Let the mind manage the body
Que l'esprit gère le corps

MAURITIUS
EXAMINATIONS
SYNDICATE

NCE 2025

EXAMINERS' REPORT

Information and Communications Technology

Subject code: N540

April 2026

Introduction

In October 2025, a total of 14,413 candidates sat for the National Certificate of Education (NCE) ICT assessment. This cohort comprised Grade 9 students from the regular programme and Grade 9+ students from the extended programme. Candidate performance showed a modest improvement compared to 2024, with the overall pass rate rising from 86.3% to 88.69%.

The NCE ICT Assessment evaluates skills and competencies acquired from Grade 7 through Grade 9/Grade 9+, based on the learning objectives outlined in the Teaching and Learning Syllabus (TLS, MIE 2016). The 2025 paper was designed to accommodate students of varying abilities, incorporating a range of question types to allow each candidate to demonstrate the breadth and depth of knowledge developed over nine years of continuous schooling.

This report provides an overview of candidate performance, highlights common challenges, and proposes strategies to support improved outcomes for future cohorts. It serves as a valuable resource for teachers, students, and curriculum developers, offering insights into examination structure, frequent errors, patterns of achievement, and areas requiring curricular reinforcement. Readers are encouraged to consult this report alongside the assessment paper for a comprehensive understanding of candidate performance.

Paper overview

The ICT paper lasted 1 hour 45 minutes and carried a total of 100 marks. Candidates were required to answer all questions.

The breakdown of the ICT Paper is given in the table below:

Section	Questions	Types of questions	Marks
A	1 to 5	Objective type questions and Short answer questions	50
B	6 to 11	Structured questions	50

The structure ensured balance between recall-based tasks and higher-order problem-solving, enabling candidates of varying abilities to demonstrate both factual knowledge and applied skills.

General Comments

Candidates generally performed better in Section A than in Section B, with many scoring high marks in objective and short-answer questions. This positively influenced overall performance.

However, Section B revealed persistent weaknesses in applied knowledge. Questions on databases, spreadsheets, and programming proved particularly challenging, suggesting insufficient preparation and limited practice in these areas.

Key Messages

• Candidates must demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge across different topics in varied contexts, rather than relying solely on rote memorization.

• As ICT is a technical subject, candidates are strongly advised to use precise technical terminology when describing concepts, as vague or colloquial language undermines accuracy**.**

Areas of Difficulty

Keyboarding Skills & Word Processing:

• Many candidates struggled to identify formatting features in the given word document.

• The size of the paper was often incorrectly stated in question 7.

Spreadsheet:

• Candidates showed limited understanding of the distinction between a function and a formula.

Databases:

• Sorting data presented difficulties.

• Interpretation and completion of the Query by Example (QBE) grid remains problematic.

Practical Problem-Solving & Programming:

• Candidates had difficulty identifying the correct flowchart symbols.

• Completing the flowchart for the given scenario was a common weakness.

• Many struggled to interpret programming questions and to write correct Python statements for the given problems.

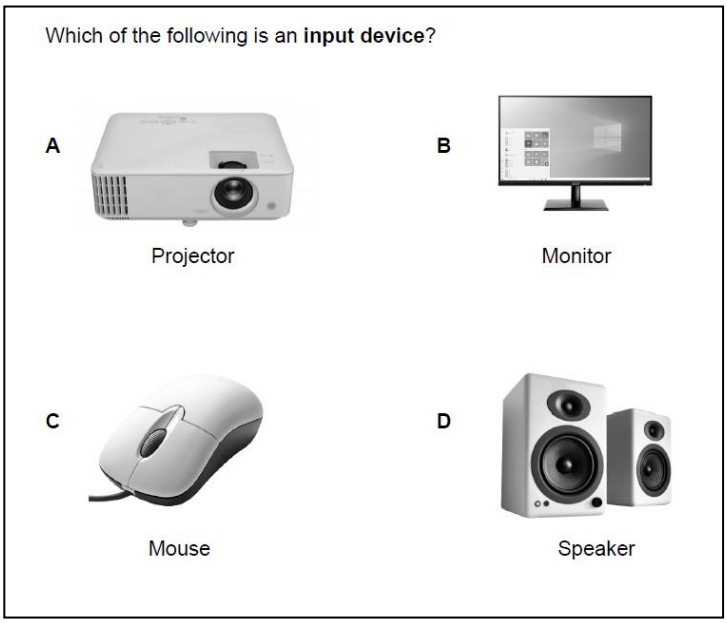
Specific Comments

SECTION A

Question 1

Candidates work well in general in this question. However, only around 10% of the candidates scored full marks. Parts (i), (k) and (m) were more challenging.

