

Candidate Guidance for TDA QTS ICT

Applications used within the ICT test are not based on a particular suite of commercially available software. Instead, they draw on generic features from a range of operating systems and application packages. This reflects the fact that the test aims to assess trainees' core ICT skills regardless of product specific knowledge and, in so doing, removes the possibility of candidates being disadvantaged by not having exposure to particular software packages.

It is essential that you use the practice tests (see the link below) to familiarise yourself with the applications and their function as this will be different from whatever you have used previously.

Question structure

The test consists of 4 tasks which include questions on the 5 software applications of: Presentation, Text Editor, Spreadsheet, Web Browser and Email. Each of the tasks has 4 subtasks, with the fourth being a reminder to save and close documents.

There are 24 marks available in total, with each of the 4 tasks structured as follows:

- Introduction
- Subtask .1 (2 marks)
- Subtask .2 (2 marks)
- Subtask .3 (2 marks)
- Subtask .4 (Closing instructions)

The pass mark of each test is calibrated against the benchmark test, the pass mark of which is set at 60%.

Preparation for the test

Practice material

Use the online practice material before you take the real test so that you become fully familiar with the functionality of each of the five applications and how these differ from software that you would use normally.

Click here to access the practice tests: http://www.tda.gov.uk/skillstestsonline/ict/ict_practice.htm

During the test

Remembering tasks

Always read the onscreen instructions carefully; they have to be carried out with 100% accuracy for you to be rewarded with the marks attached to each subtask.

Use the paper provided to record any key information, if needed, to help you to remember settings that you have to apply and/or actions that you have to complete.

Time planning

Plan your time. Don't spend too long on a question if you feel that you cannot complete it. Instead, move on to other tasks and then return, if you have time once you have completed all four tasks, during the review stage of the test.

Test navigation

During the test, note that you will not be allowed to return to the previous task until you reach the review stage. Then, you can revisit each task once.

Restarting a task

If you feel you have made a number of mistakes within a task, you have the option to restart the task using the Restart task button. Note: all your work on that task will be lost and the time will not be reset.

The test environment

You will be presented with a 'desktop' which is similar to, but not the same as, a normal desktop environment. There are application icons and a Task window with the instructions for the test.

Short cuts

In the practice tests, most keys on the keyboard (like Enter and Delete) will behave as usual, but please be aware that in the actual test you will not be able to use keyboard shortcuts (such as Ctrl-C and Ctrl-V) and the right click on the mouse will not offer you context menus.

Do not overload the computer with constant and unnecessary clicking. This will only slow the computer and waste your time.

Application placement

Avoid moving application windows off screen as this can hide functionality and buttons. Instead, use the tabs at the bottom of the page to bring the document you require to the front of the screen.

Using the applications: general points

Undo feature

The Undo feature is available in the Presentation and Spreadsheet applications. It is not available in the Text Editor, Email or Web Browser applications.

Opening files

Files can be accessed using either the appropriate application launcher or the Folder Viewer application.

When you are asked to save or download a particular file, ensure that you follow the instructions carefully with regard opening/saving.

Note that images cannot be opened as there is no image application. You will, therefore, only be asked to save the image rather than open it first.

Inserting text

Insert only the required text and information. Do not enter any additional information. Marking is dependent on the exact wording, spelling and punctuation being used.

Copy and paste

Where possible, use the Copy option on the Task pane to copy and paste text from the question to the application. This will avoid the possibility of you making mistakes when typing information. Data must be entered with 100% accuracy as per the Task instructions. Where it is not possible to use the copy and paste function, e.g. when saving a document, candidates may use the notepaper provided to write down the exact text, e.g. the filename.

Printing

When you are asked to print a number of copies, such as 3, do so in one print operation by setting the number of copies option in the Print dialogue box to the required number. If you were to print single copies three times, you would not get the mark.

Dialogue settings

Only change the settings you have been asked to change. For instance, if you are asked to set the print quality and the print orientation then change only those two options on the Print dialogue box, and leave all other settings as they were.

Saving your files

Always remember to save your files and close all applications before moving on to the next task. Note that, when saving files, you do not need to specify the file extension (e.g. .spr or .txt) to gain the mark.

Checking your work

When you have completed all four tasks, you may review your work to ensure that you have completed all the tasks correctly. You are only given one chance to review each task before the end of the test.

The Presentation application

Highlighting items

To highlight an item, select the border; it will turn yellow. This item can then be moved around the presentation or deleted, as required .

Formatting text

To edit the contents of a text box, double click within the text box. To align text ensure that all the text within the box is highlighted before you apply the appropriate formatting.

The Text Editor application

Spell checker

Read the task instructions carefully and ensure that during the spell check, misspelt words are changed to the suggested correctly spelt word and/or unrecognised words are added to dictionary.

The Spreadsheet application

Sorting data

The method for sorting data within the test is different to that of Excel and other commercially available spreadsheets. Please use the practice material to become familiar with the functionality you will be using for the test.

Functions and formulas

You will be required to create formulas within the test. Please ensure that you become familiar with formula structures and the process of inserting these within the Spreadsheet application.

The Web Browser application

Bookmarking

Notice the position of a bookmark before you move it and then again after it has been moved: bookmarks within folders are indented more than those that are not within folders.



Figure 1 – Bookmarking

Notice also the folder icon; a black plus sign indicates it has items within it. Clicking on the folder icon will expand the list to show the contents of the folder.

Further help

For further training in the areas of ICT covered, please refer to your training provider for assistance.