

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

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

**MAY/JUNE 2011**

**SOCIAL STUDIES  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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## GENERAL COMMENTS

### Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

In June 2011, 46,959 candidates sat the examination. Of this number, 70 per cent obtained Grades I–III. This represents a decline over 2010 when 81 per cent of the candidates obtained acceptable grades.

The Social Studies examinations consisted of the following papers:

- Paper 01 — Multiple Choice
- Paper 02 — Structured Questions and Extended Essays
- Paper 031 — School-Based Assessment
- Paper 032 — Alternative to School-Based Assessment

Paper 01 consisted of 60 items distributed as follows: 30 on Individual, Family and Society and 30 on Sustainable Development and Use of Resources. The items tested various levels of difficulty in the Knowledge and Comprehension profile and provided adequate syllabus coverage. The mean on this paper was 34 out of 60 or 57 per cent.

Paper 02 consisted of three sections: A, B and C, comprising 10 questions. Candidates were required to answer a total of five questions. Each question was worth 20 marks. The profiles tested were Profile 1, Knowledge and Comprehension and Profile 2, Application, Evaluation and Problem-solving. The mean on this paper was 39 per cent.

## DETAILED COMMENTS

### Paper 02 – Structured Questions and Extended Essays

#### Section A: Individual, Family and Society

In this section, candidates were required to respond to two out of the three question set. The quality of the responses ranged from outstanding to less than satisfactory.

#### Question 1

This was the most popular question in Section A and the most popular on the paper. It tested candidates' understanding of the emotional needs of family; benefits to society when emotional needs are met; the reasons why more women have become income earners and ways in which working parents may share responsibilities. It was attempted by approximately 95 per cent of the candidates but had the lowest mean score in this section.

In Part (a), most candidates identified emotional needs of children such as *to be loved, to feel wanted and to receive affection*. Incorrect responses included 'to learn the culture of the society'.

Part (b) was generally well done. Candidates described one benefit to the society when the emotional needs of children are met. There were varying responses with popular ones ranging from economic to social issues. These included *children will have less social problems and there is less likelihood that children will become delinquent*.

Part (c) asked candidates to give two reasons why more women have become income earners. This was generally well answered. Correct responses included *educational opportunities for women especially at the tertiary level have provided them with better paid jobs, the desire to be independent, to earn their own money and have greater control of their lives and the fact that women have been forced to share economic responsibilities in the home because of the difficulty in maintaining a family due to increases in the cost of living*.

Part (d) which focused on application, evaluation and problem-solving skills, asked candidates to suggest to working parents three ways in which they may share responsibilities in the home. The responses were varied and correct responses included:

- Parents and children should discuss and create a duty roster of the times and the days when each member of the family would be responsible for specific household chores. The chores should be rotated.
- Parents and children should attend group counselling sessions with working parents sharing best practices for the family and helping to dispel the notion that males and females have specific roles and tasks in the home.

The following is an example of a relevant feasible and well-explained justification for the first action: *Discussing and creating a duty roster would allow parents to plan in advance for their household chores. Thus, the father would be aware that on a particular day he is responsible for picking up the children from school and would not schedule any other activity for that day.*

## Question 2

This question tested candidates' understanding to the concept of ethnic groups, changing Caribbean customs and strategies to promote aspects of Caribbean culture. It was attempted by approximately 90 per cent of the candidates, had the highest mean score of the section and the second highest mean score for the paper.

In Part (a), most candidates were able to correctly identify four ethnic groups such as the *British, Africans, Indians* and *Chinese*.

Part (b) asked candidates to give two reasons why some traditional Caribbean customs are presently changing. Popular and correct responses included:

- North American culture such as fast food, mode of dress, music and dance via cable television has been embraced by many Caribbean people.
- This generation of young people do not wish to learn and practise certain traditional cultures which are not in keeping with the beliefs of modern societies.