Part (a)

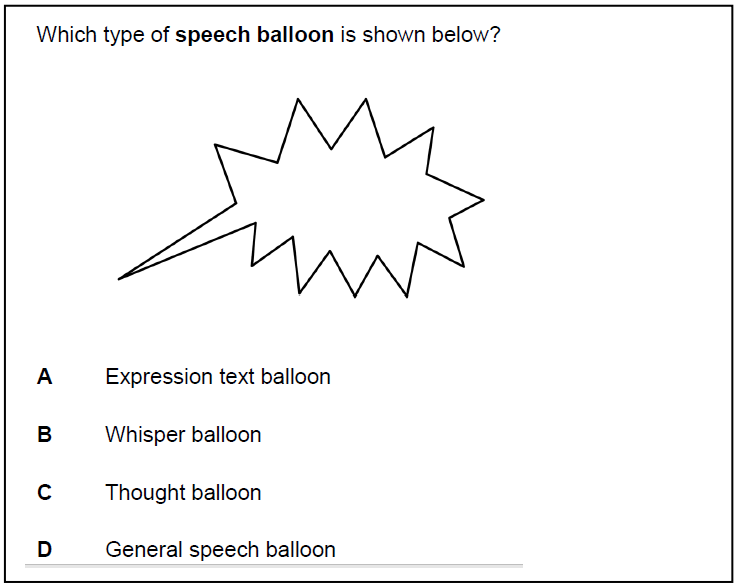


This part was well attempted by many candidates.

A few candidates wrongly identified **option** *B (Monitor*) as the correct answer.

(*Ans: C*)

Part (b)



Most candidates could recognize the speech balloon.

(*Ans: A*)

Part (c)

Which one of the following can be used to **view web pages** on the internet?

A  Microsoft Word

B  Microsoft Paint

C  Google Chrome

D  Linux

Most candidates successfully identified option C as correct.

Part (d)

How many **bits** are there in one byte?

A 4

B 8

C 12

D 16

This part was mostly well answered. A common distractor was *option A*.

(*Ans: B*)

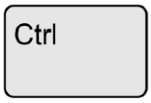
Part (e)

Which **key** should be pressed to begin a new paragraph in a word processing program?

A 

B 

C 

D 

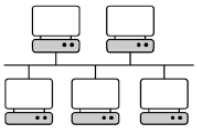
Most candidates chose the correct *option A*.

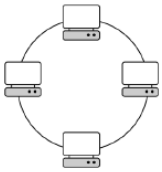
Option B was a common distractor.

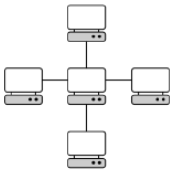
(*Ans: A*)

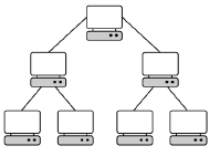
Part (f)

Which of the following illustrates a **bus topology**?

A 

B 

C 

D 

Most candidates correctly identified a bus topology.

A few incorrectly chose option D.

(*Ans: A*)

Part (g)

Which **function** must be used to find the **lowest** value from a range of cells in spreadsheet?

A MAX

B AVERAGE

C MIN

D SUM

This part was mostly well attempted. However, some candidates wrongly opted for distractor B

(*Ans: C*)

Part (h)

Which **sign** is used to start a **formula** in spreadsheet?

A +

B =

C –

D /

Many candidates correctly chose *option B*.

The most common wrong answer was option D

Part (i)

Which spreadsheet feature is best used to **duplicate information** from a cell?

A Fill handle

B Autosum

C Filter

D Save as

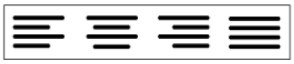
Only 50% of candidates could choose the correct answer.

B, C and D were also seen as answers. There was no specific common distractor.

(*Ans: A*)

Part (j)

In a word processor, what is the **function** of the following icons?



A Set the line spacing

B Add extra lines

C Copy and paste the text

D Change alignment

Many candidates correctly chose option D.

The most common distractor was *option A*.

(*Ans: D*)

Part (k)

Which term is used for the plan that contains images and instructions to create a video?

A Presentation

B Letter

C Storyboard

D Recorded narration

Performance of many candidates in this part was quite poor and was one of the least well answered part of the MCQs. Only a third of the candidates could answer this question correctly. Common distracters for this part were A and D.

