

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON THE CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2008

ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT

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ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT

GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

JUNE 2008

GENERAL COMMENTS

The number of candidates sitting the Electronic Document Preparation and Management examination continues to increase annually. In 2008, 7439 candidates sat the examination an increase of 1,727 candidates over 2007.

The examination consisted of three papers:

- | | | |
|----------|---|--|
| Paper 01 | - | Structured Questions |
| Paper 02 | - | Production Test |
| Paper 03 | - | Alternative to the School Based Assessment |

The overall performance was very good with 95 per cent of the candidates achieving Grades I to III.

Paper 01 – Structured Questions

Paper 01 consisted of ten compulsory questions that tested the knowledge and application of important concepts and theoretical principles involved in document production and management. Candidates' performance on this paper was very good. The paper was marked out of 50 and the mean mark was 31.91. Eighty-eight per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this paper.

Paper 02 – Production Test

Paper 02 consisted of four compulsory questions that tested the candidates' ability to prepare business forms, business letters, creative displays and spreadsheets while applying a variety of production principles. The performance of candidates on this paper was very good. The paper was marked out of 100 and the mean mark was 58.24. Seventy per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this paper.

Paper 03/2 – Alternative to the School-Based Assessment

Paper 03/2 consisted of two compulsory questions that tested the candidates' ability to prepare letters with mail merge, advanced creative displays, Power Point presentations, organizational charts, and spreadsheets using a variety of production principles. The performance of candidates on this paper was very good. The mean mark was 58.45 out of 100. Sixty-six per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this paper.

DETAILED COMMENTS

General Proficiency

Paper 01 – Structured Questions

Candidates' performance indicated areas of strength and areas of weakness. The areas of weakness were seen in centering, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction, expressing themselves effectively and following instructions.

Question 1

This question tested candidates' ability to identify software applications and the uses of hardware devices. The question was attempted by approximately 91 per cent of the candidates.

Section (a) of this question was known by most candidates as they were able to identify different software applications. However, in section (b) responses indicated that candidates confused the word "equipment" with "hardware and software."

Question 2

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to identify input devices. The question was attempted by approximately 92 per cent of the candidates.

The overall performance on this question was good. However, this question posed difficult for some candidates particularly in their ability to explain or identify the standard keys on the computer keyboard. Candidates, on the whole, were particularly knowledgeable about the "Home", "Shift", and "Insert" keys.

Question 3

This question tested candidates' ability to identify the steps in saving a **new** document. The question was attempted by approximately 91 per cent of the candidates.

Most candidates misinterpreted this question in that they named the steps in saving a folder instead of a new document created. A possible cause of this weakness could be that candidates did not read the question carefully.

Question 4

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to move or delete text in a document. The question was attempted by approximately 90 per cent of the candidates.

Some of the candidates could not differentiate between cutting text to move it and copying the text. Some of the candidates were unable to explain the process, instead they said "cut and paste." Other candidates were aware of the process involved in deleting information and not moving information.

Question 5

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of

- (i) sizes and layout of paper
- (ii) sizes of envelopes.

The question was attempted by approximately 91 per cent of candidates.

Most candidates were able to match the paper size with the document. However, many candidates could not differentiate between 'types of stationery' and 'paper size.' Candidates also had difficulty in matching the correct type of envelope with the document.

Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to

- (i) differentiate between operating software and application software
- (ii) identify types of secondary storage devices.

This question was attempted by approximately 91 per cent of the candidates.

Section (a) seemed to have posed difficulty for many candidates. They could not differentiate between 'operating software' and 'application software.'

Question 7

This question tested the candidates' knowledge of the concepts 'intellectual property' and 'copyright.' The question was attempted by approximately 88 per cent of the candidates.

The overall performance on this question was poor. Candidates' performance indicated that the majority of the candidates did not understand the term 'concept.' In some cases candidates confused 'plagiarism' with 'intellectual property.' However, many candidates correctly defined the term 'copyright.'

Question 8

This question tested the candidates' ability to create letterheads by following formatting instructions. The question was attempted by approximately 91 per cent of the candidates.

Overall, the performance on this question was good. The majority of candidates were knowledgeable about centering, bolding, and capitalization. However, spacing and punctuation presented difficulty for many candidates.

Question 9

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to edit documents by correcting punctuation and spelling errors. The question was attempted by 91 per cent of the candidates.

The overall performance on this question was very good. The majority of the candidates completed the question competently. However, inserting correct punctuation, especially quotation marks, presented difficulty for many of the candidates.

Question 10

This question tested the candidates' awareness of keyboarding techniques. The question was attempted by 86 per cent of the candidates.

The overall performance on this question was poor. The performance of the majority of candidates indicated that they were not knowledgeable about shortcut keys.

