

## Chief Examiner Report for Functional Skills ICT

Functional Skills in ICT at Level 1 – 600/0030/2

Functional Skills in ICT at Level 2 – 600/0139/2

January 2018

Level 1:

### **Skill Standard: Using ICT**

In questions concerning wider ICT knowledge, learners often respond by suggesting they would contact the IT Help Desk, or similar. This response does not achieve marks, as it does not show any understanding, and learners must demonstrate how they would remedy the issue themselves.

Learners continue to struggle with data types, and many learners do not understand what this means in the context of spreadsheet data.

### **Skill Standard: Finding and selecting information**

Learners often perform very basic internet searches, but should demonstrate that they know how to complete a more refined search with multiple keywords. Having found information, learners must review the content to ensure that it is relevant. When an internet search is required, learners are expected to save information such as website addresses and search keywords.

### **Skill Standard: Developing, presenting and communicating information**

When creating an email message, some learners omit any form of closing statement such as 'Regards', their name etc. Learners should produce a message that is appropriate for the context, including the use of an appropriate structure for the email, as if they are genuinely writing an email to someone. Issues of spelling and grammar will not be assessed.

When working with a spreadsheet, learners should expect that all calculations will require a formula and the use of cell references will always be required in developing the numerical data. Some learners complete manual calculations, and this will not earn any marks.

Learners are usually capable of producing a chart in a spreadsheet, but learners often do not label their charts; a main title and axes titles are expected. When working with documents, marks are often lost due to poor use of space on the page. Learners should review their final document and consider whether it is fit for the stated purpose.

## Level 2:

### **Skill Standard: Using ICT**

As with Level 1, learners often respond to questions regarding error messages and common ICT problems by suggesting they would contact the IT Help Desk, or similar. This response does not achieve marks, as it does not show any understanding, and learners must demonstrate how they would remedy the issue themselves.

### **Skill Standard: Finding and selecting information**

As with Level 1, learners must demonstrate the ability to refine an internet search, for example with multiple keywords. Learners must also follow instructions carefully and record all the requested information to evidence their search methods, such as website addresses and search terms. Full website addresses are often requested, and learners sometimes provide an abbreviated address that would not work if re-entered in a browser.

### **Skill Standard: Developing, presenting and communicating information**

When creating an email message, some learners omit any form of closing message. Learners should produce a message that is appropriate for the context, including the use of an appropriate structure for the email, although spelling and grammar will not be assessed.

Learners should always be aware that in a spreadsheet, cell references must always be used. The use of an IF function may be appropriate, and the use of absolute cell references is often expected. When a mathematical method is required that may be less familiar to learners, the calculation method is explained in the task.

In producing charts in a spreadsheet application, learners often show difficulties in selecting specific and separate series of data. Learners may also be expected to include data labels.

Learners often do not make use of text formatting to make information stand out, although learners would benefit from knowing how to use features such as sub-headings, image captions and text boxes. The use of tables may also be expected at this level.

In questions that require a demonstration of wider knowledge, learners continue to struggle with explaining the different types of data formats that can be used and what features make a database application useful.

## Generic Overview:

Learners are expected to use folders to organise their work, and saved files should be in an appropriate folder. Learners should develop an awareness of the importance of file management.

Learners need an awareness of how online communication can benefit business and the workplace user, rather than only knowing about social media.

The meaning and significance of data types is important to the correct function and presentation of some applications, and learners need to be aware of this.

In spreadsheet work, learners need to demonstrate the use of suitable and efficient formulae and formatting. When working with charts, learners will need to chart specified data and apply labels. Correct titling of a chart, to make its meaning clear, is important and a review of their work should allow learners to identify any omissions.

Learners are likely to perform better if they review their work before leaving the assessment room, and check that they have completed all parts of each task.

## Overcoming an area:

When completing an internet search, learners must check the activity instructions and make sure they have included all the required information. Marks are often lost because of this omission.

In spreadsheet work, learners need to demonstrate a range of skills. This will include using a range of formula types to calculate, using data types in their formatting and formatting row and column sizes. Learners must always use cell ranges in formulae, for example B2:B6 rather than a series of discrete cell references, and must always use cell references rather than numerical values in calculations. At Level 2, learners should be able to use absolute cell references and functions such as IF. In working with charts, learners need to improve their ability to chart specified data and to label it correctly, including data value labels.

In document development using word-processing, formatting and presentational features, learners need to review their final piece of work and make sure it is fit for purpose. Learners must understand the difference between a poster, report, presentation etc. and make appropriate software and formatting choices.

**Chief Examiner: David Foster**

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