AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

Information and Communication Technology 6521

Unit 5   Information: Policy, Strategy and Systems

Report on the Examination

2007 examination – January series

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General Comments

In this January series of the examination both the AS and A2 units showed candidates achieving a good range of marks. There was clear evidence that many candidates were well prepared for the unit that they were attempting.

Candidates do need to be reminded to read the front of the question paper before beginning to read the questions themselves. It is clearly stated on the front of all GCE ICT question papers that, '…*the use of brand names will not gain credit.'*   Marks were therefore lost by candidates using brand names of specific software packages as they <u>must</u> respond to questions with reference to generic types of software.

Some candidates gave answers to questions which have appeared on previous question papers or they repeated their answers within the same question. In any examination it is unlikely that any response in whole or in part would be credited more then once. Also the importance of reading a question properly cannot be stressed enough. It is imperative that candidates answer a question as it is asked, rather than simply give stock answers remembered from previous examination series.

Often questions cover topics that have been used many times in a similar, straightforward manner, yet some candidates fail to recognise the different topics, despite clues in the questions. A study of the specification, alongside past papers and mark schemes that are available on the web-site, might have helped candidates to prepare more thoroughly.

Question 1

This question offered no context and so one-word answers sometimes failed to make clear what the candidate had in mind and therefore the candidate could not gain credit. 'Time' and 'Storage' are two examples of topics that should be included in an organisation's backup strategy. Candidates should beware of the problems associated with offering one word answers at this level of assessment.

Question 2

Some candidates were well-prepared for part (a), but too many gave answers relating to normalization or claiming that a Database Management System was used to design and implement a database.

Part (b) was generally poorly answered with many candidates picking up on the words 'evaluating' and 'software' and then describing evaluation *criteria* for which little credit was gained. 'Procedures for software evaluation' are clearly described in the GCE specification.

Question 3

This question was generally well-answered, except that some candidates failed to distinguish successfully between the two parts.

Question 4

In part (a), after offering a method of protecting the network for one mark, too many candidates went on to offer expansions which were not descriptions of how the method under consideration would protect the network.

In part (b), many candidates described the detection of abuse of the network system, which is not a network accounting issue.

Question 5

This question was intended to examine a traditionally badly-understood part of the Specification. Unfortunately, that part mentions the provision of 'short cuts for *experts*', a concept which many candidates fail to grasp. The prevalence today of 'short cuts', which are placed on desktops by software to 'nanny' inexperienced users, leads all too many astray. Another common mistake was to describe long term uses of computer memory in part (c), rather than human long term memory.

Question 6

This question was well answered by candidates and appeared to present them with no problems.

Question 7

It is apparent from candidates' answers to part (a) that the concept of 'in-house' solutions is not well understood. Future candidates would do well to give this topic their attention.

In part (b), too many candidates again saw the words 'criteria' and 'software' and mistakenly discussed evaluation criteria. On this occasion, some allowance was made for this but it should be noted for future examinations that this will not be the case. Many of these candidates had provided the same incorrect answers to Question 2(b). A few candidates gained full marks for discussing the selection of software through, for example, time considerations, company policy or the software house's reputation.

Question 8

Generally, this question was well answered, although candidates did not seem to have the knowledge required to answer part (b) of the question. 'Processor speed' is not a resource and an answer which offered 'memory', but no idea what kind of memory, gained no credit.

Question 9

Many really good answers were seen. Candidates should be discouraged from 'brain dumping' everything they know. Little of that gains credit. Many diagrams of network topologies were seen. Very few gained any credit.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.