(*Ans: C*)

Part (l)

How is the **set of principles** that regulates the use of computers in everyday life called?

A Computer ethics

B Computer crime

C Computer piracy

D Computer privacy

Most candidates correctly attempted this part. However, option D was the most common incorrect answer. It appears candidates were confused between the meanings of Computer ethics and Computer privacy.

(*Ans: A*)

Part (m)

In a database, which one of the following is a group of records?

A File

B Report

C Field

D Table

Performance of candidates was very poor in this part. Only around 25% of the candidates obtained the mark. The most common distracter for this part was *options A*

(*Ans: D*)

Part (n)

Which of the following is a **search engine**?

A 

B 

C 

D 

Most candidates were able to identify the search engine.

(*Ans: B*)

Part(o)

What is an **email attachment**?

A A forwarded email

B A deleted email

C A reply to an email

D A file sent with an email

Many candidates knew the meaning of an email attachment.

The most common distractor for this part was *option A.*

(*Ans: D*)

Question 2

Part(a)

(a) Fill in the blanks with the **correct term** from the given list.

sound card	**motherboard**	**fan**
graphics card	**CPU**	**RAM**

(i) The ..... is the brain of the computer and is responsible for all data processing.

(ii) The ..... allows us to use microphones with a computer system.

(iii) The ..... keeps the processor cool and stops it from overheating.

(iv) The ..... enables the computer to display images.

(v) The ..... is where all the components of a computer system are connected.

[5]

The performance of most candidates was satisfactory and were successful in identifying the correct terms to fill in the blanks. However, a handful of candidates had difficulties in

writing the correct answers for part (i) and part (v). Candidates seem to have difficulties in differentiating between '*CPU*' and '*motherboard*'. Less than half of the candidates scored full marks in this part of the question.

The answers for part(a) are given below:

(i) CPU *[common wrong answers given were RAM / motherboard]*
(ii) sound card
(iii) fan
(iv) graphics card
(v) motherboard *[common wrong answer given was CPU]*

Part (b)

(b) Give the **output on screen** when the following actions are taken.

	Actions	Output on screen
(i)	Pressing **Shift** + **&** **7**	
(ii)	Pressing **(** **9**	

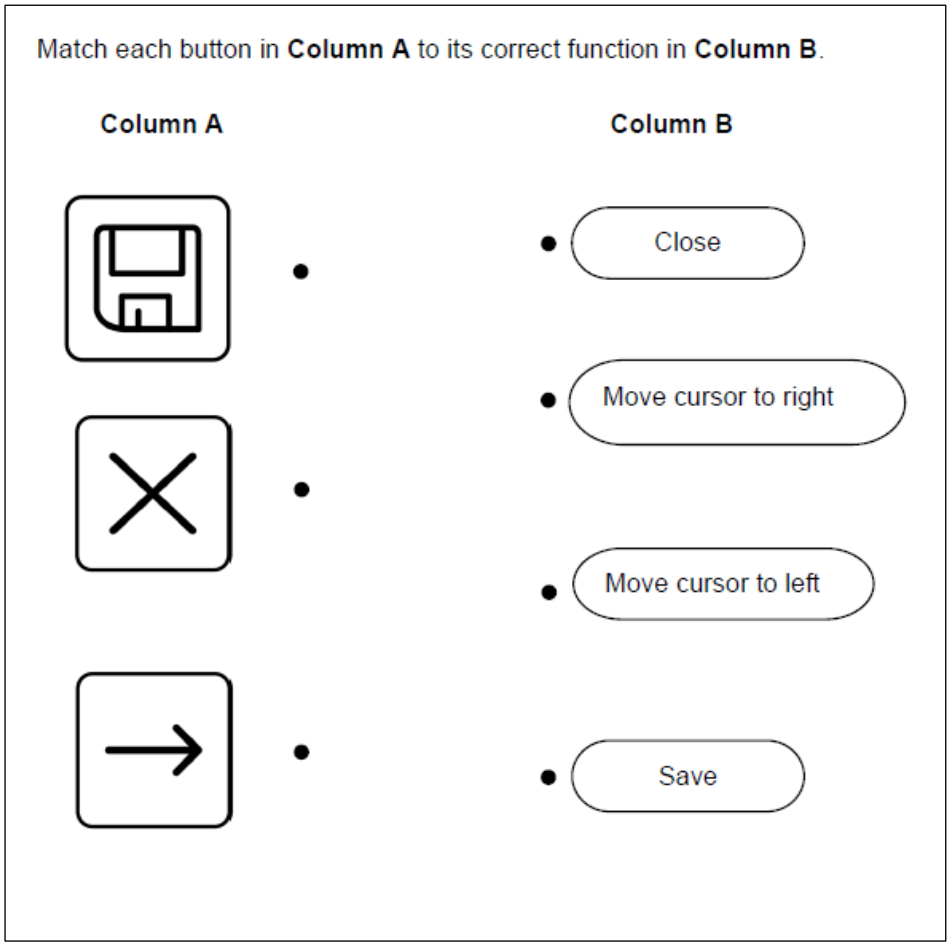
This part of the question was not scoring for many candidates. Around 50% of the candidates gave the correct answers. Many candidates left this question unanswered.

