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 – June series

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Question 1

This question was well answered by many candidates, although some gave answers which involved responsibilities that were more appropriate for network management, or which mentioned database issues which are not part of database administration, for example data normalisation or even data entry.

Candidates should beware of one-word answers, unless the question specifically endorses their use. One such example answer to this question was, 'Access; Backup; Training.' In the case of the access, if the candidate intended, 'Allocation of access to users,' that would have been an answer worth 1 mark. However, if the candidate intended, 'Denying access to unauthorised persons,' this is not credit worthy as this function is that of a network manager. The use of sentences helps to ensure that the intended meaning is clear to the examiner.

Question 2

Good candidates were bristling with ideas here, but too many seemed unable to distinguish a corporate Information Technology Policy from a Code of Conduct/Practice.

Question 3

A few of the weakest candidates appeared to be confused and gained few or no marks; but many scored well, although few gained all 3 marks available for alpha testing. Too many candidates wrote incorrectly about acceptance testing.

Question 4

Only the better candidates seem to have understood that part (a) was about user interfaces. Many gave answers which made no reference to the user interface. Some candidates earned marks with answers such as, 'He has to provide his login name and a password.' But few gave answers such as (in part (iii)), 'A status message relating to the file appears, so users are aware that others are using the file,' which would have earned 2 marks.

The 2 marks for part (b) were awarded to many good candidates. It should be noted that logging network activity cannot directly prevent abuse.

Question 5

For part (a) some candidates wrote about the standardisation of systems across an organisation, and some about standards of quality expected in systems or even in the behaviour of employees, but many did try to describe what a standard is, and gained 1 mark.

For part (b) many good candidates answered quite well, with a good spread of ideas for examples of standards, and gained 4 marks out of the 6 available. USB, JPEG and PDF were examples of standards cited. In the case of each example, the third mark was rare. For example, many good candidates who cited USB as an example standard were able to further say that its use meant that different makes of device could be employed. But few of these went on to point out that this avoided single manufacturer control of the market for such devices. A candidate whose answer included all of this would have earned 3 marks for this one example. A very common answer was to offer 'The *de facto* standard' and 'The *de jure* standard' as the two standards required. These gained no marks as they are examples of how standards arise. However, many of these candidates went on to gain marks in the explanations that followed.

Part (c) was frequently well answered, reflecting a good understanding of protocols.

Question 6

The best candidates answered this question well. There is evidence that students have studied, and even memorised examples, but in many cases, there is little evidence to show that they truly understand the psychological aspects. Also, there were too many answers about vision, hearing, touch etc., or about users' particular physical requirements.

Question 7

This question was generally well answered by good candidates. With weaker candidates, common failings were: giving multiple examples of sharing information, discussing network issues (working from home, sharing printers), discussing the benefits of the activities and not the benefits of using the intranet for that. A few candidates discussed e-commerce and other Internet activities, even clearly writing 'Internet' in their answers.

Question 8

In part (a)(i), most candidates did not have a problem, but many of those who chose to cite software for desktop applications offered only the proprietary name of the software. This cannot gain credit. Part (ii) revealed the description of many good ideas, but few candidates earned all 8 marks.

For part (b) many candidates do not know what is meant by 'a system resource'.

Question 9

Many candidates successfully applied their coursework knowledge to the synoptic discussion of the first bullet, '*How you will establish the requirements'* and scored well, writing about interviewing and observing users, and about the use of questionnaires and of existing documentation. Some candidates, however, gave extensive accounts of ways in which software solutions might be obtained, which has limited relevance to software evaluation.

For the second bullet, '*The criteria you will use to evaluate possible software solutions,'* even more candidates did well. Most were able to write about some of the evaluation criteria listed in the module specification.

The bullet, '*How you will match software capabilities to the requirement,'* was generally less well understood, which many candidates acknowledged by giving it scant attention. Those who did gain credit did so mostly for discussions on scoring software against criteria, or of testing. In the latter case, again, many candidates had plenty to write about different ways of testing software, which has a similarly limited connection to the subject under assessment.

For the final bullet point, '*The content of the evaluation report you will write for the governors,'* many candidates were able to cite the four items which the module specification lists: methodology, actual evaluation, recommendation and justification. Few candidates were able to score more than 4 marks in this section. However, this proved no handicap to the best candidates, who had already scored maximum marks for content.

Overall, many candidates scored very well on this question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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