **part (b)**.

(a)   Nearly a quarter of candidates did not attempt this question. This was better answered than **part (b)**, with some candidates doing well. Candidates who first identified the three methods of researching gained higher marks on this question as they were able to match these with the correct worker. Candidates who identified the worker first appeared to struggle to go on to match them with the correct research method.

(b)   Nearly half the candidates did not attempt this question. What appeared to be a straightforward question exposed the lack of knowledge of most candidates. A variety of wrong answers were given by candidates, including lists of methods of implementation, components of an expert system to types of documentation.

Question 14

Most candidates gained a number of marks on this question. Performance was better on **part (b)** than **part (a)**, with **part (c)** providing most problems.

(a)   One in six candidates did not attempt this question. However, of those that did, many gained at least half marks. These candidates gave good answers, which described the three conditions that returned 'strong, medium or weak'. However, candidates struggled to describe what happened when the A1>12 condition was not met.

(b)   This was well-answered. Most candidates gained at least three marks, though a common omission was failing to recognise what should replace the < sign.

(c)   Nearly one quarter of candidates did not attempt this question. There appeared to be little understanding among many candidates of what modelling is. Many of those that did attempt the question gave examples of general IT applications or examples of expert systems instead of types of modelling.

Question 15

Most candidates gained marks on this question. Performance was slightly better on **part (a)** than **part (c)**, which in turn produced better responses than **part (b)**.

a)   Most candidates gained at least one mark, with some gaining two or more. Answers were often found to be very vague.

b)   Most candidates struggled to gain even one mark. This question asked for three *other* features, yet many candidates repeated the opposite point that they gave to the previous question.

c)   As with **part (a)**, many candidates gained at least one mark, with some gaining two or more, mainly for a brief description without making more than one or two points.

Question 16

This question was quite well answered, with the majority of candidates gaining at least one mark and many gaining two or more. Most candidates seemed to be familiar with the topic but some candidates seemed to run out of ideas after giving one or two benefits.

Question 17

This question was well answered, with most candidates naming two or three health issues. Many failed to go on to give detailed descriptions often omitting the time dimension. Candidates, on the whole, gave health issues but a small number of candidates referred to security issues.

Question 18

This question was well answered, with very few candidates failing to gain less than two marks. Incorrect responses were distributed evenly among the alternative wrong options. A number of candidates added more than three ticks, which meant that they lost marks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

| Paper 0417/02 |
| Practical Test A |

Key messages

Candidates can help themselves to get marks by making sure they are familiar with the main families of fonts and applying these as specified, and also by following instructions for entering data exactly as given on the question paper. In this question paper, candidates needed to pay close attention to the data selected for the chart.

General comments

The paper provided the opportunity for all candidates to demonstrate some skills, and challenged stronger candidates to fulfil all tasks with high degrees of accuracy. Occasionally, full marks were seen.

The advice given to Centres not to staple or punch holes in scripts (to secure with treasury tags or string) was mostly observed. Holes in scripts may obscure text that should be available for marking.

A few candidates reduced the size of screen prints of text to such an extent that it was difficult to read some of the characters. Some printers smudged the output, making smaller text difficult to read. A few printouts were suffering from low toner or dirty drums, such that the evidence was in danger of not being visible. If work cannot be seen, even with the aid of a magnifying glass, then it cannot be marked.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates created an Evidence Document bearing personal identity for use during the examination.

Question 2

Most candidates added the contact correctly with few errors; errors included capitalisation in the name or incorrectly formed email address.

Question 3

Most candidates accessed the correct document file and presented work based on this. A small number did not present the document at a later stage in the examination, after clearly working on it.

Question 4

Some candidates saved the document in the original rtf file format. The intention at this step is to save the file in the native format of the software in use, and also to change the file name.

Question 5–8

Most candidates provided screenshots of the page size, layout and margins. Occasionally, measurements were observed to be in inches. A few candidates did not provide evidence of the page size. The use of screenshots avoids difficulties in variations of, for example, margin accuracy due to printer settings outside the control of the candidate, or local availability of paper such as letter or foolscap size.

Question 9

Alignments of the header and footer were inaccurate in a number of cases. Some candidates did not know how to insert a full file path.

