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# Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level  
In Information and Communication Technology  
(WIT04) Paper 1

edexcel 

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## General Comments

It was pleasing to see that the majority of students took into account the clear instructions in the examination paper with regards to the ordering of evidence and the printouts required. It is understandable that some students may need to produce more than the minimum prints required in Activity 3 but the best advice, as shown by many students, is keep to the task specified and keep it simple.

It is worthwhile noting what is deemed acceptable with regards to help and assistance before and during the exam period. The teachers job is to prepare the students for the exam by developing the **technical skills** necessary to create a database at this level. The scenario is released prior to the examination. Teachers are allowed, and encouraged, to discuss with their students possible answers to the questions. The scenario had very clear tasks in order to aid this process. At this point, the teacher does not know the final construction of the dataset so that any datasets they give to their students for practice can only be guesswork.

**Once the teacher becomes aware of what is in the live data files they should no longer discuss the examination in context. The teacher is allowed to discuss with the students aspects of databases in general terms.** For example, they can revise the generation of primary keys, as long as the examination data files are not used as an example. The data file(s) in any examination contain data that the students have to accept as being the way we want it. It is up to them how they cope with any anomalies that may be present. This is true of any 'live' situation in the real world where they would have to make their own decisions about how to proceed. Students are not required to create any new fields, they should use all and only what they have been given.

## Administration

On the whole, administration is good, however, there are some students losing one or two marks on their Standard Ways of Working by not assembling the tasks in the correct order, or, where they are in the correct order, attaching them to the answer booklet incorrectly. When the examiner opens the booklet they should see Activity 1 facing toward them, ready to mark; this is not always the case. There have been some instances when the examiner opens the booklet they were faced with the back of the Activity 6, or the work hole punched in the right-hand corner as opposed to left. This adds to the time taken to mark an examination paper. Very few students do not ensure their name, centre number etc is present on every print though it does still occur.

## **Activity 1**

Part A expected students to be able to differentiate between input, processes and outputs. This was generally well answered with students showing clear understanding. However, at times students identified a step as more than one aspect i.e. input and process etc.

Part B expected students to give reasons as to why a user-friendly interface is desirable. Generally, where students gave three specific and different reasons they usually achieved marks. However, some students gave the same reason more than once – rewording but in effect the same.

Part C expected students to give two valid reason as to why third normal form is important. At times, the responses were vague meaning students did not achieve the marks. Where they were specific and used technical language appropriately, students scored well.

## **Activity 2**

On the whole this question was well answered.

A lot of students managed to pick up all the marks for Part A with tables for categories, treatments, clients, appointments and appointment details. However, in some instances students seemed to try to force the solution to involve only the use of four tables when, quite clearly, normalisation to third normal form would be violated.

For Part B, most students picked up the marks for the single primary keys, with many achieving the composite key mark too. However, there are still instances of students not enforcing referential integrity and using too many fields within a composite key when the extra fields are not required to ensure each record is unique. The majority of students achieved the mark for using correct data types.

Part C wanted students to format either the mobile telephone number or the postcode. There is no need for students to format dates etc and this will not attract marks. Most students also achieved a mark for using a suitable presence check, however, there are still students applying a presence check to primary keys which is not required and will not attract a mark. Some students achieved the mark for using a table lookup on a foreign key. Where the mark was not achieved it tended to be because the students had not used it on a foreign key or had not ensured limit to list was set to 'yes'. Evidence for this must come from design view and not datasheet view.

In Part D, if marks were lost here it was generally down to either the use of incorrect tables or not ensuring the number of records could be clearly seen.

### Activity 3

Activity 3 is all about the **design view** aspects of building the forms and generating the processes. Students should be discouraged from including screenshots showing the system in use as that is explicitly tested in Activity 4 and can detract from the evidence required in Activity 3.

Where Activity 3 had been attempted, all students built the client form and it was very well evidenced overall with most students achieving full marks in Part A.

Part B was also well evidenced overall. When marks were lost it was usually down to the examiner not being able to determine whether the record would save. For example, students using an autonumber but not providing evidence here to show this, students using the save method in code but not showing how the generated number for TeacherID would be assigned to the primary key, or students truncating the append query so that all of the information could not be seen. The examiner must be confident the value of the new primary key would be appended to the table.

In terms of Part C, the majority of students did create the appointment form and most followed the design given. For c(i), a lot of students achieved all 7 marks. Where marks were lost it tended to be because students did not ensure that they showed the treatment list box was multi-select and that the end and total time were disabled. For c(ii), it was very pleasing to see the number of different solutions students used. Some involved VBA code, some used macros and others used a combination of both. A lot of students also achieved full marks here. If marks were not achieved, it tended to be because evidence was lacking to show that the method would be used for each treatment selected. Most students achieved some of the marks in part c(iii). Generally, the date was linked to that selected, the 20 minutes of travel time was considered, and the start time was checked for clashes. Many students ensured an error message was displayed. Where students attempted part (iv) most achieved 3 out of the 4 marks with the appending of treatment details being the missing mark.

Overall, it was nice to see how well this activity was attempted and the many different methods of achieving what was required. The only weakness is that some students do not realise that if they want the marks on offer they must ensure the examiner can clearly see the evidence. It is worthwhile asking themselves the question – *'if I did not know how this had been done, would I be able to work it out from the screenshots I have provided?'* - This does not mean lots of annotations / screenshots have to be present. Indeed, we try to guide the students into the screenshots we want. However, if what we have asked for does not fully show what they have done, they should include more. They should ask themselves *'have I included all of my queries, have I included evidence of every part of formulae used, are my query columns wide enough, are my screenshots clear to see'* etc.

#### **Activity 4**

Overall, students did well on this activity with many achieving full marks.

Parts A and B were very well evidenced. In terms of Part C, most students achieved c(i) and the available message in c(ii). Where (iii) was attempted, it was nice to see both marks being achieved in most of cases. If any mark was lost it tended to be because the evidence of the treatments stored in the relevant table. Most students achieved both marks in Part D.

#### **Activity 5**

This activity was well attempted and evidenced overall with many students achieving full marks.

In Part A, most students ensured the query was not truncated and that all criteria etc could be seen.

Part B expected students to follow the design given, and most did. It was nice to see that the majority of students ensured each category was present only once and that the design was fully followed, including the centre alignment of total treatment and total sales. Where totals had been included most students ensured they were shown as currency to two decimal places.

#### **Activity 6**

It was very nice to see that the majority of students had taken note of what was asked of them in the examination paper and carefully ensured their evaluation reflected this with some excellent, well thought evaluations raising some very good points about future functionality. However, others still see it as an opportunity to talk about how well they have completed the examination questions or give a running commentary of what they did to build it. Please stress to students that providing screenshots of how they have built aspects is not creditworthy as this has already been evidenced in Activity 3. Students can waste a lot of valuable time doing this.

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