Part (c) tested the application, evaluation and problem-solving components. Candidates were asked to suggest to the Ministry of Culture three strategies that can be used to promote either music or dance in their country. Candidates' responses revealed an awareness of the importance of promoting Caribbean culture. Some of these responses included:

- Organise annual school competitions in music such as 'Sing Along' in which the schools would showcase their musical talent and top performers would be awarded scholarships and monetary prizes.
- Government should make music compulsory from early childhood to secondary school; hire specialist teachers and provide the necessary musical resources. The success of the music programme would be included in the grade given to the school.

Part (d) (ii) asked candidates to justify each strategy given in Part (d) (i). The following is an example of a relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for the first point: *The annual school competition will be effective in promoting music because young people are always enthusiastic to show off their talents and become celebrities and will be enticed especially by scholarships and monetary awards.*

### Question 3

This question was based on the branches of government, types of law courts in the judicial system and ways in which the police force helps the courts to do its work. The question also asked candidates the ways in which the local community may cooperate with the police to maintain law and order. This was the least popular question in this section, but it had the second highest mean score for the section and the third highest for the paper overall.

The Knowledge and Comprehension part of the question comprised Parts (a)–(c). Part (a) (i) asked candidates to identify two other branches of government, apart from the judiciary. Most candidates responded correctly by naming the *executive*, *legislature* or *parliament*.

Part (b) tested candidates' knowledge of the law courts in the judicial system. This section was well-answered and correct responses included the *High Court*, *Supreme Court*, *Court of Appeal* and the *Caribbean Court of Justice*.

Part (c) asked candidates to explain two ways in which the police force helps the courts to do its work. Responses that were correct and well explained included the following:

- Properly managing of crime scenes by collecting the relevant evidence and preventing individuals from interfering with the crime scene so that such evidence can be presented in court.
- After properly investigating, arresting and charging individuals who are alleged to have committed crimes so that they can be brought to trial. Instituting a witness protection programme in which special measures such as concealing the identity of key witnesses and increased security for the witness and family members to encourage witnesses to testify without fear of being killed.

Part (d) (i), the application, evaluation and problem-solving task, asked candidates to suggest to citizens three ways in which the local community may cooperate with the police to maintain law and order. Some ways suggested could not be implemented by the local community members. The following are correct responses that were well-developed and fully explained:

- Reports to the police immediately, through the special unit responsible for witness protection, cases of abuse and any suspicious activities in the community.
- Institute a neighbourhood watch, where the members of the police force are invited to give advice concerning safety, the responsibilities of community members and methods of alerting members of suspicious activities in the community for example, by using whistles.

An example of an inappropriate response was that 'citizens should capture and punish any suspicious person and then take him or her to the police'.

Part (d) (ii) asked candidates to explain why each of the actions was likely to work. The following is an example of a justification for the first strategy that was relevant, feasible and well-explained.

*Reporting immediately cases of abuse and suspected criminal activities to a special branch of the police force may allow the police to apprehend criminals quickly or prevent the act from being committed and the citizens will be less fearful of reporting criminal activities and becoming witnesses in court. This will help to maintain law and order.*

### **Section B: Sustainable Development and Use of Resources**

This section was divided into two parts. Part I consisted of two structured questions and Part II of two extended essays. Candidates were required to attempt one question from each part of this section.

#### Question 4

This question tested candidates' understanding of population density, the calculation of population density and the relationship between population density and quality of services. Candidates were given a map depicting population density. This was not a popular question and less than one third of the candidates attempted it. It also had a low mean score.

Part (a) (i) asked candidates to define the term *population density*. A minority of candidates responded correctly by stating that it was *the average number of persons per unit area such as a square kilometre*. An incorrect response was that it was 'the number of persons living in a country'.

Part (a) (ii) required candidates to state how population density is calculated. A few candidates responded correctly by stating that it was obtained by *dividing the total population of a country by the total area of the country or by dividing the total population of an area by the total area of that part of the country*.