Questions 10–13

Most candidates added the title and subtitle correctly, except for a few data entry errors. A minority confused serif and sans-serif fonts. Some continued the underlining of the title to the subtitle.

Question 14

Most candidates inserted the change of page layout at the right place. A few inserted this before the title. Occasionally, the gap between the columns was incorrect; for example, the default gap setting, or one deriving from measurements set as inches.

Question 15

Most candidates formatted the body text correctly. Occasionally, one or more paragraphs were formatted incorrectly. For a minority, incorrect formatting was extensive; for example, where the formatting of the source file was unchanged.

Question 16

The full list was usually correctly identified and square shaped bullets applied. Sometimes the space between the bulleted text was not reduced.

Question 17

Usually the three items of subheading text were correctly identified and the required formatting was applied. Sometimes, additional text was incorrectly identified as intended subheading text.

Question 18

The spacing between paragraphs was often correctly and consistently applied. However, there was quite a lot of evidence of incorrect spacing or inconsistent spacing.

Question 19–23

Selecting and charting the correct data was quite challenging. Quite a number of candidates selected the years data to chart, instead of the commission values. This was the result of not observing exactly how the chart was being presented. A very few produced the wrong type of chart. Some candidates did not add correct legend data and some did not display commission values on the segments. A number of candidates did not pull out or highlight the segment displaying the largest value. The candidates also needed to examine the data or interpret the chart to identify the best year. This was quite a challenging and differentiating task.

Question 24

Most candidates added the text correctly and many identified the correct year (either from the data sheet or from the chart).

Question 25

Those who produced the chart tended to place it correctly.

Question 26–28

Most candidates placed the image roughly in the correct place in the text, but quite a few did not manage to place it correctly in line with the text. Others made it too big or small.

Question 29

Spell-checking and correcting misspelled text was often overlooked by those candidates who did poorly on the paper.

Question 30

The presence of widows and orphans, and inconsistent spacing lost marks for many.

Question 31

A small number of candidates did not present a printout of the document, often after showing evidence of working on it.

Question 32–33

Most candidates produced a screenshot of the field structure. A minority got the capacity data type wrong; this field was specified to be applied as text, not numeric. Generally, the numeric and logical fields were correctly identified and applied.

Question 34–36

There were occasional, but not many, typographical errors in data entry when adding records to the database.

Question 37–39

Those who produced the report tended to do so accurately, occasionally missing off the field 'Completed'. The count was missed off for a proportion of candidates and data entry lost marks for the label and titles for a few candidates. Evidence for the count calculation had to be seen in a screenshot, so this had to be present for the mark to be awarded.

Question 40–41

This report was often present, but included a number of errors. The selection criteria were sometimes incorrect. Occasionally, the commission was incorrectly calculated. The formatting of this field was sometimes incorrect. The sorting on two fields was frequently incorrect. The fields occasionally were not fully visible, or more often were not in the right order. The total value of the commission was occasionally omitted. The label and/or title had the occasional error in data entry.

Question 42

Most candidates who created the presentation did so correctly from the source file. Sometimes the layout of the slides did not include bulleted text.

Question 43

Most managed to set up a master slide and had many or all of the elements given. Occasional overlap, usually of text over lines, was seen.

Question 44–46

Most candidates inserted the new slide in the correct place, with title and subtitle layout set as requested. Master slide items were not always applied to all the slides.

Question 47–49

Evidence of transitions applied between all slides was often seen, but sometimes the evidence was of timings and not transitions.

Question 50–53

In the email message, evidence of the carbon copy was often absent. This may be a feature of some mailing software that makes it look on some views as though all recipients are in the 'To:' line. This has been reported on before. Some candidates ensure they have both full evidence of 'To:' and 'Cc:' and also their attached file by submitting two screenshots. There were some instances of data entry inaccuracies in the subject line or in the message text.

Question 54

Occasionally, the Evidence Document was not presented and all material that should have been collected there was absent for marking. When present, it was usually complete.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Paper 0417/03
Practical Test B

Key messages

A significant number of candidates produced screen shots that were so small (and often pixelated) that it was extremely difficult and in some cases impossible for Examiners to award marks. Candidates **must** ensure that all printouts are readable without the use of magnification devices.

