

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2012

**HOME ECONOMICS: MANAGEMENT
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Home Economics: Management Examination comprises three components: Paper 01 – Multiple Choice, Paper 02 – Structured Essays and Paper 03 – School Based-Assessment. Approximately 6,252 candidates sat for this examination. Of this number, approximately 85 per cent achieved Grades I–III. This figure represents a decrease over 2011 when 89 per cent of candidates received similar grades.

For the examination this year, there were noticeable areas of strength and some areas which continued to show less than acceptable performance. It was evident that some candidates gave fuller answers, showing improved language usage and embracing more of the essence of the themes and content being examined. They showed greater awareness of the subject matter and there is evidence that they are integrating the concepts with personal experiences. This is good evidence that the subject is showing relevance to the everyday lives of the students. Although candidates sometimes used the Creole to present their responses, there was evidence that there was improvement in the application component of the concepts being tested.

The areas of weakness which were evident in candidates' responses are for the most part recurring ones. Too many responses continue to be disorganised and not logically laid out. Such responses do not allow for the award of high scores to candidates.

Candidates still do not understand content organisation terms like 'guidelines', 'procedures/ steps', 'roles', 'effects', 'features', 'actions' and 'factors'. These are part of the vocabulary of the syllabus and the textbooks. A consequence of this weakness is that candidates often give examples which may be relevant to the subject matter but are often unrelated to the specific concept being tested. A case in point is that they gave 'precautions' instead of stating 'guidelines' as was asked of them in Question 3 part (c) (ii). Another example is in part (c) (i) where candidates were asked, 'What steps should Mrs Simpson take to deal with the situation?' Expected answers were

- *Try to stop the bleeding by applying pressure or tying the off area of the cut*
- *When the bleeding stops, clean the cut with antiseptic to remove bacteria and other anti-bodies/germs.*
- *Bandage the cut with clean cloth or gauze to protect from germs/anti-bodies.*
- *If the cut is deep, go to the hospital if it is beyond first aid.*

Candidates failed to list the steps in the order they should be done. In addition, in almost every instance the candidates wrote that the cut should be put under running water, claiming, erroneously, that this would stop the bleeding or that dressing or ointment should be applied to the cut.

Responses continue to show candidates' misinterpretation of the key action words used in a question, such as 'describe', 'suggest' and 'explain'.

Candidates continue to show poor mastery of management principles. The core concepts of the Home Economics Management revolve around the management principles and their clear relationship to family activities. This was one of the weakest areas reflected in the candidates' responses. It was also noticeable that the question testing this principle was not attempted by a large number of candidates. Hence, it was the least popular among the optional questions. Many candidates who opted to respond to the question used words and phrases related to the concept but used them inappropriately or out of context which suggests that they were exposed to the associated concepts but did not fully understand them and would need more time to develop a fuller understanding and an ability to apply what they have learned. For example, 'planning', 'organising', 'evaluating' are words that many candidates repeated in their responses but with inaccurate definitions, descriptions and applications.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 - Multiple Choice

This paper consisted of 60 multiple choice items which tested all sections of the syllabus and Profiles 1 and 2. The mean on this paper was 55 per cent, a decline from 60 per cent in 2011.

Paper 02 - Structured Essay Questions

The Paper 02 consisted of two parts. Part A and Part B. Part A comprised three compulsory questions while Part B consisted of four questions from which candidates were required to respond to two of them. Hence, candidates were required to answer a total of five questions. Each question was awarded a total of sixteen marks, six marks for the Knowledge profile and ten marks for Use of Knowledge. The mean mark on this paper was approximately 45 per cent.

Part A

These questions assessed Modules 5, 7 and 10 of the syllabus. Although the syllabus specifically states that each year these question will be based on the stated modules, candidates' performance was below the acceptable standard in previous years. This year's performances, however, reflected some improvement in the overall grasp of the subject matter

Question 1

This question tested candidates' knowledge in the areas of 'Work and Work Ethics', and 'Career'. In particular, it assessed

- (i) Importance of career exploration with reference to job search and career choices
- (ii) Desirable attitudes to work.

Part (a) tested candidates' knowledge of ways to prepare for work other than attending career seminars. This part was fairly well done, as most candidates were able to list at least two ways of preparing for the world of work. However, a number of overlapping responses were given by candidates as separate points. For example they would give each of the following sets as separate points:

- Going on summer job/ Going on work experience. Working in family business
- Gathering information on career / Reading books on career / Surfing the internet
- Talking to parents/ guidance counsellor/ friends

The following are some expected responses:

- *Send out job application*
- *Study and pass examinations*
- *Explore advertisement in the media*
- *Seek to gain work experience via on the job training programme*

Part (b) required candidates to state two desirable work attitudes. This part was generally well done, as a majority of the candidates were able to give the correct responses to qualities /attitudes employers look for in employees. However, some incorrect responses that were quite popular included:

- Dress code
- Proper work ethics
- Good work attitudes
- Communication skills
- To make you have a good record
- Behaviour in the workplace
- Arrival of the employees.

