

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATION COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2011

**ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

**Copyright © 2011 Caribbean Examinations Council
St Michael, Barbados
All rights reserved.**

GENERAL COMMENTS

Approximately 12,583 candidates registered for the examination in 2011, an increase of approximately 850 candidates over 2010.

The content of the written examinations was as follows:

Paper 01	-	Structured Questions
Paper 02	-	Production Test
Paper 032	-	Alternative to School-Based Assessment

Paper 031, School-Based Assessment was done by school candidates. Overall performance on the examination was excellent, with 85 per cent of the candidates achieving Grades I–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. The performance of candidates on this paper showed no improvement compared with 2010. The paper was marked out of 50 and the mean mark was 20 (40 per cent).

Paper 02 – Production Test

Paper 02 consisted of four compulsory questions that tested candidates' ability to apply a variety of production principles to prepare business letters, creative displays, spreadsheets, and to format documents and interpret manuscript signs. The performance of candidates on this paper was below expectation. The paper was marked out of 100 and the mean mark was 42.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

Paper 032 consisted of two compulsory questions that tested candidates' ability to use a variety of production principles to prepare letters with mail merge, forms and PowerPoint presentations. The maximum mark possible was 100 and the mean mark on this paper was 39.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Structured Questions

Candidates' performance on this paper indicated significant weaknesses in areas such as knowledge of the computer, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure 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. It is important that emphasis be placed on grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and the importance of reading and following instructions carefully.

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the essential components of a computer system. The question was attempted by 91 per cent of the candidates. Overall performance on the question was good. Candidates were able to answer Part (a) competently, however, they were unable to clearly define the components.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' ability to set up and maintain electronic filing systems and their knowledge of file types and extensions. The question was attempted by 90 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance of the question was unsatisfactory. Candidates had difficulty expressing the methods used to set up and maintain an electronic filing system and had little knowledge of file types and extensions.

Question 3

This question tested candidates' knowledge of formatting features. It was attempted by 76 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance of the question was unsatisfactory, with the majority of candidates having difficulty listing formatting features.

Question 4

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of the modes of transmitting documents electronically and their ability to perform mail merges. The question was attempted by 89 per cent of the candidates. Overall performance on this question was fair.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the types of documents produced in the day-to-day activities of a business. The question was attempted by 83 per cent of the candidates. Overall performance on this question was weak.

Question 6

This question was designed to test candidates' grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. The question was attempted by 91 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on this question was satisfactory.

Question 7

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the concept of copyright and procedures to avoid plagiarism. It was attempted by 83 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance of the question was fair. Candidates' seemed to have problems identifying stakeholders. However, they seemed to have basic knowledge of the procedures to avoid plagiarism.

Question 8

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the appropriate productivity tools used for creating advanced tabulations. The question was attempted by 84 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance of this question was unsatisfactory, with more than half of the candidates gaining no more than one of the three marks available. The word 'tool' seemed to distract candidates from the true meaning of the question.

Question 9

This question tested candidates' ability to identify shortcut keys. The question was attempted by 82 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance of this question was poor. Candidates seemed to have difficulty identifying shortcut keys. It is necessary for candidates to know all aspects of using the keyboard and not depend solely on the mouse to access the keyboard and the computer.

Question 10

This question tested candidates' ability to create organization charts. It was attempted by 90 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance of this question was excellent.

Paper 02 – Production Test

Overall, performance on this paper was below the standard expected. Accuracy and speed continue to be concerns. Many candidates were unable to complete Question 4 in the time allotted. Most of the documents completed were not checked for typographical and formatting errors.

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to produce a letter and then perform a mail merge using the following instructions:

- (i) Create a letterhead with appropriate logo
- (ii) Use a blocked style letter
- (iii) Create a data file
- (iv) Create a main document showing fields
- (v) Interpret and apply manuscript signs
- (vi) Merge documents
- (vii) Produce an envelope

The question was attempted by over 95 per cent of candidates who wrote this paper. The mean mark was 10.01.

