

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

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

**JUNE 2009**

**ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT**

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**ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

**JUNE 2009**

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Eight thousand nine hundred and seventy-six candidates wrote the examination in 2009, an increase of 1,537 candidates over 2008.

The contents of the written examination were as follows:

Paper 01	-	Structured Questions
Paper 02	-	Production Test
Paper 03/2	-	Alternative to the School Based Assessment

The overall performance was excellent, with 90 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 generally weak. The paper was marked out of 50 and the mean mark was 19.86. Twenty-nine 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 apply a variety of production principles to prepare business letters, creative displays and spreadsheets, format documents and interpret manuscript signs. The performance of the candidates on this paper was very good. The paper was marked out of 100 and the mean mark was 56.89. Sixty-four 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 use a variety of production principles to prepare letters with mail merge, forms, and Power Point presentations. The performance of candidates on this paper was very good. The mean mark was 64.93 and the paper was marked out of 100. Seventy-eight 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 on this paper indicated significant weakness in areas such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and expression.

Paper 01 is a theory paper covering all aspects of the syllabus. It is therefore mandatory that the theory in each module be taught in its entirety. Since candidates must write their answers, it is important that emphasis be placed on grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and the importance of reading and following instructions carefully. Many candidates lacked knowledge in some areas of the content tested.

#### Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to define and identify output devices. The question was attempted by approximately 92 per cent of the candidates. Seventy-one per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

Although the overall performance on this question was good, Part (a) of this question posed challenges for most candidates. They were not able to properly define the term "output device." Part (b), however, was less challenging as most candidates were able to list examples of output devices.

#### Question 2

This question tested the candidates' ability to identify the two types of computer software, state their major function and give examples of each type of software.

This question was attempted by approximately 91 per cent of the candidates. Forty-five per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was good. The correct answer to Part (a) was known by many candidates. However, some candidates were not knowledgeable about the types of computer software, which are "operating software" and "application software." They named, for example, "Microsoft Word," which was one of the correct answers to Part (c). In Part (b), some candidates experienced difficulty stating the function of each type of software. For Part (c), many candidates could not give an accurate example of each type of software mainly because they had already given the answer in Part (a).

#### Question 3

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to set up and maintain an electronic filing system and name specific file extensions for given file types.

The question was attempted by approximately 82 per cent of the candidates. Six per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was poor. Part (a) posed difficulties for most candidates. They responded to the question by explaining how they would set up and maintain a manual filing system and made reference to filing cabinets, paper folders, dog ears, feather dusters, dust free, and so on. Consequently, they also had difficulty naming file extensions for the file types given in Part (b).

It was obvious that the majority of candidates had no knowledge of an electronic filing system (EFS).

#### Question 4

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of punctuation marks and manuscript signs.

The question was attempted by approximately 92 per cent of the candidates. Fifty-three per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was good. In Part (a), responses indicated that the topic was widely known by candidates. However, their weakness in spelling the punctuation marks was evident. Many spelt the word "comma" as "common" or "commer" and spelt "colon" as "quolon."

In Part (b), responses indicated that many candidates had limited knowledge of the manuscript signs. Many could not write the manuscript signs for the words given. A reason for this could be that candidates did not get enough practice in typing from documents with manuscript signs.

#### Question 5

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of different documents used in meetings. The question was attempted by approximately 89 per cent of candidates. Sixty-four per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this section was very good. However, many candidates felt that "memorandum" and "memo" were two different documents.

#### Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to display an organizational chart. This question was attempted by approximately 91 per cent of the candidates. Forty-three per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was satisfactory. Candidates' responses indicated that they recognised that the "president" should be placed in the first position. However, placing the other positions posed some difficulty.

It was very clear that some candidates could not differentiate between an organizational chart and other charts. Many candidates displayed bar charts, flow charts and column charts.

#### Question 7

This question tested the candidates' knowledge of types of software used to do tabulations, financial statements and types of headings used in advanced tabulations.

This question was attempted by approximately 88 per cent of the candidates. Twenty per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was quite poor. Part (a) appeared not to pose any difficulty for candidates. Most candidates, however, stated "Excel" as the software. They seemed not to be familiar with other software used to do tabulations. Part (b) posed some difficulty for some candidates as they were unable to name the types of financial statements. Part (c) also posed some difficulty for candidates as their responses

indicated that they were not familiar with the different types of headings used in advanced tabulations. One type of heading is “oblique” and many candidates spelled it incorrectly as “oblick” or “obleke.”

#### Question 8

This question was designed to test candidates’ knowledge of the concept of “plagiarism”. This question was attempted by approximately 86 per cent of the candidates. Thirty-seven per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was poor and Part (a) was not very well answered. Candidates did not have a clear understanding of the concepts “intellectual property” and “copyright.”

Responses to Part (b)(i) indicated that although candidates understood the term “plagiarism”, they were unable to express themselves clearly. Part (b)(ii) presented difficulty for most candidates. They could not accurately state the two guidelines that could be used to avoid plagiarism. An example of an incorrect answer was “put them in prison.”

#### Question 9

This question was intended to test candidates’ knowledge of keyboard navigation keys. This question was attempted by 88 per cent of the candidates. Thirty-one per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was poor. A number of candidates experienced difficulty with this question and their responses indicated that they did not know the meaning of the word “navigate.”

#### Question 10

This question was designed to test candidates’ knowledge of the steps to create a shortcut. This question was attempted by 84 per cent of the candidates. Twenty-nine per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks.