Some favourable expected responses were

- *Sense of responsibility*
- *Honesty*
- *Integrity*
- *Regularity*
- *Willingness to learn/work*
- *Respectful*
- *Ability to take initiative*
- *Polite*
- *Tolerance of views of others*
- *Working in groups*

Part (c) tested candidates' understanding or application of their knowledge of the topic. Candidates were expected, at (c) (i), to identify questions that could be asked when seeking further information about a vacancy (other than relating to salary). Additionally, they were asked to give a reason for each question proposed. This part of the question was poorly done. Some candidates did not attempt this section, while most responses indicated that candidates misinterpreted the question. Most candidates instead of writing a question wrote phrases or statements. For example,

- Location/ the location,
- Vacancy place / the location of the vacancies, instead of, "Where is the hotel located?"
- Subjects needed for vacancies, instead of, "What are the requirements, qualifications, skills, physical and personal attributes of the position?"
- Work shifts and days of work, instead of, what are the work hours?

Or responses which were stated in the form of questions but were not acceptable answers, such as

- Will I be able to live at the hotel?
- When can I come for the interview?

In Part (c) (ii), candidates were asked to state two qualifications prospective applicants should possess before responding to an application and to give reasons for their answer. This part was also poorly done as most candidates misinterpreted the question. Their responses included;

- Police record
- References
- Qualification for the vacancies
- Having the right type of clothes
- Resume`
- Application letter

- Home Management
- Home Economics
- English

Expected responses were:

- *CSEC English Language or Communication Skills*
- *Certificate in House Keeping*
- *CSEC Home Economics: Management*
- *Ability to speak a foreign language*

Overall the candidates' performance on this question was not up to the acceptable standard. Most of the candidates scored between the ranges of 0-8.

Question 2

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to:

- (a) recall information on how money is legally earned and some of the guidelines for spending money wisely
- (b) Apply knowledge of spending wisely to the preparation of a budget

The quality of candidates' responses was generally quite good as the majority of candidates scored between 10 and 14 marks out of a possible 16 marks.

In Part (a), the majority of candidates gave correct responses. The few candidates who gave incorrect responses misinterpreted the word 'legally' for 'illegally', and gave incorrect responses such as

- Selling drugs
- Prostituting
- Black market
- Money laundering
- Picking pockets
- Stealing
- Scamming

Some candidates wrote the same responses twice such as: "employed and self-employed".

The weaker candidates listed names of professions/jobs and reasons why people work instead of stating ways in which money is legally earned.

In Part (b), the respondents were asked to state three guidelines for spending money wisely. The majority of candidates were able to state the salient points for the guidelines. However, for some this part of the question seemed to have posed some challenges. For example, some candidates gave benefits of shopping wisely rather than guidelines for spending money wisely. Others listed two responses that were synonymous or one was inclusive of the other. For example, 'Use good judgment when making consumer choices' would include points such as- 'avoid impulsive buying', 'do comparative shopping, getting value for money', and 'buying goods in season'.

Part (c) (i) was generally well done. The majority of the candidates were able to complete the table accurately. Candidates demonstrated a good grasp of fixed and variable expenses in budgeting and were therefore able to fit items into the appropriate columns.

Those who did not score full marks did the following:

- Copied the table without filling in the information.
- Copied the question including the list of income and expenditure to their answer booklet but did not use the information to complete the table.
- Divided the income and expenditure over a yearly period instead of monthly.
- Added the totals incorrectly.
- Made a shopping list.
- Transferred some fixed expenses to the variable expenses column and vice versa.

Overall, the responses to Part (c) (ii) were poorly done. Most candidates scored either zero or one mark out of a possible two marks. The responses showed insufficient analysis as the candidates failed to state the amount by which Jane had over-budgeted and did not adequately show how the budget could have been balanced. For example, candidates suggested a removal of movies from the budget which only accounted for \$20.00 or took the entire \$115 from the amount allocated to food. These actions, even though they balanced the budget, were not the most appropriate adjustment to make. A few candidates outlined fully that in order *to balance the budget, the adjustments were to be made to the variable expenses.*

Question 3

This question tested Module 10 – ‘Safety in the Home, Safety Features of Appliances or Equipment’. In particular questions were based on Objectives 1, 6 and 3.