Part (b) asked candidates to outline one factor which may have prevented persons from settling in the low density area. Correct responses mentioned the *swampy terrain and waterlogged soils limiting agricultural production and the presence of a large river which may cause flooding during the rainy season*. Some candidates did not use the map as a guide and referred to the presence of the desert in the low density area.

For Part (c), candidates were asked to give two examples to show how the high density of populations may affect the quality of services. Many candidates did not understand the relationship between population density and services. Correct responses which were well-explained were:

- There may be a strain on the education system because of the large number of children enrolled in schools which contribute to overcrowding and affect students' learning.
- Inadequate housing to satisfy the large population and the inability of some residents to purchase houses may lead to the development of squatter settlements and slums without basic amenities such as water supply and sewage disposal systems.

Part (d) (i) assessed application, evaluation and problem-solving skills and asked candidates to suggest three measures which the government of a country could take to encourage people to migrate to low density areas. The following are correct responses that were well-developed and clearly explained.

- Provide incentives such as lower prices for land, lower property taxes, subsidies on imported materials for manufacturers and other business owners to establish businesses or branches of their organizations in the area.
- Partner with private sector construction companies to build attractive housing complexes designed with green spaces and sold at lower rates than those in other areas.

Part (d) (ii) asked candidates to explain how each measure was likely to be successful. The following is an example of a relevant, feasible and well explained justification for the first measure.

*Providing incentives would encourage the development of businesses which would create services and generate employment for residents, thus reducing the amount of time and money spent travelling to and from work and for other services. Many persons prefer to live in areas in close proximity to work where services are available.*

#### Question 5

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the location of natural resources in the Caribbean, the importance of rivers, and pollution of rivers through human activities. Parts (a), (b) and (c) assessed knowledge and comprehension and Parts (d) (i) and (ii) assessed application, evaluation and problem-solving. A large percentage of candidates attempted this question. It had the highest mean score for the examination.

Part (a) tested candidates' knowledge of the location of named resources in Caribbean countries. Many candidates answered correctly.

Part (b) (i) asked candidates to state two uses of rivers. Popular and correct responses included *for transportation, for generating hydroelectricity and for agricultural purposes such as irrigation.*

Part (b) (ii) asked candidates to describe one way in which human activities may pollute rivers. An example of a correct response was that *the use of fertilizers and pesticides in farming results in runoff into rivers which contaminate the water supply and affect aquatic life and the health of people.*

For Part (d), most candidates were able to suggest three measures a community group may use to reduce pollution of rivers in the community. The following are examples of correct measures which were well-developed and clearly explained.

- Community groups can plan an environmental day in which experts from the Department of Water Resources test water quality, citizens clean debris from rivers and surrounding areas, install garbage bins and appoint environmental stewards with responsibility to maintain designated recreation areas along the river.
- Community members can arrange for house to house campaigns to distribute flyers, posters and educate members of the family on how to prevent water pollution and to report cases of polluting

An example of an inappropriate response was that 'members of the community should prosecute anyone found polluting the environment'.

The following is an example of a justification for the first strategy that was relevant, feasible and well-explained.

*If community members are involved in an environmental day, they will have practical experiences of the sources and effects of river pollution and will become more aware of changing negative behaviours that contribute to pollution and begin to participate in sustainable activities.*

### Question 6

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). It assessed candidates' knowledge and comprehension of the topic and the application, evaluation and problem-solving skills related to CARICOM issues. Although less popular than Question 7, it had a higher mean score.

Candidates were asked to write an essay on the stimulus *The CSME is about you and me.* The knowledge and comprehension section asked candidates to identify two stages of the integration movement before the establishment of CSME. Many candidates correctly identified the stages. They were then asked to state two objectives of the CSME. Correct responses included *removing all remaining trade barriers within the region and organizing for increased production among the member states to improve trade among Caribbean nations.*

Candidates were further required to describe two difficulties that some member states may experience in meeting the objectives of the CSME. Correct responses that were well developed included:

- The less developed countries in the region are at a disadvantage in competing to produce similar goods of smaller quantities at higher costs of production for the same CARICOM market.
- There is the fear of rising unemployment for citizens in the smaller member states with free movement of labour from the larger states.