The overall performance on this question was poor. The performance of the majority of candidates indicated that they were not knowledgeable about creating the necessary shortcut. They could not differentiate between “creating a folder” and “creating a shortcut.”

### **Paper 02 - Production Test**

The performance on this paper was good overall. Once again, accuracy continues to be a concern. 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 punctuation marks.

#### Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates’ ability to produce a one-page letter with the following features:

- (i) Creating a letterhead using header

- (ii) Block style letter
- (iii) Interpreting and applying manuscript signs
- (iv) Integrating a logo and a watermark

The question was attempted by approximately 93 per cent of the candidates. Eighty-three per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was good.

The following areas created challenges for many of the candidates:

- (i) Use of correct spacing between lines, punctuation marks and parts of a letter
- (ii) Use of a header
- (iii) Interpreting manuscript signs
- (iv) Integrating a logo in a letterhead
- (v) Integrating a watermark into the body of a letter

### 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. Eighty-seven per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was good. A strong area of performance was in the centring of headings. However, many candidates had difficulty:

- (i) Ending a page and starting a continuation page
- (ii) Typing enumerated paragraphs in block format
- (iii) Following given instructions
- (iv) Using correct line spacing

### Question 3

This question tested candidates' ability to produce a bar or column chart using a spreadsheet. This question was attempted by approximately 82 per cent of the candidates. Forty-six per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

The overall performance on this question was unsatisfactory. The majority of candidates had difficulty in labelling the axis and arranging the legend for the chart. A possible cause of these weaknesses could be lack of practice and reinforcement.

#### Question 4

This question tested candidates' ability to use advanced creative display techniques to prepare a three-page brochure from manuscript. This question was attempted by 83 per cent of the candidates. Forty-three per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this question.

Performance on this question was satisfactory. The majority of candidates seemed comfortable with formatting the different fonts, inserting graphics correctly and using correct paper orientation.

The following areas presented difficulty to candidates:

- (i) Using headers and footers
- (ii) Placing a border on the first page
- (iii) Using correct line spacing
- (iv) Interpreting instructions
- (v) Aligning numbers

Possible causes of these weaknesses could be that candidates did not read instructions carefully before starting the question and unfamiliarity in preparing this type of document.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Teachers should place more emphasis on the importance of students reading and interpreting instructions before they begin each exercise.
2. Teachers should ensure that more in-depth focus be given to all theoretical aspects of the syllabus before attempting the practical components.
3. While teachers should attempt to cover the entire syllabus, specific attention should be given to those areas that traditionally prove difficult for students.
4. Teachers should devise more strategies to reinforce concepts and terms (such as plagiarism, intellectual property, copyright, application software, operating software, input devices, output devices) and frequently used phrases.
5. Teachers should administer spelling tests or quizzes, relevant to Electronic Document Preparation and Management, at regular intervals to improve spelling performance.
6. A list of all short-cut keys should be made available to students and their use should be reinforced.
7. Students are to be reminded constantly of how to type headings in all capitals and in initial capitals and to use the spellcheck after preparing each document.
8. Assignments including the following tasks should be given at regular intervals:
  - (a) Letterheads within a header
  - (b) Letters with different letter styles and correct spacing between different parts of the letter
  - (c) Correct integration of watermarks into documents

- (d) Headers and footers
  - (e) Selection and integration of logos into documents
9. Teachers should give students more opportunities to practise displaying different types of charts, including organizational charts.
  10. Teachers should give students more opportunities to use manuscript signs and to type from manuscripts in different handwritings.
  11. Teachers should give more revision of letter formatting and styles.

### **PAPER 03/1 – SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT**

Overall, the School-Based Assessments were satisfactory. Some SBAs were not complete as the required assignments were not submitted. It was also evident that some of the work submitted was photocopied. In addition, some schools did not submit assignment questions, keys or mark schemes.

However, overall, the quality of teachers' marking was acceptable.

The SBAs were marked out of 100 and the mean mark was 76.69. Ninety-two per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks.

### **PAPER 03/2 – ALTERNATIVE TO SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT**

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

#### **Question 1**

This question was intended to test candidates' ability to format a letterhead, interpret and apply manuscript signs, produce letters using mail merge and create forms.

The performance of candidates on this question was very good. However, many candidates had difficulty completing the mail merge correctly.

#### **Question 2**

This question was intended to test candidates' ability to prepare a PowerPoint Presentation.

The performance of candidates on this question was satisfactory. The majority of candidates showed strength in completing the PowerPoint.

### **Recommendations**

1. More attention needs to be given to the requirements of the syllabus.
2. Some teachers need to become more knowledgeable about the SBA. Some Reference Manuals consisted of definitions of tasks instead of the actual tasks.

3. Teachers must indicate corrections and marks on students' individual pieces of work.
4. Assignments must be labelled for identification.
5. Moderation sheets must be completed in totality.
6. Students' registration numbers must be placed on moderation sheets and assignments.
7. Teachers must submit mark schemes, keys and copies of production assignments.
8. Students need more practice, especially with manuscripts and manuscript signs.
9. Students need to pay closer attention to the rules governing document preparation.
10. An exchange of teachers between schools is recommended during assessment times. This will provide more objectivity for the marking of production work.
11. Students should be given ample practice in using the tools and features of the various software packages necessary for the production of accurate professional documents.