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Advanced Test Analyst

ISTQB ATA

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QUESTION NO: 1 - (SIMULATION)

SIMULATION

Ken, an entrepreneur in Leeds finds the quality of the tea locally available so low, that he decides to research superior teas around the world. He decides to market, sell and distribute these superior teas via the web. His market strategy is to offer superior products on a well-designed website with graphics that are fast to load, has high availability, superior usability and fast response times.

The website will offer the following:

-An innovative interactive catalogue of teas, which not only enables customers to buy the product, but also enables them to provide feedback by rating the teas (which will influence his stock purchasing levels)

Provide the customer with the ability to use secure credit card transactions Provide the customer to give general feedback

Ken selects an iterative model for the development of the prototypes. The team consists of three developers that are experienced in web development. Ken, although he doesn't have technical skillset, is concerned with quality. He doesn't believe a lot of documentation is necessary and he wants the website to be completed quickly.

The test basis contains the following:

-Story boards that show the information flow and page links through the site -HTML pages developed to date.

-A statement of non-functional requirements.

With the strategy taking shape, Ken asks your advice on the specific testing techniques that should be used to complete the required testing, bearing in mind the nature of the application and the nature of Ken’s overall objectives.

ANSWER: See the explanation for the answer

Explanation:

Recommended test approach: use a lightweight, risk-based and iterative test approach. The most important quality risks are usability/navigation, page-load and response performance, availability, secure payment, and correct catalogue/feedback behaviour. Testing should be performed on each prototype iteration, using the storyboards, current HTML pages and non-functional requirements as the test basis.

Storyboard-based scenario (use-case) testing: derive end-to-end customer journeys from the storyboards: browse/search teas, view a tea, add it to the basket, checkout, pay, rate a tea, and submit general feedback. Include navigation paths, back/forward behaviour and invalid/dead links.
Usability testing: observe representative users performing the important scenarios. Assess understandable labels, navigation, page layout, feedback/error messages, efficiency and ease of completing a purchase. This directly addresses the requirement for superior usability.
Equivalence partitioning and boundary value analysis: apply these to input fields and business rules, such as quantities, ratings (minimum/maximum and invalid values), required feedback fields, card-number length/format, expiry dates, CVV length and character limits.
Decision-table testing: use it for combinations of conditions in checkout and payment processing—for example valid/invalid card details, expired/not-expired card, payment authorised/declined, mandatory data present/missing, and resulting order confirmation/error behaviour.
State-transition testing: where applicable, test lifecycle behaviour such as basket/order/payment states (empty basket, items added, checkout, authorised, declined, confirmed/cancelled) and restrictions on allowed transitions.
Static review and HTML/link validation: inspect the developed HTML and page links early and repeatedly. Check conformance to HTML standards, broken links, missing images, inappropriate page titles and basic accessibility/usability defects. This is quick, inexpensive and suits the limited-documentation, rapid-prototype context.
Performance testing: measure response times and page-load times against the stated non-functional requirements. Run load tests for realistic numbers of simultaneous users and stress/capacity tests to identify the point at which service degrades. Include catalogue browsing, searching, rating and checkout/payment transactions.
Security testing: perform vulnerability assessment and penetration testing focused on the payment and feedback interfaces. Verify HTTPS/TLS, protection of cardholder data, authentication/session handling where used, input validation, resistance to injection and cross-site scripting, and that sensitive information is not exposed in pages, logs or error messages.
Availability/reliability testing: test behaviour under service, network and payment-provider failures; verify recovery, appropriate customer messages and that incomplete/duplicate orders are not created. Monitor availability during load/endurance testing.

Priority: first test the customer purchase and payment path, security, and response time/load; then catalogue navigation, ratings and general feedback. Automated regression checks for links, key journeys and input validation should be retained and rerun after every prototype iteration.

QUESTION NO: 2

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Which TWO of the following items may more frequently need to be explained in greater detail for non-functional defect reports than for a functional defect report?

A. Expected results

B. Steps to reproduce the defect

C. Test data used to identify the fault

D. Level of load on the system at the time of failure

E. Actual results

ANSWER: A D

Explanation:

Expected results and **Level of load on the system at the time of failure** are correct. A non-functional requirement normally expresses a measurable quality target or acceptance criterion, such as a maximum response time, a required availability level, or a permitted number of concurrent users. Therefore, the expected result in a defect report must often state the applicable target precisely, including relevant units, thresholds, time periods, and the measurement conditions. For example, a report should identify the required response-time limit rather than merely stating that a page should be “fast.”