This indicates that the candidates might not be sufficiently exposed to practical sessions.

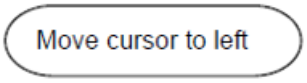
The answers for part(b) are given below:

	Output on screen
b(i)	*&*
b(ii)	*9*

Part (c)



Performance in this part of question 2 was very good. Most candidates did the correct matching.

A few candidates wrongly matched  to  .

The answers for part(c) are given below:

Floppy Disk	*Save*
Cross	*Close*
Arrow	*Move cursor to right*

Question 3

		True	False
(a)	**ROM holds programs currently being used.**		✓
(b)	A text overlay places an audio file over a video.		
(c)	Hacking means gaining unauthorised access to a computer.		
(d)	A meta-search engine has its own database of websites.		
(e)	A joystick can be used to play games.		
(f)	Megabyte is a smaller unit than Gigabyte.		
(g)	In a comic strip, caption provides information about a panel.		
(h)	During a presentation, the speaker notes are visible to the audience.		
(i)	Spreadsheets can be used to produce pie charts.		
(j)	Header refers to text appearing at the top of the document.		
(k)	Bullet points and numbering are used to create lists.		

Performance in this question was very good for most candidates. However, around 10% scored full marks in this part. Parts(d), (h) and (i) were problematic for many candidates.

Candidates are advised to ensure that they tick the correct boxes while ensuring that their ticks do not overlap in the adjacent boxes. Lack of clarity results in loss of marks.

(*Ans: (b) F (c) T (d) F (e) T (f) T (g) T (h) F (i) T (j) T (k) T*)

Question 4

Part (a)

(a) Match each term in **Column A** to the correct statement in **Column B**.
Write your answers in the **answer grid** provided below.
An example is given.

Column A	
(i)	**Cache memory**
(ii)	RAM
(iii)	Nibble
(iv)	Bit
(v)	Sensor
(vi)	Plotter
(vii)	Hard copy

Column B	
1	is non-volatile
2	consists of 4 bits
3	can be 0 or 1
4	**primary storage**
5	is a printout
6	is an input device
7	is volatile
8	is an output device

Performance in this part of question 4 was fair. Not many candidates scored full marks.

Common mistakes were:

- Matching (ii) RAM to (1) is non-volatile
- Matching (iii) Nibble to (3) can be 0 or 1
- Matching (iv) Bits to (2) consists of 4 bits
- Matching (v) Sensor to (8) is an output device
- Matching (vi) Plotter to (6) is an input device

The correct answers are given below:

(ii)	*7*
(iii)	*2*
(iv)	*3*
(v)	*6*
(vi)	*8*
(vii)	*5*

Part (b)

(b) Label the pictures using the appropriate words from the given list.

Input device	Storage device	Output device	Sprite	Antivirus software

This part was well answered by most candidates. Around 70% of the candidates scored full marks in this part.

Pictures 1 and 3 were most of the time well labelled.

Among those who could not score full marks, the common mistakes were:

- Picture 2 incorrectly labeled as output device
- Picture 4 was wrongly answered as Input device or Output device

(Ans: Sprite, Input device, Antivirus software, Storage device)

Question 5

Safety measures that must be adopted in the computer lab are shown below.
Match each picture with the appropriate safety measure.





- Do not run in the computer lab
- Follow proper steps in switching on or off your computer
- Do not touch wires
- Adopt a proper sitting posture
- Avoid trailing wires in the computer lab
- No food or drinks in the computer lab

Performance in this question was very good. Many candidates managed to score full marks.