Paper 02 - Production Test

The performance on this paper was fairly good overall. Accuracy continues to be a concern, as candidates failed to utilize the basic features of the word processor to correct simple errors. Another outstanding weakness was that candidates were not knowledgeable about the number of spaces to be left after the various punctuation marks.

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to produce a two-page letter with the following features

- (i) creating a letterhead
- (ii) modified block style letter with indented paragraphs
- (iii) interpreting and applying manuscript signs

- (iv) preparing and integrating a spreadsheet.

The question was attempted by approximately 93 per cent of the candidates.

The following areas posed difficulty for many of the candidates:

- (i) Layout of letter in modified block style
- (ii) Positioning date correctly in letter
- (iii) Interpreting manuscript signs correctly
- (iv) Integrating spreadsheet into the body of letter correctly

The overall performance on this question was satisfactory. In many cases it was evident that candidates did not read the entire question before attempting it. A general weakness that was evident was the candidates' inability to leave adequate number of spaces after punctuation marks.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' ability to format a document and to interpret and apply manuscript signs. This question was attempted by approximately 92 per cent of the candidates.

The overall performance on this question was very good. However, many candidates had difficulty in the interpretation of the manuscript signs.

Question 3

This question tested the candidates' ability to produce a form using drawing tools and formatting techniques. The question was attempted by approximately 89 per cent of the candidates.

The overall performance on this question was poor. The majority of candidates had difficulty in

- (i) using drawing tools to produce text boxes
- (ii) interpreting and applying manuscript signs
- (iii) formatting by changing font size, using capitalization and leader dots.

Question 4

This question tested the candidates' ability to prepare a leaflet from manuscript, using advanced creative display techniques. The question was attempted by 75 per cent of the candidates.

Performance on this question was good overall. Candidates who scored highly on this question displayed the ability to insert clipart into the document and use Word Art competently.

The following areas presented difficulty to candidates:

- (i) formatting the document into several columns
- (ii) justifying margins and text
- (iii) using correct paper size and orientation
- (iv) using correct line spacing

Recommendation to Teachers

1. Teachers should ensure that the theoretical components are mastered before attempting the practical components of the syllabus.
2. Teachers should devise more strategies to reinforce concepts, terms (such as, intellectual property, copyright, application software, operating software, input devices, etc.) and frequently used phrases.
3. Teachers should place more emphasis on reading and interpreting instructions.
4. Teachers should administer spelling tests or quizzes, at regular intervals to improve spelling performance.
5. Assignments including the following tasks should be given at regular intervals:
 - (a) Two-page letters, letterheads, and layout of continuation sheets
 - (b) Forms designed with tear-off slips
 - (c) Letters with different letter styles and spacing between different parts of the letter
 - (d) Integration of spreadsheets into a document
 - (e) Inserting text boxes, headers and footers
 - (f) Selecting paper sizes and stationery
 - (g) Saving and retrieving documents
6. Teachers should give students more opportunities to use manuscript signs.
7. Tests on theoretical aspects of the syllabus should be given at regular intervals to ensure that students become better at expressing themselves effectively.

Paper 03/1 – School-Based Assessment

Overall, the School-Based Assessment assignments did not meet the required standard. In addition, some assignments were not submitted and a number of schools did not submit assignment questions, keys or mark schemes.

Recommendations

1. Teachers must submit School-Based Assignments in the presentation folder along with the assignment instructions, keys and mark schemes. Loose-leaf format is not acceptable.
2. Assignments must be clearly labelled for identification.
3. Moderation sheets must be completed.
4. The student's registration number must be inserted on the moderation sheet and all assignments.
5. Teachers must submit mark schemes, keys and copies of the production assignments.
6. Students need more practice time especially in the formatting of tables, proofreading and centering of documents vertically and horizontally, in order to develop the required skills.

7. Students need to pay close attention to the rules governing document preparation.
8. An exchange of teachers between schools is recommended during assessment times. This will provide more objectivity for the marking of production work.
9. Students should be given practice using the tools and features of the various software packages necessary for the production of accurate professional documents.

Paper 03/2 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

This paper is the alternative paper to the School-Based Assessment (SBA) and it attempts to assess the same skills that would have been tested in the SBA.

This paper consisted of two questions.

Question 1

This question tested the candidates' ability to:

- (i) format a letterhead
- (ii) interpret and apply manuscript signs
- (iii) produce letters using the mail merge

The performance of candidates on this question was satisfactory. Many candidates had difficulty completing the mail merge and the footer. However, an area of strength was the preparation of the letterhead.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' ability to:

- (i) prepare different types of documents using appropriate formatting – organizational chart, spreadsheet
- (ii) integrate information to produce a single, complete document in a Power Point presentation.

The performance of candidates on this question was satisfactory. The majority of candidates showed strength in completing the organizational chart. Areas of weakness were seen in calculating percentages and net income in the spreadsheet, and in cutting and pasting to the Power Point.