To assess the application, evaluation and problem-solving skills, the question asked candidates to suggest three strategies for overcoming the difficulties of the CSME. An example of a strategy that was well-developed and clearly explained was. All Caribbean leaders need to take responsibility to develop their local manufacturing and service sectors to generate employment for the growing population and reduce the large number of persons migrating from some Caribbean territories. Where vacancies cannot be filled by residents, skilled Caribbean nationals should be encouraged to migrate to fill such posts.

A relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for the strategy was *if all governments embark on increasing employment opportunities in their member states then there would be no need to fear that some Caribbean states are dumping grounds for the overspill population of others. In fact, free movement of labour would be welcomed by most member states.*

### Question 7

This question tested candidates' knowledge and comprehension of educational organizations designed to promote regional cooperation. It was one of the more popular questions in this section. It had the second lowest mean score for the examination.

Candidates were asked to write an essay on the stimulus *Benefits of Regional Integration to CARICOM Citizen*. The knowledge and comprehension section required that candidates name two organizations designed to promote regional cooperation in education. Many candidates correctly named the organizations and popular responses included *University of the West Indies, Caribbean Examinations Council and Council of Legal Education*. Many candidates also gave correct responses for the functions of the organizations. For example, *the Caribbean Examinations Council prepares and conducts a common examination for the countries in the region.*

Candidates were further required to explain two ways in which Caribbean citizens benefit from regional cooperation, other than in education. Correct responses that were well-developed and clearly explained to warrant full marks included:

- Increased employment opportunities as Caribbean citizens are able to work and travel freely across the region. The *Caribbean Skills Certificate* facilitates such employment.
- Removal of duties and tariffs from goods being traded in the region results in lower cost of goods to the consumer, thus increasing consumers' purchasing power and standard of living.

For the application, evaluation and problem-solving marks, candidates were asked to suggest three measures that the government of their country could take to encourage citizens to support CARICOM organizations. The following are examples of strategies that were well developed and clearly explained:

- The Ministry of Education in collaboration with other ministries in the region should organize a regional high school competition on CARICOM where the winning team from each country competes for prizes and the title of the top CARICOM school.
- Arrange a CARICOM Trade Show highlighting the high quality goods produced within the region and distribute free samples of these goods; provide information on CARICOM and showcase cultural pieces from each country.

The following is an example of a justification for the first strategy that was relevant, feasible and well-explained.

*A regional high school competition would spark interest in students, teachers, parents and other citizens who would gain greater knowledge, insights and appreciation for CARICOM organizations as they support their local team.*

## Section C – Optional Questions

There were three questions in this section and candidates were required to answer one. All questions were attempted. Question 10 was the most popular while Question 9 was least popular.

### Question 8

This question tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of cultural transmissions and the influence of global media on Caribbean culture. Many candidates performed satisfactorily; Question 8 had the highest mean in the section.

The question began with a stimulus in cultural transmission through oral traditions. Candidates were asked to speak on the topic as if they were a well-known media personality. The knowledge and comprehension section required candidates to define *cultural transmission*. The complete definition was expected to include two features. Correct responses included *the process by which culture is passed on from generation to generation*. An incomplete response was 'transmitting culture via storytelling'.

Candidates were then asked to identify two ways of transmitting oral culture. Popular and correct responses ranged from *storytelling and rhymes* to *ring games*. Candidates were then required to explain the influence of global media on Caribbean culture. Correct responses included *the change, especially in urban areas, from transitional food such as yam and dasheen to a preference for American fast food such as Kentucky Fried Chicken, Kellogg's cereals, American grapes and apples*.