Common mistakes were:

- Picture 2 matched to 'Avoiding trailing wires in the computer lab'
- Picture 5 matched to 'Do not touch wires'

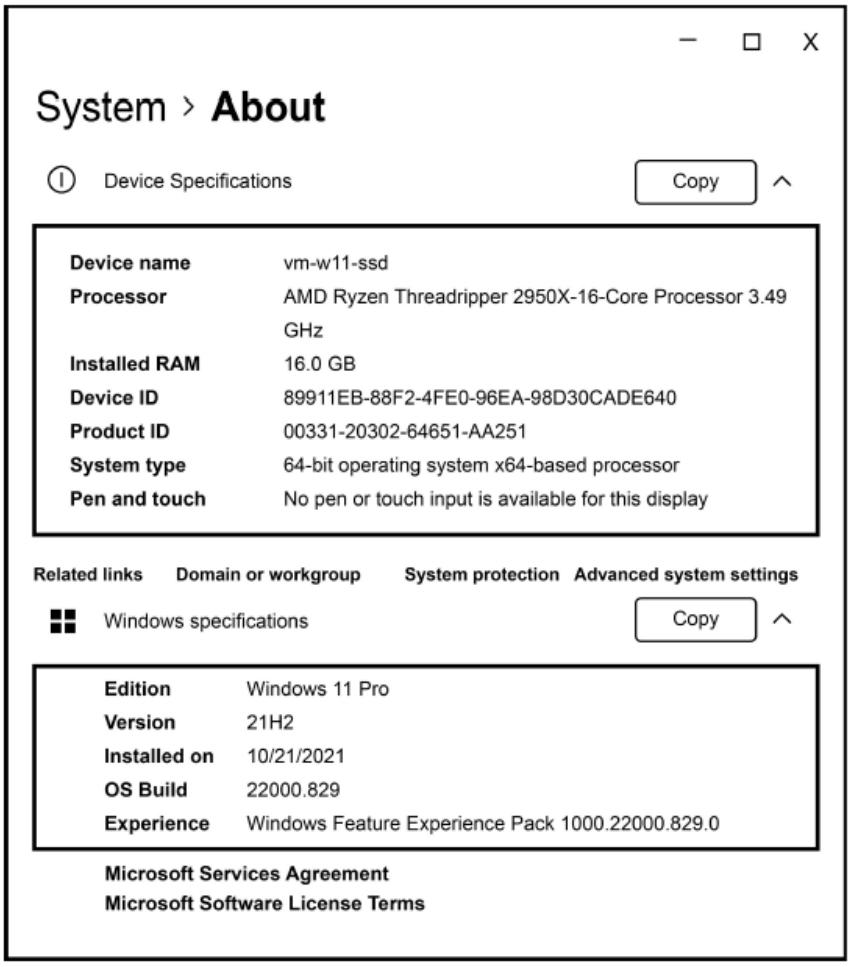
Answers are given below:

Picture 1	*Adopt a proper sitting posture*
Picture 2	*Do not touch wires*
Picture 3	*No food or drinks in the computer lab*
Picture 4	*Do not run in the computer lab*
Picture 5	*Follow proper steps in switching on or off your computer*

Section B

Question 6

The specifications of a computer system are shown below.



System › **About**

Device Specifications — Copy

Device name	vm-w11-ssd
Processor	AMD Ryzen Threadripper 2950X-16-Core Processor 3.49 GHz
Installed RAM	16.0 GB
Device ID	89911EB-88F2-4FE0-96EA-98D30CADE640
Product ID	00331-20302-64651-AA251
System type	64-bit operating system x64-based processor
Pen and touch	No pen or touch input is available for this display

Related links **Domain or workgroup** **System protection** **Advanced system settings**

Windows specifications — Copy

Edition	Windows 11 Pro
Version	21H2
Installed on	10/21/2021
OS Build	22000.829
Experience	Windows Feature Experience Pack 1000.22000.829.0

Microsoft Services Agreement
Microsoft Software License Terms

(a) Give the **name** of the computer.

.....

(b) Tick (✓) the correct **model** of the processor used in the laptop.

Celeron ☐ AMD ☐ Intel ☐

(c) What is the **speed** of the processor used in the laptop?

.....

(d) Give the name of the **operating system** installed on the computer.

.....

(e) What is the **memory size** of the computer system?

The specification of a computer system was given and candidates were expected to interpret the information. Candidates' performance was satisfactory in general. Most of them showed understanding and could interpret the specifications.

Part (a)

was well answered

Part (b)

This part was mostly well answered. A few candidates gave Intel as the answer

Part (c)

Some candidates incorrectly wrote 16.0 GB, or copied whole sentence from the specification. Candidates responses must be specific and concise.