Part (a) tested candidates’ knowledge of the type of accidents which can happen while doing activities around the home. This section was fairly well done as many candidates gave satisfactory responses. Some expected responses for accidents which may occur when carrying out repairs around the house were

- *falls/slips/slides*
- *electrocution/shock/electric shock*
- *inhaling noxious fumes from paints/thinners/solvents*
- *poisoning*
- *cuts and bruises from tools*

Some expected responses for accidents which may occur when gardening were:

- *falls*
- *insect stings and bites*
- *poisoning from herbicides and insecticides(garden chemicals)*
- *cuts and bruises from tools*
- *Grazes and scratches from twigs and branches*

A few candidates wrote the same accident for both activities without paying attention to the use of the word ‘different’. Some confused accidents with safety hazards and gave responses like ‘leaving things in the wrong places’ and ‘not connecting things correctly’. Quite a number of them gave their responses in the vernacular, supplying answers such as ‘jook’, ‘chook’, ‘stab’, ‘dig’. Others wrote the results of accidents for example ‘sprains’, ‘broken limbs’ and ‘pain’.

Part (b) tested candidates' knowledge of safety measures which could help to prevent accidents. Although many candidates scored full marks in this section, some listed items that are needed for setting up emergency kits for example flashlights, important documents, food items and cell phones. Others completely misinterpreted the question as they listed items such as 'televisions', 'refrigerators' and other household items. There were others who mentioned items such as 'black', 'red/ purple ointments/dressings' 'spirits', 'first aid manuals' and the use of brand names instead of product names. Yet other candidates were unsure of the different types of antiseptics, so named many examples in their response for example 'iodine', 'mercuochrome', etc. Still others listed the ailments that the first aid kit is used to address; 'cuts', 'bruises', 'burns' rather than what the contents should be.

Part (c) (i) targeted application of the knowledge of First Aid procedures. A scenario about an accident that occurred in a kitchen was presented and candidates were required to suggest the appropriate steps to be taken to deal with the situation.

This part was generally very poorly done as more than 80 per cent of the candidates seemed unaware of the correct steps/sequence to be followed when administering first aid to a cut. Even though some answers were accurate, candidates failed to list the steps in the order in which they should be done. In addition, in almost every instance, they stated that the cut should be put under running water, claiming that this would stop the bleeding.

Expected answers:

- *Try to stop the bleeding by applying pressure or tying off the area of the cut*
- *When the bleeding stops, clean the cut with antiseptic to remove bacteria and other anti-bodies/germs.*
- *Bandage the cut with clean cloth or gauze to protect from germs/anti-bodies.*
- *If the cut is deep, go to the hospital if it is beyond first aid.*
- *Call a nurse, doctor or professional first aider.*

Although candidates were asked to give a reason for the step, only a few candidates gave plausible reasons, while some totally ignored that part of the question.

Part (c) (ii) required that candidates suggest safety precautions that a father should take in protecting the child in the situation described in the scenario. Many candidates did not give this section of the question the attention it required. Most of them gave the following responses:

- He should get someone to watch the child either relative or neighbour
- He should put him to sleep, to watch television
- Lock him away in another part of the house.

Candidates overlooked the key words 'safety precautions' and 'protecting' in this instance. Most candidates answered the question by stating things to bear in mind for a safe environment, not necessarily for a toddler. Incorrect responses included: lock away knives, spoons, dangerous utensils, assuming the child is in the kitchen. Others felt that pot handles should be turned in so baby cannot pull down pot and burn himself.

Correct responses include:

- *Arrange for the toddler to be placed in a play pen, crib, lock chair away from the stove, the sink and electrical appliances.*
- *Keep the baby in full sight while he is working in the kitchen.*

- *Wash hands thoroughly with soapy water and dry hands completely before picking up baby to avoid transferring spices etc to baby's clothing and skin.*

Generally, there seemed to be a lack of depth and knowledge of the correct sequencing in the responses of the candidates for this question.

Part B

Question 4

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the roles of the family members and the effects of migration on the family. It also tested their understanding of the effects of an economic downturn on the economic stability of the family and of how the community could support families during this time. This question was the most popular optional question with approximating 73 per cent of candidates responding to it.

In Part (a), candidates were required to state roles of different members of the family. This section was generally well done. Some respondents confused the roles with the functions and responsibilities. For instance, candidates gave answer like, "mother cooks and cleans", instead of stating the role "housekeeper".