For the application, evaluation and problem-solving marks, candidates were asked to suggest to the Minister of Culture three actions to preserve cultural heritage. Examples of such actions that were well-developed and clearly explained were:

- The Minister of Culture should establish a Cultural Heritage museum with artifacts and provide for field trips to heritage sites. Field trips should be a compulsory activity in Social Studies for all schools. Agents from the Ministry of Culture would be responsible for the arrangement of field trips.
- Declare a public holiday as Cultural Heritage Day when students are taken to various cultural sites with special rates for the day and stage a cultural showcase where various ethnic groups display their cultural heritage in all parishes.

The following is an example of justification for the first action that was relevant, feasible and well-explained.

*Students will be excited to leave the classroom and visit museums and heritage sites. The experience will provide practical knowledge, strengthen their awareness of cultural heritage and create a deeper appreciation of the need to preserve their culture.*

### Question 9

This was the least popular question in this section with the lowest mean for the paper. It tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of devaluation. Candidates were asked to prepare a speech on the stimulus that advised Caribbean consumers to practise thrift because of the threat of devaluation.

Candidates were required to explain the term *devaluation*. This was not well answered. Only a minority of candidates were able to explain devaluation as *a reduction in the exchange rate of a currency against a known standard currency*. An example of an incorrect response was 'reduction in the amount of money in a country'.

Candidates were then asked to state two possible effects of devaluation on consumers. This section was not well-answered as many candidates did not understand the concept of devaluation. Some candidates ignored the effects on the consumers. A popular and correct response included *consumers may be unable to afford the high cost of imported and even local food which results in the absence of a balanced diet and health problems for the family*. Candidates were asked to give two reasons why consumers who practise thrift may reduce the effects of devaluation on their families. This was not well answered. Popular and clearly explained responses included *consumers who make a budget usually shop wisely by comparing prices, purchasing only what they need, thus resisting impulsive buying and overspending*.

For the application, evaluation and problem-solving marks, candidates were asked to suggest three strategies which the community may use to assist families who are affected by devaluation. The following are examples of strategies that were clearly explained:

- Members of the community should collect and distribute seedlings for short-term crops and pots where necessary for backyard gardening, provide help in planting seedlings and advice in caring for plants to encourage the residents to plant their own food.
- Community members should arrange seminars with local entrepreneurs to advise residents on the variety of investment opportunities available and provide guidance in designing proposals for start-up businesses and for funding.

A relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for the first strategy was. *If people are provided with planting materials and help to plant, they will be encouraged to embark on such an exercise with the knowledge that in the short term they will reduce their food bill and may sell the surplus*.

#### Question 10

This was the second most popular question in this section with the second highest mean score. It tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of employment opportunities in tourism.

For this question, the stimulus was an advertisement to fill a position as a tour guide. The knowledge and comprehension section asked candidates to name two types of jobs in tourism other than that of a tour guide. Correct and popular responses included *house keepers, chefs, bartenders, entertainment coordinators and tour bus operators*. Candidates were then asked to identify two requirements for the job of a tour guide. Correct responses included *knowledge of the history and culture of the popular tourist sites on the island, good communication skills such as proficiency in speaking the English Language and knowledge of a second language such as Spanish or French*.

The final question in this section asked candidates to give two reasons why a Caribbean government may invest in hospitality training. Some candidates had problems answering this section and some responses were very general and were not linked to training. Correct and clearly developed responses included *tourism is our largest foreign exchange earner and thus persons who work in the industry must be equipped with the necessary knowledge, values and skills to relate to tourists in positive ways. This will ensure tourist arrivals*. An example of an incomplete response was 'to provide foreign exchange'.

The evaluation, application and problem-solving section asked candidates to suggest to the Tourism Hospitality School three strategies that may be used to attract people to register for courses at the school. The following are examples of correct, well-developed and well-explained strategies:

- The administrators of the Tourism Hospitality School may provide financial support such as scholarships, bursaries and book grants for high-performing students as well as needy ones. Such assistance may also include a payment plan.
- Have a booth at the employment fairs of schools across the island to advertise the programme through posters, flyers and the use of technology, highlighting how the course is structured for the young entrepreneurs.