Part (d)

Half of the candidates identified the correct operating system. Some candidates wrongly wrote "Windows Specifications", or "64-bit OS X 64-based Processor".

Part (e)

was well answered.

The answers are given below:

(a)	*vm-w11-ssd*
(b)	*AMD*
(c)	*3.49 GHz*
(d)	*Windows 11 Pro*
(e)	*16.0 GB*

Question 7

An extract of a document is given below. Answer the questions that follow.

(a) Which font type has been used for the title **'2016 Summer Olympics'**?

..... [1]

(b) What is the font size of the title **'2016 Summer Olympics'**?

..... [1]

(c) Which alignment has been used for the 2nd paragraph?

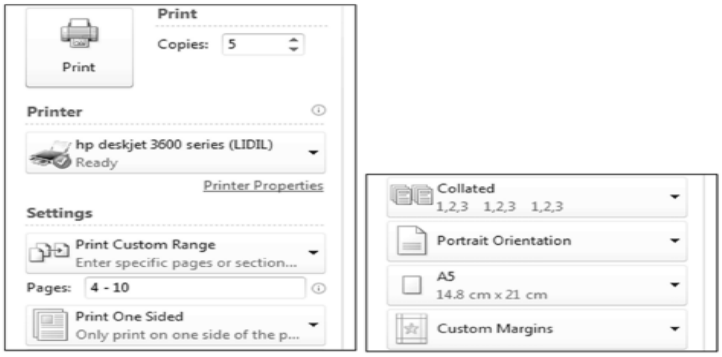
..... [1]

(d) Which type of formatting has been used for "Kosovo" in **line 2** of the second paragraph?

Underline ☐ Italic ☐ Bold ☐

[1]

(e) A hard copy of the document must be printed.
The diagram below shows the settings of the printer.



State

(i) the number of copies that will be printed,

..... [1]

(ii) the size of the paper selected,

..... [1]

(iii) the pages of the document that will be printed.

..... [1]

In this question a text was given and candidates were expected to recognise the different formatting.

Performance was quite good in general except for part(c). Candidates seem to be unfamiliar with 'alignments'.

Common mistakes were:

- In part (a) some candidates gave 'BOLD' as answer instead of Times New Roman.
- In Part (c) many candidates could not identify the alignment used. Wrong answers included fourth one, centre, straight, middle and parallel.

Correct answers are given below:

(a)	*Times New Roman*
(b)	*18*
(c)	*Justify*
(d)	*Italic*
(e)	*(i) 5* *(ii) A5* *(iii) 4 – 10 / 4 to 10 / 4,5,6,7,8,9,10*

Question 8 (spreadsheet)

Jane is comparing prices of PC hardware from three different shops and is using a spreadsheet to calculate the differences, as illustrated in the image below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	**Price comparison of PC hardware**							
2								
3	**Items**	**Shop A**	**Shop B**	**Shop C**		**Highest**	**Lowest**	**Average**
4	Pendrive	€ 10.00	€ 12.50	€ 16.00		€ 16.00	€ 10.00	€ 12.83
5	Mouse	€ 12.50	€ 15.00	€ 13.00		€ 15.00	€ 12.50	€ 13.50
6	Keyboard	€ 25.00	€ 23.00	€ 19.00		€ 25.00	€ 19.00	€ 22.33
7	Headset	€ 75.00	€ 85.00	€ 96.00		€ 96.00	€ 75.00	€ 85.33
8								
9	**Total Excluding VAT**	€122.50	€135.50	€144.00				
10	**VAT at 18%**	€ 22.05	€ 24.39	€ 25.92				
11								
12	**Total Including VAT**	€144.55	€159.89	€169.92				
13								

(a) Write the content of cell **A7**.

.....

(b) Give the **cell address** that contains the price of a mouse in Shop B.

.....

(c) Using an appropriate function, write a formula that should be entered in cell **B9** to find the **total excluding VAT** for the items purchased in Shop A.

(d) Tick (✓) the **correct formula** that has been used in cell **B10** to calculate the VAT at 18% on the items purchased from Shop A.

= B9 + 0.18 ☐ = B9 x 0.18 ☐ = B9 * 0.18 ☐ [1]

(e) In cell **H4**, a formula was entered to find the **average price** of a pendrive. Write down the formula.

(f) Conditional formatting is applied to cell **B4:D7** as follows:

Name the **cells** that will be formatted.

Part (a)

Generally, well answered.

Part (b)

some candidates wrongly gave the content of cell C5 that is € 15.00.