A small number of candidates failed to print their name, Centre number and candidate number on some of the documents submitted for assessment. Without clear printed evidence of the author of the work, Examiners were unable to award any marks for these pages. It is not acceptable for candidates to annotate their printouts by hand with their name as there is no real evidence that they are the originators of the work.

A small number of candidates submitted multiple printouts for some of the tasks and failed to cross out those printouts that were draft copies. Where multiple printouts are submitted, Examiners will only mark the first occurrence of each page.

For all tasks set within the context of this examination, candidates were expected to use the most efficient methods to solve a particular problem. This was not always the case, both in the spreadsheet and website authoring sections of the paper.

A significant number of candidates did not read, or choose to ignore, the scenarios set within the paper. These scenarios, usually in italics, give general instructions for a whole section of the paper and apply to all the work submitted. They frequently indicate key instructions such as setting all CSS colour codes into hexadecimal, or in the spreadsheet, setting all currency values to a specified local currency with a number of decimal places.

General comments

The majority of candidates attempted and completed all elements of the paper. There were significant differences in the range of results from Centre to Centre and from candidate to candidate within Centres. The paper gave a full range of marks with candidates scoring 0 to 80.

Overall the paper performed well.

Comments on specific questions

Spreadsheets

Question 1

This question was completed well by most candidates, as evidenced by their subsequent printouts.

Question 2

Almost all candidates successfully downloaded the data files into their user areas.

Question 3

Almost all candidates successfully opened and re-saved their evidence document in the application-specific format rather than as a generic rich text format file.

Question 4

Most candidates successfully completed this task.

Question 5

Almost all candidates were able to create a named range; some used the name Range instead of Rates.

Question 6

Most candidates were successful in merging the cells, although a small number merged fewer cells than instructed in the question paper.

Question 7

Many candidates inaccurately entered this text, especially the spacing around the hyphen. A number of other typographical and spelling errors were evident.

Question 8

The majority of candidates successfully formatted this text.

Question 9

The majority of candidates successfully formatted this cell.

Question 10

A significant number of candidates did not answer this question fully. While most demonstrated the correct use of a VLOOKUP, some attempted to use a LOOKUP function and referred to unsorted data. LOOKUP would provide a solution if the data in the lookup range was sorted into order, unfortunately few candidates attempting to use the LOOKUP function did so. Some candidates did not use the named range (even when they had created it correctly in an earlier question). A significant number of candidates who used VLOOKUP looked for the return data in column 2 of the range rather than column 3. VLOOKUP defaults to a TRUE parameter if one is not specified, some candidates did not include the FALSE parameter to ensure the function performed as expected.

Question 11

The majority of candidates entered a working formula into cell G4, the vast majority using the most efficient methods and gaining all the marks for this. Fewer candidates completed the testing in the Evidence document with the same success. Some candidates failed to complete 'Testing 1' and a surprising number got the wrong expected result, usually owing to a failure to multiply correctly. Most candidates chose appropriate test data, but the more complex the test data selected, the greater the likelihood of calculation errors. Those candidates choosing easier test data (like 2 or 10 hours) frequently completed this well.

A significant number of candidates did not follow the instruction to enter test data in cell F4 and entered test data in the whole of column F. Some candidates completed this correctly, calculating the expected output, entering the data and showing the actual output from the calculation.

Question 12

The required nested IF function should have contained two IF statements. Many candidates did produce solutions like this, although a significant number produced just a single IF statement, which returned only 2 of the 3 values. A number of candidates used a three tier nested IF when a two tier function was sufficient. There were a number of syntax errors, especially with the logic, for example: using >= instead of >, e.g. F4>=E4 instead of F4>E4. There were also a number of typographic and case errors in the text returned.

Many candidates completed test table 2 as instructed, but a significant number left some or all of the table empty. Some candidates erroneously placed functions or formulae as test data rather than numeric values.

Question 13

Many candidates replicated their formulae correctly.