System load is particularly important when reporting a non-functional failure because the observed behaviour can depend directly on workload. A performance, capacity, or reliability issue may occur only with a particular number of concurrent users, request rate, data volume, duration of execution, or transaction mix. Recording this load in sufficient detail enables the team to recreate comparable conditions, assess the severity against the stated target, and determine whether the result is repeatable. This supports the ISTQB principle that defect reports provide the information needed to investigate, reproduce, and resolve anomalies, while non-functional testing evaluates quality characteristics under defined conditions. See the ISTQB Advanced Test Analyst syllabus and ISTQB Glossary: defect report.

QUESTION NO: 3

The use case will be used as a basis for the design of usability test scenario's. As a tester you are asked to review the ATM use case from the perspective of usability testing.

As a tester you are asked to review the ATM use case provided below. The use case will be used as a basis for functionality testing to be performed later.

System:	XYZ Bank ATM
Goal of test	The goal of this use case is to test the withdrawal of cash from the ATM
Description	**Context:** This is core functionality, so this is an important test of a frequent usage function
	Actors: Any user may use this function
Preconditions	The ATM is on and functional The user has a current debit card
Description of use case flow	ATM start screen is showing 1. the user inserts card 2. the user types in PIN 3. the user selects "cash with receipt" 4. the user selects £50 5. the user selects "no further service"
Expected results	The ATM returns the card, delivers £50 and a receipt, clears the screen and displays the start screen
Failure conditions	On screen instructions not clearly displayed On screen instructions not simple to follow Card not returned (see functional tests)
Additional attention points	Note response times

Which one of the comments, described hereafter, would be the MOST important one you would make?

A. Acceptance criteria not defined

B. Business priority is missing

C. Post condition not defined

D. Alternative flows are missing

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

Alternative flows are missing is the most important review comment because a use case intended as a basis for functional and usability test scenarios must describe more than the successful, main path. ATM interactions inherently involve meaningful variations and exception handling, such as an invalid PIN, cancellation by the customer, an unavailable account balance, an amount exceeding withdrawal limits, an unreadable card, or cash that cannot be dispensed. These paths affect both the required system behaviour and the user experience: the user needs clear feedback, appropriate recovery actions, and a safe route back to a usable state.

Documenting these flows enables the Test Analyst to derive complete scenario-based tests, including the user actions, system responses, decisions, and end states associated with each realistic condition. It also makes requirements more testable by clarifying what the ATM must do when the normal interaction cannot continue. This is especially valuable for usability testing because users frequently encounter non-happy-path conditions, and the quality of guidance and recovery in those situations strongly influences usability. ISTQB describes use cases as a source for identifying test conditions and emphasizes testing user interactions and behaviour across relevant scenarios. See the ISTQB Advanced Level Test Analyst syllabus page and the ISTQB Certified Tester Foundation Level syllabus page.

QUESTION NO: 4

Consider the following description in a defect report “Nasty bug trashed contents of new file that I created by formatting some text in symbol font, wasting my time.”

Which TWO of the following comments would you immediately make based on the defect description above?

A. Needs to be neutralized

B. Steps to reproduce are unclear

C. No attempt to isolate the defect

D. More than one defect in one report

E. Possible duplicate

ANSWER: A B

Explanation:

“Needs to be neutralized” is appropriate because a defect report should communicate factual, objective information that supports investigation and resolution. Terms such as “nasty” and “wasting my time” express the reporter’s frustration rather than describing the product behavior. Replacing this language with a precise statement of the observed result—for example, that file contents were lost or changed after a specified formatting action—makes the report more professional, clearer, and more useful to the development team.

“Steps to reproduce are unclear” is also immediately justified. The report gives only a broad indication that a new file was created and text was formatted using a symbol font. It does not identify the exact sequence of actions, relevant application or document state, font selection details, save actions, or the expected result. A tester or developer needs reproducible steps, together with expected and actual results, to confirm and diagnose the problem reliably. These are core qualities of an effective defect report, as reflected in ISTQB’s treatment of defect reporting and test work products. See the ISTQB Test Analyst certification page and the ISTQB glossary entry for defect report.

QUESTION NO: 5

A requirement for an online booking system states: “The system shall display available flights quickly after the customer enters a departure airport, destination airport and travel date.”