*A relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for the first strategy was. Given the recession most parents and working young persons find it difficult to pay tuition fees, purchase books and school supplies and would welcome financial aid.*

### **Recommendation for Candidates**

The new structure of the examination paper requires that candidates answer a question on CARICOM. Although the scores for CARICOM questions have slightly improved, they reflected the second and third lowest mean scores on the examination paper. Candidates need to improve their knowledge and understanding of issues pertaining to CARICOM. Candidates are advised to use the objectives for the regional integration section, the CARICOM website, newspaper articles and other media reports on CARICOM to help to improve their performance on the questions.

The question on devaluation was poorly done, with the lowest mean score for the examination. This reflected limited knowledge and understanding pertaining to specific concepts. Candidates are advised to use the CSEC Social Studies syllabus to guide them in preparation for the course and the examination.

The application, evaluation and problem-solving section requires that candidates use an informed position and principles based on fostering responsible behaviour and the promotion of democratic values and attitudes in proposing suggestions for social problems. The strategies should be relevant and feasible. Candidates must also be aware that some suggestions may not be applicable to some groups.

The essay-type questions are structured to guide candidates in organizing their responses. There were too many cases where responses were disorganized and sections of the question located in various parts of the essay. Candidates are thus advised to organize their responses based on the format of the question.

The suggestion of a strategy, measure or action must be well-developed and clearly explained to achieve full marks. The definition of concepts continues to pose problems for candidates. Candidates are advised to use concept-mapping techniques to develop an understanding of the concepts.

### **Recommendation for Teachers**

Teachers must engage students in the following:

- Problems-solving exercises such as case studies to enhance responses to the application, evaluation and problem-solving section.
- Concept-mapping exercises to improve understanding and application of concepts.
- Skill building so that they will be able to apply problem solving, critical thinking and research skills in information gathering to enhance responses.
- Discussions on the rationale for Social Studies and the skills and attitudes to be developed. This subject must go beyond knowledge acquisition. .

### **PAPER 031 — SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)**

As in previous years, the popular topics continue to be ' Teenage Pregnancy', 'Unemployment', 'Substance Abuse' and 'Delinquency.' However, it was encouraging to find a few more non-traditional topics than previously such as:

- Social networking
- Cellphone use
- Divorce
- Intermarriage
- Tourism

### Task 1

Most problem statements were well stated for example:

- What factors account for the rise in juvenile delinquency in the village of...?
- What factors account for the level of street children in...?
- What are the causes of unemployment in my community?
- To what extent has the use of social networking affected the family?

Some examples of problem statements that were not well written were:

- What are the causes of single parent families and the challenges faced in catering for this family?
- How prevalent is alcohol use among students and what impact does it have on their educational achievement?

Both of the above are double-barrelled problem statements.

A question requiring a yes/no response should be a question on a questionnaire or interview. One such example was:

- Are teenagers turning away from religion in the ... community?

The other tasks were well done in many samples. However, there were major areas of weakness as noted below.

### Presentation of Data

Many students did not present their data in three different ways. There are *different ways* of presenting data that are applicable to this SBA, from which students may select *three*:

- pie charts
- bar graphs
- tables
- tally charts
- pictographs

To improve performance on this task, students should not present three different bar graphs or three different pie charts.

Some students presented as many as 23 figures in this task; these were too many and represented a departure from the requirements of the SBA. Students need to be exposed to the different ways of presenting data and should be provided with adequate opportunities to practise using them. This is important as this section carries six marks.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

There was improvement in this task but many students continue to be challenged with the analysis. Good performance is necessary as this task carries the most marks (8 marks). To improve performance, students should be encouraged to use analytical terms such as *majority*, *in comparison to*, *a larger percentage of*, *ratio*, *one can conclude* etc.