Part (b) required candidates to explain ways in which migration of the father could affect the family. It was also generally well done but some candidates were not able to provide clear explanations. The expected responses include:

- *Father remains a breadwinner*
- *Older siblings' role as nurturer increases*
- *Mother becomes sole nurturer, breadwinner, disciplinarian,*
- *Family may experience financial difficulties*
- *Psychological and emotional effects*

Incorrect response given include

- Crime
- Death of a bread winner can cause drastic downturn
- Family conflict
- Divorce

Part (c) (i) required candidates to suggest three possible effects of the economic downturn on the economic stability of the family. This question posed a great deal of difficulty for most candidates since they misinterpreted the concept of "economic downturn" to be occurrences like accident, death, misfortune, or neglect of parental responsibility in the family.

The acceptable responses include

- *Family income could be reduced or lost*
- *Mrs. Emson could lose her job*
- *Both parents could have a reduction in income*
- *Debt can accrue since payments may not be made on time*

In some cases candidates gave responses such as:

- No time for kids
- Mr. Emson can fall while building and injure himself
- They are having a lot of children which is helping to overpopulate the society
- Children will not get enough attention

Part (c) (ii) required candidates to discuss ways in which a community could provide support to a family during times of economic downturn. This was well done by most candidates. Some acceptable responses were:

- *Provide opportunities for family members to acquire a skill so they can become more marketable*
- *Re-training for persons who lose their job*
- *Provide welfare support*
- *Families can give assistance to other families*

Some of the candidates' correct responses were;

- *Pool resources to provide basic needs*
- *Donate food and clothing to families in need*
- *Shopkeepers may give credit until the family is back on their feet*
- *Provide free transportation of children to school*

Some incorrect responses given were

- They should practise proper family planning methods
- They must love each other
- Construct community centres for children and parents to relieve stress

The majority of the candidates scored 3-8 out of a maximum of 16 marks for this question. Generally, candidates presented their responses in an organized manner following the numbering system of the question. A few candidates failed to 'discuss' as required by the question. Instead they wrote short phrases or words with no explanation or discussion.

Incomplete explanation, poor expression and grammatical errors restricted the range of marks awarded for the question.

Question 5

This question was based on Module 2 and tested candidates' knowledge of values, goal setting and decision making. Approximately 52 per cent of candidates attempted this question.

Part (a) required candidates to define values, needs and goals.

In general, this part was fairly well done. The main weakness was with the definition of values. A large number of candidates misunderstood this term and provide incorrect definitions such as

- values are objects that are important to a person
- the behaviour, attitude and moral well-being of an individual which was taught or adapted
- these are things that mean something to us

A few candidates in defining 'needs' stated that 'it is something you can do without' or 'not necessary' instead of 'CANNOT do without'.

Expected Responses:

- *Values- important beliefs or ideals shared by members of a culture, of what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable.*
- *Needs- are the things that are necessary for organisms to live a healthy life*

Part (b) which was further sub-divided into three parts, tested candidates' understanding of how to analyse the information given in a scenario in which a young person had to make a choice. This question also required candidates to explain how the young person's values could have affected the decision.

For Part (b) (i) some candidates incorrectly used the management processes as the steps to arrive at the decision. While some candidates just restated the information as given in the stem. Some candidates gave responses such as 'planning, evaluating', 'acting, prizing' and 'resource'.

Candidates' responses to Part (b) (ii) indicated that many of them misunderstood the question. They responded by repeating what was given in the stem such as 'Joyce decides to pay for the course and postponed the car purchase for another year,' instead of stating how values guided her choice. Other incorrect responses given included;

- She would go after her desire in buying the car instead of getting better job.
- Getting the car was more important than getting a further education which would have enhanced her ways of getting a promotion.

Some of the personal qualities that were given by the candidates in Part (b) iii were not appropriate for example, respect, responsibility, consideration and industrious. Those qualities that were appropriate were either not discussed or incorrectly discussed. These included *determination, discipline, commitment* and *initiative*.

Overall the candidates' performance on this question was, however, satisfactory.

Question 6

This question tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of the reasons for home ownership and suitability of furnishing for different sections of a house. Approximately 47 per cent of candidates did this question.

Part (a) was fairly well done with most candidates giving valid points to support a family's decision to buy or rent a house. Some appropriate responses included

- *the need for families to have an asset that may be handed down in generations;*
- *to have the freedom to do what they want with the house without a landlord's interference*
- *to have a feeling of ownership.*

Some candidates misinterpreted the question and based their responses on the need to save (not spend money) as a reason for buying a house. Other reasons given were based on factors that should be taken into consideration when buying a house, for example, suitable location and neighbourhood.