Overall, performance on this question was below expectation. Candidates performed competently in creating the letterhead and inserting the logo. The maximum mark available was 24. The following created challenges for some candidates:

- (i) Block style format for letter
- (ii) Date format for block style letter
- (iii) Creating merge fields
- (iv) Creating envelope
- (v) Punctuation and spelling
- (vi) Interpretation of manuscript signs
- (vii) Merging letters

Question 2

This question tested candidates' ability to create a memorandum and insert a spreadsheet, interpret and apply manuscript signs, calculate times and sort. It was attempted by over 95 per cent of the candidates. The mean mark was 14.35 out of a maximum of 26. The overall performance on this question was satisfactory. However, several candidates had difficulty with the following:

- (i) Calculation
- (ii) Blocked layout — to, from, date, Ref and subject line
- (iii) Justification of document
- (iv) Integrating table in memorandum
- (v) Sorting

Question 3

This question tested candidates' ability to interpret and apply manuscript signs to produce a table. It was attempted by 84 per cent of the candidates who wrote this paper. The mean mark was 12.21 out of a possible 23. The overall performance of candidates on this question was satisfactory. Candidates were able to:

- (i) Present a table
- (ii) Demonstrate knowledge of manuscript/correction signs
- (iii) Format

However, some candidates experienced challenges with:

- (i) Shading of lines
- (ii) Calculating totals
- (iii) Typing abbreviations in full
- (iv) Vertical and horizontal centering
- (v) Footnotes
- (vi) Inserting symbols

Question 4

This question tested candidates' ability to interpret and apply manuscript signs to produce a flyer with a tear-off. The following features were required:

- (i) Insertions
- (ii) Leader dots
- (iii) Columns and bullets
- (iv) Border and text boxes

The question was attempted by 67 per cent of the candidates. The mean mark was 12.13 out of a possible 27. The overall performance of candidates on this question was below expectation. Candidates were able to complete the document, but interpreting the manuscript and applying manuscript signs seemed to be a problem.

Paper 031 – School-Based Assessment

Overall, the work produced by students in the School-Based Assessment (SBA) was satisfactory. However, some SBA samples did not include the required components. In addition, it was also evident that some of the work submitted was not students' original work, since similar copies were submitted by more than one student. On a positive note, most teachers submitted mark schemes and made comments that the moderators could follow, which is an improvement over the previous years.

Recommendations

1. Moderation sheets must be completed fully.
2. Teachers are reminded to refer to the specifications set out in the syllabus and to advise students accordingly.
3. Students and teachers are reminded that the registration number of students should be included on the moderation sheets as well as on the assignments.
4. Students should be given ample practice using the tools and features of the various software packages. Mastery of these tools is necessary for the production of accurate, professional documents.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

This paper 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 perform the following:

- (i) Create letterheads
- (ii) Interpret and apply manuscript signs
- (iii) Insert logo and watermark
- (iv) Select and use appropriate stationery
- (v) Format documents

The performance of the candidates on this question was satisfactory with candidates performing competently in inserting watermarks, word art and clip art. However, use of headers and footers, the insertion of shading and left and right alignment presented difficulties for candidates.

Question 2

This question was intended to test candidates' ability to create and produce the following:

- (i) Spreadsheets with advanced tabulations
- (ii) Charts and graphs
- (iii) Effective and creative displays

Candidates were also required to interpret and apply manuscript signs, format, creating PowerPoint presentations and insert information from other documents.

The overall performance of candidates on this question was satisfactory, with the execution of the following presenting difficulty to candidates:

- (i) Slides — the information was not presented as slides
- (ii) Heading — some of these were inappropriate
- (iii) Graph creation
- (iv) Use of auto shapes

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers should emphasize to students the importance of reading and interpreting instructions before they begin an exercise.
2. The theoretical aspects of the syllabus must be given the same consideration as the practical during the instructional process.
3. Grammar and spelling should be reinforced and tested continuously by teachers.
4. Teachers need to expose students to a variety of current software applications, as well as ensure that relevant software tools are available for use.
5. Teachers should provide samples of various office documents as references for students.
6. Emphasis should be placed on the need for consistency in a finished document.
7. Students should be exposed to up-to-date office equipment and resources through field trips, print media or multimedia presentations.
8. Students should be made aware of different letter formats.
9. Students should practise keyboarding skills consistently until they write the examinations.