Question 14

Few candidates attained all the marks for this question. This required candidates to look at each cell and determine the most appropriate formatting for that particular cell. Many candidates applied the correct currency symbol to 2 decimal places to the correct columns, although a significant number of candidates applied this to some rather than all the data in the 'Pay Rate' column and the 'Rates' table. A small number of candidates applied dollars and 2 decimal places to all the numeric cells.

Question 15

Most candidates included the correct function.

Question 16

This question was completed well by most candidates, although a number of candidates did not place all elements in the centre.

Question 17

Most candidates who attempted this question completed it as specified, although a small number printed the formulae view a number of times.

Question 18

Most candidates who attempted this question completed it as specified, although there were a small number of typographical errors.

Question 19

Although most candidates generated a formulae printout, a significant number of candidates did not display the row and column headings. Some candidates who printed their formulae did not extend the column widths, meaning that the full formulae and/or labels could not be seen by the Examiners and therefore candidates could not be given full credit for their answers.

Question 20

Most candidates completed this question as specified.

Question 21

Most candidates completed this question as required; there were a small number of printouts with the data entry from **Question 18** visible, but printed in formulae view rather than showing the values.

Question 22

Most candidates who attempted this question completed it as specified, although there were a small number of data entry errors.

Question 23

Most candidates completed this question as required; there were a small number of printouts with the data entry from **Question 22** visible, but printed in formulae view rather than showing the values.

Question 24

Many candidates attempted to sort the data without retaining its integrity. There were also a number of candidates who did not submit this printout.

Question 25

Most candidates completed this as required.

Question 26

Most candidates completed this as required.

Question 27

Many candidates searched for the data 'to contain' the letter F rather than 'to start with' this letter. Almost all candidates who showed evidence of this step selected the employees who worked overtime with accuracy.

Question 28

Most candidates completed this as required.

Website Authoring

Question 29

Most candidates were successful in creating the table structure as shown in the diagram. A small number of candidates struggled with this step. Some candidates ignored the final statement in the question and left the letters shown in the table in their web pages. Centre aligning the table within the browser caused some candidates problems, with many displaying the table as 100% of the width of the browser or other chosen fixed widths. These settings negated and overrode the 620 pixel widths specified in rows 1 and 6. If candidates are using WYSIWYG packages to assist them they must check that the package settings have not overridden their instructions.

Question 30

The text entered for this question frequently contained data entry errors. It was usually set in style h2. The second line of text (set in h3) was more often correctly entered by the candidates.

Question 31

Although the majority of candidates completed this question as specified, there were a number who repeated the patterns of images and text from previous sessions, with images and text in the wrong cells. A small number of candidates selected the wrong images, despite having use of the Internet to check their selection.

Question 32

Most candidates completed this question as specified.

Question 33

Most candidates completed this question as specified.

Question 34

Many candidates completed this question with 100% accuracy; checking each image and in one case amending the image dimensions in the markup. Some candidates did not maintain the aspect ratio of the image.

Question 35

Most candidates used the correct image for the hyperlink but a common error was to set the hyperlink to the file n15_3_alligator.htm but also include a specific file path, to a local SSD, HDD or network drive. Many candidates did not create a new target window called **_gator** as an attribute of the anchor. A number of candidates created one of the two hyperlinks (usually from the image) and did not create the second (often from the text).

Question 36

Many candidates included alternate text for the images of animals added in **Question 33** but failed to add alternate text for the title added in step 32. Some candidates did not add appropriate alternative text which should briefly describe the image being displayed.

Question 37

Most candidates attached the stylesheet using the correct syntax. A number of candidates did not place this in the head section of the markup (or in some cases opened the head section, added the external stylesheet and then failed to close the head section). There were a number of absolute file paths to local SSD, HDD or network drives that would only allow the web page to work on a computer with an identical file structure.

Question 38

Most candidates completed this step but some lost marks for showing only the top part of the browser view.

Question 39

Most candidates completed this but a few printed only part of the html. In some cases the printouts had text so small that it was barely legible even with the aid of magnification devices. Evidence must be produced so that Examiners can read it with the naked eye. Where it was not possible to read candidates' work, a significant number of potential marks were lost. Some candidates omitted the html source code entirely.

Question 40

Almost all candidates completed this question as specified.