Part (c)

Only a handful of candidates scored full marks. Many scored only partial marks. Candidates were expected to use a function to find the total expenses after a purchase in shop A. Many were unsuccessful in writing the correct formula. Partial marks were obtained for writing the correct function or the correct range.

Part (d)

Many candidates selected the correct answer.

For those who were not successful the option "= B9 × 0.18" was a common distractor.

Part (e)

Candidates were expected to write a formula and around one third of them were able to write an correct formula.

The use of a function was not mandatory in this case. Hence, other correct alternative valid answers were accepted.

Common errors included use of AVG, wrong range, use of ÷ symbol and improper use of brackets.

Part (f)

Some candidates wrongly gave B4:D7 as the answer.

The answers are given below:

(a)	*Headset*
(b)	*C5*
(c)	*= SUM (B4:B7)*
(d)	*= B9 * 0.18*
(e)	*= AVERAGE(B4:D4)*
(f)	*C7, D7*

Question 9

Video conferencing is becoming very popular nowadays.

(a) Explain what is meant by **video conferencing**.

(b) Name **two** devices apart from **keyboard**, **mouse** and **monitor** that are required during video conferencing.

(c) State **two** advantages of using video conferencing.

(d) State **one** disadvantage of using video conferencing.

(e) State **two** uses of video conferencing.

Performance in this question was quite poor.

A large array of inaccurate/incorrect answers was provided. It appears that candidates were not well prepared for this question.

Part (a)

Only around 20% of candidates could obtain the full marks in this part. Candidates had to provide 3 different elements in their answers, visual communication, different/remote locations and use of internet.

Many candidates, scored only partial marks for missing out on any one of the three elements.

Part (b)

Around half of the candidates correctly answered this part. Many wrong answers came either from the same categories, or were devices like laptop, mobile phone or projector.

Part (c)

A third of the candidates were successful in answering this part of the question. It appears that some candidates were confused between the definition, advantages and uses of video conferencing. Credit was given to a number of valid answers.

Part (d)

Candidates provided a variety of valid answers. However, many answers were not concise. Candidates were expected to give one disadvantage of video conferencing; however, some candidates gave general dangers of the internet instead.

Part (e)

Answers provided by candidates clearly lacked focus and clarity. Some provided the definition of video conferencing while others provided the names of apps like Zoom, Skype and WhatsApp as their answer.

Question 10 (Database)

Clearly, Database remains one of the challenging questions of the question paper. Students need to be further exposed to this type of question. More practice is required to be able to answer such questions correctly. Many candidates did not attempt this question.

Part(a)

This part was challenging for many candidates. Performance in part(b) was better than part(a).

(a) (i) Give **two** advantages of using a computerised database program.

(ii) A list of sports is given below:

- Badminton
- Football
- Tennis
- Cricket

If the data given above is sorted in **descending order**, which sport would be first in the list?

Part (a)(i)

A number of valid answers were accepted for this part. Answers which were not accepted included single word answers like "easy", "quick", "no mistake" or "no human error".

Part(a) (ii)

For this part, it was clear that candidates had not understood how to perform sorting on a list of text data. Some students gave the whole sorted list instead of giving only the first item in the sorted list.

Part (b)(i)

(b) A hairdresser uses a database to store data on upcoming appointments of clients.
Part of the database is shown below.

The **APPOINTMENT** table is shown below.

APT_ID	DATE	TIME	NAME	STYLE
JP15	1/2/2026	09:45	Saleem	Cut
JP12	1/2/2026	14:00	Vicky	Cut and Dry
JP13	1/2/2026	14:30	Vidya	Colour
AD14	1/2/2026	16:00	Karen	Cut and Colour
JP16	2/2/2026	11:15	Steven	Cut and Dry
AD17	2/2/2026	12:30	Daniela	Colour

(i) The following search condition was entered using a **query by example** grid.

Field	APT_ID	STYLE
Table	APPOINTMENT	APPOINTMENT
Sort	ASCENDING	
Show	✓	☐
Criteria		= "Colour"
Or		

Show what the **output** would be.

This was one of the least correctly answered questions. Very few candidates scored full marks. Some candidates were able to earn 2 marks. A larger number of candidates were able to earn 1 mark for a partly correct answer. Common mistakes included 3 outputs, no sorting in output and additional information given with the answer.

Part (b)(ii)

Complete the **query by example** grid below to select and show the names of clients who have appointments on 2/2/2026.

