

EXAMINER'S REPORT

TALENT (SKILLS) CAPSTONE EXAMINATION – JANUARY 2018

(SS2) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

The main aim of this paper is to test the candidates' overall knowledge on Information Technology and skills on applying the same in an office environment while giving more concern on office application software. It should be noted that practical knowledge, on how to use IT applications in an Office environment is vital to face this paper more successfully.

SECTION A

Twenty (20) compulsory questions
(Total 40 marks)

Question 01

Almost all the topics in the entire IT Skills syllabus is tested in this question. All the candidates attempted the question and out of them many were able to score more than half of the allocated marks. It appears that majority of candidates have lack of knowledge related to fundamentals of database applications and Microsoft PowerPoint. They made mistakes in questions related to those areas. For the question **1.6**, candidates should note that Transition is the feature out of given answers in the question, that can be applied to slides in Microsoft Power Point. For question **1.11** candidates should identify that a form can be used in Microsoft Access to assist in the process of entering data. For the question **1.14** candidates should recognize that when we require to add text which can be read out by the presenter when using Microsoft PowerPoint, without the audience noticing them, the Add notes feature is used. For the question **1.17**, candidates should note that when designing a database to store customer information, we can store multiple data fields if required and it is a true statement.

Candidates must pay special attention to those areas of study. Candidates must take in to consideration that they must score well in this question in order to obtain overall higher marks.

The overall performance for this question was satisfactory.

SECTION B

Any four (04) questions only to be answered.

(Total 60 marks)

Question 02

The candidates' knowledge related to database technologies was tested. Less number of candidates attempted this question. Only handful of candidates was able to correctly answer for part (a). As the part (b) of the question was related to spreadsheets, some candidates misunderstood the question and assumed given table in part (a) also a spreadsheet. Those candidates erroneously explained that letter "V" for NIC number can obtain by entering it to the first cell and drag down to other cells for the part (a) sub section (i). For part (a) (i), candidates should note that the process can be streamlined using an Input Mask for the NIC Number field.

For part (b), candidates gave short answers without proper justification: Part (b) sub section (ii) majority of the candidates have not even understood what is expected. For that part candidates should note that when there is a large amount of data (fields / Records), storing them in excel worksheets will affect the efficiency of using the data, and there can be duplication of data, If the data is stored in a database, it can be more efficient.

In part (c) majority of candidates were unable to explain the difference between Queries and Reports. Candidates should note that Queries are questions you define and send to the data source to retrieve data. A report is organized and formatted view of the data that the query retrieved.

Candidates must devote time to understand the fundamentals of database applications. The performance for this question was poor.

Question 03

The question was prepared to test the candidates' ability to apply relative references on given formula and identifying simple formulas to do basic calculations on a given spreadsheet. Majority of candidates preferred this question. Out of them many were able to correctly identify formulas for parts (b), (c), and (d). Some candidates erroneously interpret the formulas in G4 and G5 cells and due to that mathematical calculations for remaining sub sections were incorrect.

The overall performance for this question was satisfactory.

Question 04

The knowledge regarding sending emails to communicate in a business environment was tested. This was the most preferred question out of selective questions. Many candidates were able to score high marks.

Few candidates have no idea about what signature text is for part (g). They have incorrectly stated their personal signatures as the answer. A considerable number of others was unable to identify correct file extension of the attachment for part (h). For that part any file name with a "DOC" or "DOCX" extension is acceptable as the answer.

Using email communication should be promoted among candidates in order to gain practical experience.

Candidates successfully answered for this question.

Question 05

The knowledge regarding the Internet and its associated technologies have been tested. Majority of candidates opted for this question.

The performance was satisfactory for part (b) but only few candidates were able to answer correctly for part (a) and (c).

In part (a), how to use a web browser in order to obtain required information using the internet has been tested. Most of the candidates were unable to state a reliable source to obtain the applicable exchange rate. Candidates should be able to predict that out of search results the first or close to first would be the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) link to the exchange rates with their general knowledge.

Part (c) was related to most common threat affecting internet banking users. Majority of candidates have no idea about what is meant by “phishing”.

Most of them thought it is a feature which is beneficial to internet users. Candidates should note that Phishing is the attempt to obtain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card details, often for malicious reasons by disguising as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication.

Related reading is recommended in order to gain more knowledge in this regard.

The performance for this question was at a moderate level.

Question 06

The candidates’ competence on word processing has been tested by way of how to design a formatted document from a given source document. Almost all the candidates selected the question. Majority of them were able to score marks on questions related to positioning the selected text. However, for the rest of the parts only few candidates were able to give proper answers. Most of them were unable to mention the “Crop” tool for the part (a) and “superscript” option for the part (d). When more than one feature is required to do the change, candidates must declare all such features. Practical experience is needed to learn these options.

The performance for this question was moderate.

Question 07

The question was expected to test the knowledge on Microsoft PowerPoint. Only few candidates have opted for this question. Out of those who attempted, some of them have answered correctly for the part (a) sub sections (i), (ii) (iii) & (iv). But answers for the sub sections (v) and (vi) were not satisfactory.

For sub section (v), candidates should note that it is required to have a match between the size of the slides and the size of the screen / medium used to deliver the presentation in order to get the best results.

For sub section (vi), candidates should note that Presenter view is a way to view the presentation with speaker's notes on one computer, while the audience views the notes-free presentation on a different monitor.

Some candidates have written the feature name itself without explaining.

Eg: Hide Slide - To hide the slide
 Slide Size - To change the slide size

It is clearly visible some candidates do not have a proper understanding about PowerPoint features. More practice is highly needed in this regard.

For Part (b), many candidates have explained how the stated requirement can be fulfilled using Microsoft PowerPoint. Candidates should note that the presenter can prepare the document as normally, and when saving the document, under general options, the password needs to be entered twice.

The performance for this question was not up to the expectation.

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General Comment

Notably many candidates attempted all six questions in Section B. It shows they didn't have a clear understanding in choosing questions out of optional questions. As a result, they could not gain the optimal use of the limited time they had. Some of them have not attempted some parts in each question although they have attempted all the questions.

Common points to consider for improving of the competency level of candidates:

- (1) Thorough study of the entire syllabus.
- (2) Candidates should read the question carefully a several times and should not write unnecessary explanations and details, when a direct and an accurate answer is expected from the question.
- (3) Refer study text, books, articles, magazines and other reading materials in relation to Information Technology.
- (4) It is important to present the theoretical concepts and practical knowledge relating to information technology in an organized manner and quote examples wherever necessary, when writing answers.
- (5) Make sure that the handwriting is legible and have numbered the answers, appropriately.
- (6) Follow the instructions given in the exam paper.
- (7) Study the past papers, pilot papers and answer to improve your knowledge.
- (8) Effective time management.
- (9) Check twice whether answers are numbered properly before submitting the answer scripts.
- (10) Face the exam with a good preparation and with the utmost hope of passing the exam.

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