Part (b) was very well done by the majority of candidates. They were able to name two institutions from which a family could obtain money to buy a house and popular responses included banks, *National Housing Trust and credit unions*. Poor responses, however, included church, police stations, Western Union and family and friends. In some cases, candidates identified institutions that do not give loans for

purchasing a house. Worthy of note is that some candidates gave the abbreviations for loan institutions which proved difficult to decipher in some cases.

Part (c) gave a scenario about a spacious living room that is used for various purposes and the candidates were to suggest activities that the family could carry out in that room. Part (c) i was fairly well done as many candidates were able to suggest activities that were appropriate for the living room even though some of the activities given were related and could not have been awarded maximum marks. One example of this was the candidates giving responses such as parties, games and 'get togethers' as separate activities which they are all considered as entertainment. In addition, some candidates gave responses that were inappropriate activities for the living room such as camping, playing tennis, having a picnic, washing and cooking.

Part (c) (ii) required candidates to apply knowledge of furnishings and soft furnishings to decorating the living room based on selected activities. This question posed some difficulty for many candidates. In many cases, the candidates gave responses which suggested that they were not familiar with the terms 'furniture' and 'soft furnishings'. Incorrect responses included the use of stainless steel carpets, books, sharpeners, rubbers, flowers and light as furniture or soft furnishings. In some cases, furniture and soft furnishings given by many of the candidates were not linked to the activities named in (c) i as required by the question. Overall, however, the candidates answered this question fairly well.

Question 7

This question was focussed on management processes and entertainment. It tested the candidate's knowledge, understanding and application of content related to the management process. It was the least popular question on the paper, and was attempted by approximately 11 per cent of candidates. Despite this, however, most of those who attempted the question, scored between six and eleven marks of the maximum 16 marks.

For Part (a), candidates were required to define terms related to the management processes. This section was generally well done. The weaker candidates were unable to give the standard definitions of the terms. Some candidates limited their definition to money management. Of the three terms, the candidates were able to define evaluation most accurately.

Part (b) required candidates to provide suitable examples of the task to be performed in the different processes involved in planning a formal birthday party. Most candidates were able to gain maximum marks in this section. Candidates understood the terms 'planning' and 'controlling' very well and as a result this was reflected in the appropriate tasks they wrote. Examples of task given for planning were '*making a guest list*' and '*making a budget*'.

For Part (c), candidates were required to complete a formal invitation. Although some candidates were able to score maximum marks, most were unable to use the correct format for writing a formal invitation. The weaker candidates wrote an invitation letter instead. Too many candidates thought that the word 'cordially' was the name of the host and did not know what a formal dress code meant.

Expected responses - Dress Code – *Formal wear*

Candidates' response

- Dress code – casual wear
- Dress code – wear pink and white

Most candidates knew that R.S.V.P was required on the invitation but did not provide a contact number or an email address where contact could be made. In instances where an address was given too many candidates failed to give a proper address for the venue of the party.

Generally, candidates answered the questions according to the sub sections and followed the numbering system in the organization of the responses. However, the responses were replete with grammatical and spelling errors. For example, the term 'overlook' was used instead of 'look over' in a sentence which changed the accuracy of the response.

School Based Assessment

This component is done at the school level. Candidates were required to complete three practical assignments. These assignments tested the skills of planning and preparation, manipulation and evaluation and presentation. Candidates could score a maximum of 60 marks. The performance on this component was commendable and fairly consistent with that of 2011. The mean mark for both years was 47. More than 60 per cent of the candidates scored above 50.

Conclusions

While some of the continuing issues of inadequate mastery, inaccurate interpretations and expressions were present in the 2012 responses, some improvements have been noted in terms of candidates' expression and language usage. Answers were more coherent. Candidates gave many real-life examples as requested, indicating the movement towards the appropriate application of the knowledge and skills taught in the Home Economics: Management programme in schools. More still needs to be done to raise prestige of the programme and teachers are urged to read more widely and provide up-to-date material and reading lists for students as they prepare for this important examination in the future.

Recommendations

1. It is important to stress again that there must be concerted efforts for teachers to help candidates learn how to read and interpret the essay questions and provide reasonable responses that will earn the assigned marks. The low scores of some candidates who took this examination suggest that some candidates did not study the subject with the attention required or did not prepare as well as they should. If this observation is correct, then action should be taken by teachers and school administrators to preserve the reputation and integrity of the Home Economics Management curriculum in schools.
2. Some attention must be given in the classroom to candidates' interpretation of key verbs used in questions such as 'list', 'analyze', 'suggest', 'state', 'explain', and 'describe' in an effort to make their responses more complete and appropriate. Attention should be paid to correct grammar, usage and spelling.