Field		
Table	APPOINTMENT	APPOINTMENT
Sort		
Show	☐	☐
Criteria		
Or		

Only a few candidates earned full marks. Common mistakes were copying the fields from part (b) (i) of the question, that is, APT_ID and STYLE. Another common mistake was writing NAMES instead of NAME or putting the criteria in the NAME field and including show in the DATE column.

Question 11

Part(a)

(a) Fill in the blanks using the terms given below.

rectangle	**diamond**
circle	**parallelogram**

In a flowchart,

(i) a ..... is used to represent input and output.

(ii) a ..... is used to represent a process.

(iii) a ..... is used to represent a decision box.

Performance in this part was satisfactory in general.

Common mistake was to swap answers for (i) and (ii). For part (iii) a common distractor was "Circle".

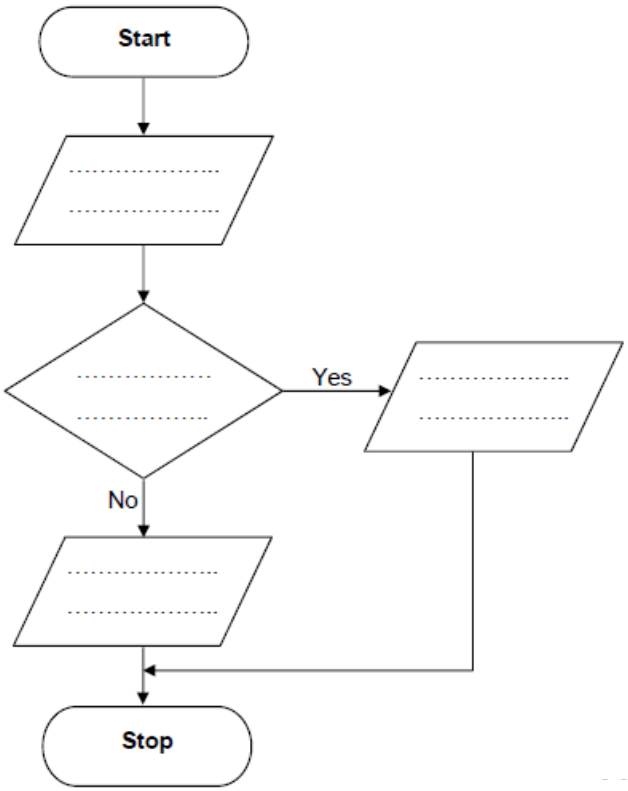
(Ans: (i) parallelogram (ii) rectangle (iii) diamond)

Part(b)

The flowchart below allows the user to enter a mark for an ICT test.

If the mark is **35 or more**, then output **Pass**, else output **Fail.**

Complete the flowchart.



Only a handful of candidates were able to earn full marks.

Common mistakes included omission of keywords to indicate input or output. Many candidates wrote the condition incorrectly.

Part (c)

Write statements in Python that will allow a user to enter a value in the variable marks and then output its contents.

Most candidates found this part very challenging. Many left the answer space blank. Candidates appeared unfamiliar with writing statements in Python. A handful of candidates could understand that part (c) and part (b) were not related. Common mistakes included use of uppercase for keywords input / print.

Recommendations and conclusions

Keyboarding & Word Processing

- Encourage regular practice with word processing software to build familiarity with formatting tools.
- Incorporate timed exercises to improve speed and accuracy in keyboarding.
- Provide tasks requiring identification of paper sizes and formatting features.

Spreadsheet Skills

- Reinforce the difference between functions (predefined operations like SUM, AVERAGE) and formulas (user-defined expressions).
- Use practical examples where students must apply both functions and formulas to solve problems.

Databases

- Provide step-by-step practice in sorting and filtering data.
- Use guided exercises to strengthen understanding of the QBE grid, gradually moving to independent tasks.

Programming & Problem-Solving

- Introduce flowchart exercises with clear emphasis on the meaning of each symbol.
- Encourage students to complete small, structured programming tasks before tackling larger problems.
- Provide scaffolded Python exercises focusing on syntax, logic, and problem interpretation.

The 2025 NCE ICT assessment reflected a slight improvement in candidate performance, achieving an 88.69% pass rate compared to the previous year. While students generally found success in Section A and demonstrated a strong understanding of computer safety and basic hardware, significant challenges remain in technical areas such as databases, spreadsheet functions, and Python programming. To address these gaps, future preparation should prioritize practical exposure, the correct use of technical terminology, and scaffolded problem-solving exercises. Ultimately, this report serves as a critical roadmap for identifying frequent errors and implementing the curricular reinforcement necessary to improve outcomes for future cohorts.