Which of the following review comments is MOST appropriate?

A. The valid airport codes have not been defined

B. The requirement is ambiguous because “quickly” is not measurable

C. The requirement should specify the database technology used for the search

D. The requirement cannot be tested until all flight schedules are available

ANSWER: B

Explanation:

The requirement is not testable because the word “quickly” does not define a measurable acceptance criterion. A Test Analyst cannot determine objectively whether the implemented response time is acceptable without a stated threshold and relevant operating conditions.

The requirement should be clarified, for example by defining the maximum response time, the percentile to be achieved, the expected number of concurrent users, and the data volume or search conditions. This converts a general quality expectation into a verifiable performance requirement.

See the ISTQB Advanced Level Test Analyst certification page and the ISTQB Glossary search for testability.

QUESTION NO: 6

Analyzing the requirement, “The system shall allow cash advances of at least 200 Euros for all supported credit cards. The correct list of credit cards is American Express, Diners, VISA, Mastercard and Eurocard.” There are arguments to be made for several test design techniques. Which of the following test design techniques is LEAST likely to be used for identifying test cases for the requirement?

A. Boundary value analysis

B. Equivalence Partitioning

C. Classification Tree Method

D. State Transition Testing

ANSWER: D

Explanation:

State Transition Testing is the least likely technique because the stated requirement specifies permitted cash-advance amounts and a defined set of supported card types, but it does not describe system states, events, transitions, or state-dependent behavior. State transition testing is most useful where an event causes the system to move between identifiable states and where the permitted outcome depends on the current state—for example, an account becoming locked after a specified number of failed authentication attempts. No such lifecycle or transition rule is present here. The requirement instead provides input-domain characteristics: a numerical threshold of 200 Euros and a finite list of card brands. Test cases can therefore be identified directly from these characteristics without needing a model of states or transitions. This aligns with ISTQB guidance that test techniques should be selected according to the nature of the test basis and the type of risk or behavior being evaluated. The Advanced Test Analyst certification information and current syllabus materials are available from ISTQB Advanced Level Test Analyst; ISTQB terminology and technique definitions can be consulted in the ISTQB Glossary.

QUESTION NO: 7

A test team is investigating an intermittent failure in a distributed order-processing service. Which TWO items are especially important to include in the defect report to support investigation?

A. Precise timestamp of the observed failure

B. Correlation identifier for the affected order transaction

C. Statement that the tester considers the defect urgent

D. Name of every tester currently assigned to the project

E. Estimated effort required for the developer to fix the defect

ANSWER: A B

Explanation:

Precise timestamps are important because distributed services commonly create related events in several logs, queues, and monitoring systems. A timestamp, including the relevant time zone, enables technical staff to correlate the reported failure with service and infrastructure evidence.

A correlation identifier or transaction identifier is also especially valuable because it allows all messages and processing steps for the affected order to be traced across component boundaries. A general statement that the defect is urgent does not help reproduce or diagnose the technical failure.

Effective defect reports provide information needed to investigate, reproduce, and resolve a defect. See the ISTQB Glossary definition of defect report.

QUESTION NO: 8

During the test execution defects are found on non-compliancy to requirements, calculations that produce incorrect results, and improper handling of data or situations.

Which of the following test types is most likely being performed?

A. Usability testing

B. Interoperability testing

C. Accuracy testing

D. Suitability testing

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

Accuracy testing is the most likely test type because the reported defects concern whether the system produces results with the required degree of correctness and precision when processing data. Incorrect calculations are a direct indicator that computed outputs do not accurately represent the intended business rules, formulas, or input values. Improper handling of data or situations likewise concerns the correctness of the system's processing and resulting outputs under specified conditions. The reference to non-compliance with requirements reinforces that the observed behavior is being checked against defined functional expectations, including the correctness of data transformation, calculation, and response handling.

In the quality model terminology used in ISTQB-related material, these concerns align with functional correctness: the extent to which a product provides correct results with the needed degree of precision. Accuracy testing therefore focuses test design and execution on representative data values, boundary conditions, calculation rules, and expected results, so that deviations in output correctness can be detected. ISTQB's Advanced Test Analyst certification covers analysis of quality characteristics and risk-based testing of functional behavior; see the ISTQB Advanced Level Test Analyst certification page. The underlying software product quality model is defined by ISO/IEC 25010.