Generally, students presented findings and recommendations from the data, but very few of them presented any implementation strategy for the recommendations. In the strategies that were provided, more description of the implementation was necessary.

Most projects were well presented — neatly bound in folders. However, there were some submissions that were presented as loose pages. A greater attempt, for example, securing the pages, should be made to facilitate easy handling of some projects.

## Plagiarism

As in the past, students continue to submit projects that have been plagiarized. To discourage students from engaging in this practice, due vigilance should be exercised by teachers.

In conclusion, conducting research is a very in-depth and complex process, appropriate guidance is essential to ensure improvement in performance.

## **Paper 032 — Alternative to School-Based Assessment**

The aim of this examination was to test candidates' knowledge of the research process and their ability to apply research concepts and skills to respond appropriately to questions. To be successful in this examination, candidates must be exposed to regular instruction relevant to research. The paper consisted of five structured questions.

### Question 1

Candidates were required to select a research topic from the two that had been provided. The more popular choice was 'Attitudes of people in my community towards homeless people'.

In Part (b), the majority of candidates could not complete appropriately a problem statement that had been started. Examples of appropriate completion statements were: *Topic 1: This study will show what residents in my community think about homeless people.* This is appropriate for a problem statement because the problem statement shows what the main focus of the research will be. *Topic 2: This study will show what students think about corporal punishment.*

Candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge of the concept of *research instruments*; this was an improvement over past performance on this task. In Part (e), the majority of candidates were able to identify possible problems a researcher could experience after distributing questionnaires.

### Question 2

Candidates were unable to formulate/write two research questions. Writing research questions, like any other skill, requires frequent practice to develop proficiency. It requires the researcher to think clearly about what he/she hopes to find out about the topic and to state these ideas in question form. These questions are expressed broadly, as they focus on the general theme of the research.

An example of a well formulated research question supplied by a candidate was:

- What are the effects of corporal punishment on secondary school students?

Examples of questions that were not well formulated were:

- Why do you like corporal punishment?
- Why are you homeless?
- Are there homeless people in your community?
- How are the homeless people regarded in your community?

Some research questions presented were not followed by a question mark.

The following criteria should be considered when writing research questions:

- clarity — questions must be clearly stated
- question format should be used with a question mark at the end
- well written questions should allow candidates to go beyond yes/no responses
- questions should not be personalized, as for example, in 'Why do you like corporal punishment?'

### Question 3

This question tested candidates' knowledge of sampling in research. Many candidates did not know the concept; only a small percentage of them were able to describe their sampling method and state the reason why they choose that method. Many candidates could not give a valid reason for choosing the sampling method.

Some acceptable responses from candidates for sampling methods were as follows:

*Random sampling:* The names of each student will be written on slips of paper and placed in a bag; 15 names will be pulled out of the bag. This is to ensure that each person has an equal chance of being selected. There are 75 households in the community so I visited every third house to distribute a questionnaire. This is to ensure that each household has an equal chance of being selected.

*Purposive sampling:* Selecting from the population only those who meet the necessary criteria to provide the relevant information.

For Part (e), the majority of candidates could state two ways in which the researcher can protect information provided by the sample.

### Question 4

Performance on this question was good; the majority of candidates could interpret the data provided in the case. They could also state two important findings.

### Question 5

For Part (a) (i), candidates were able to complete a table using data provided in the case study from Question 4. However, they were unable to answer Parts (a) (ii) which required them to display the data in the table as a comparative bar graph.

The other area of poor performance on this question was the recommendations in Part (b). Recommendations are suggestions that can be made to solve a problem; therefore, the recommendations must be *relevant* to the findings of the study. To improve performance on this question the following guidelines should be considered:

- Read the entire case study carefully
- Note the problem statement in the case
- Pay close attention to the new information the researchers found (findings) about the problem being investigated
- Recommend or suggest/state the best ways to solve the problem/s.