# **T Level Digital Core: Exam Question and Mark Scheme Formatting**

## **1. Exam Question Formatting**

* **Layout**:
  + Each question starts with a question number and may be divided into sub-questions (e.g. 1(a), 1(b), etc).
  + The command word (e.g. State, Explain, Describe, Analyse) appears at the start of the question.
  + Marks are shown in brackets at the end of each question or sub-question, e.g. **(2)**, **(3)**, **(4)**.
* **Wording**:
  + Questions use concise, direct language.
  + Questions are focused and never multi-part unless specifically structured as such (e.g. (a), (b)).
  + Questions often specify a scenario or context, but remain clear and accessible.
* **Examples**:
  + State two other data types. (2)
  + Explain why decomposition is used when developing algorithms. (2)
  + Describe how a college cafeteria manager can use sales data to improve management. (3)
  + Analyse the impact of [X] on [Y]. (4)
* **Presentation**:
  + Each question is followed by a large blank space for candidate answers.
  + For scenario or case-study based questions, a short paragraph or figure may precede the question.

## **Scenario and Context in Exam Questions**

* **All exam questions must include a scenario or context.**
  + The scenario should be realistic, relevant to the digital sector, and appropriate for the content area and command verb.
  + Scenarios should be included for every question, including 1-mark and 2-mark questions, not just extended response questions.
  + Scenarios should be concise but clear, providing enough context for the candidate to answer meaningfully.
  + The scenario can be placed before the command verb or embedded in the question itself.
* **Examples:**
  + *A UK car parts manufacturer is having issues with product quality. Analyse the impact of poor data management on production quality in this company. (6)*
  + *A local secondary school is planning to use a new biometric authentication system for staff entry. State two biometric techniques that could be used in this system. (2)*
  + *A retail company is considering the use of cloud storage for customer data. Explain one advantage of using private cloud storage instead of public cloud storage for this purpose. (2)*
* **General Principle:**
  + Every question must be anchored to a plausible workplace, organisation, or digital context, so that the assessment is applied and vocational in style.

## **2. Mark Scheme Formatting**

The mark schemes use two distinct approaches, depending on the question type:

### **A. Points-Based Mark Schemes (AO1)**

* **Format**:
  + Each mark is awarded for a specific point made in the answer.
  + Mark schemes begin with a rubric such as:

*Award one mark for each correct answer, up to a maximum of [X] marks.*

* + A bulleted list is provided, with each bullet representing a point that earns a mark.
  + Example responses may be provided for clarity.
  + Additional guidance may be given (e.g. *Accept any other appropriate response*).
  + Marks are indicated inline, for example:

• String (1)

• Integer (1)

* **General Principles**:
  + If an answer meets the rubric but the order is different, it is still credited.
  + Accept alternative phrasings and credit any appropriate response, unless otherwise instructed.

### **B. Levels-Based Mark Schemes (AO2/AO3)**

* **Format**:
  + For extended response questions (usually AO2 or AO3), use a levels-based mark scheme.
  + **Begin with a section titled “Indicative content:”**
    - This is a bulleted or paragraph-style list of the points, examples, and arguments that a candidate might include in a strong answer.
    - The list is not exhaustive. Accept other relevant and valid points not listed if appropriate.
    - This section comes *before* the banded mark scheme.
  + **After indicative content, include the banded mark scheme:**
    - A table with bands (e.g. Band 3, Band 2, Band 1, Band 0), descriptors for each band, and the mark range for each band.
    - Band descriptors state the quality of analysis, explanation, or evaluation expected for each level.
    - The banded mark scheme is placed *after* the indicative content, never before.
* **Example Format**:

Analyse the impact of [topic] on [context].  
Indicative content:  
• Candidates may refer to:  
 – Point 1 (e.g. “Poor data management can lead to errors in production records, causing delays and defects.”)  
 – Point 2 (e.g. “Reduced efficiency due to manual corrections.”)  
 – Point 3 (e.g. “Impact on reputation and customer satisfaction.”)  
 – Other relevant, contextualised points  
Banded Mark Scheme:  
Band Descriptor Marks  
3 Clear and detailed analysis with relevant examples 5–6  
2 Some analysis with limited examples 3–4  
1 Basic or superficial analysis 1–2  
0 No relevant content 0

* **General Principles**:
  + Indicative content is essential for every AO2 and AO3 levels-based mark scheme and must always be included before the bands.
  + Markers use the indicative content to guide rewardable points but must credit other suitable answers.
  + Markers then use the bands/descriptors to judge the quality and depth of the whole answer.

**For every AO2 or AO3 question, generate the indicative content first, then the banded mark scheme, always in this order.**

### **C. Common Mark Scheme Features**

* **Rubric Language**:
  + All points-based and levels-based mark schemes use precise instructional language for markers, e.g.
    - Award one mark for [X] up to [Y] marks.
    - Accept any other appropriate/alternative response.
    - Do not accept [specified incorrect answers or phrasings].
  + Indicative content is often followed by a statement reminding markers to accept alternative appropriate responses.
* **Example Format Snippet:**

**Points-Based Mark Scheme:**

Question Number Answer Mark  
1 • String (1)  
 • Integer (1)

**Levels-Based Mark Scheme:**

Question Number Indicative Content: Mark  
8 Candidates may refer to:  
 - Verification techniques...  
 - Validation techniques...  
 [further points]  
  
 Level 3: Detailed analysis... (7–9 marks)  
 Level 2: Some analysis... (4–6 marks)  
 Level 1: Basic description... (1–3 marks)

## **3. Other Key Points**

* Accept phonetic/incorrect spelling unless otherwise instructed.
* Crossed-out work is marked unless replaced by an alternative answer.
* Mark positively, crediting what the learner has shown.
* For multi-mark questions, each valid point should receive one mark unless stated otherwise.

**Follow these formatting and phrasing conventions exactly for all exam questions and mark schemes to match the T Level Digital Core standard.**