

**C A R I B B E A N   E X A M I N A T I O N S   C O U N C I L**

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

**MAY/JUNE 2013**

**HOME ECONOMICS: MANAGEMENT  
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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## **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The Home Economics: Management examination comprises three components: Paper 01 – Multiple Choice, Paper 02 – Structured Essays and Paper 03 – School-Based Assessment. Six thousand two hundred fifty-two candidates sat this examination in 2013, a figure which is very close to the number who sat in 2012. For this year, approximately 83 per cent of candidates achieved Grades I–III, representing a slight decrease compared to 2012 when 85 per cent of candidates received similar grades.

It was evident from the marking this year that there continues to be an observable improvement in the quality of some responses particularly, to the compulsory questions. Some responses were more comprehensive and focused on the subject content rather than on ‘street science’ as was the case in the past. However, there were still too many scripts where the responses indicated that the candidates were unprepared for the examination. It was evident from these responses that there was a general lack of knowledge among some candidates. The number of candidates obtaining scores ranging from 0 to 5 and the lack of coherence in some of the responses remain as serious concerns.

## **DETAILED COMMENTS**

### **Paper 01- Multiple Choice**

This paper consisted of 60 multiple choice items. The paper was set to cover a wide range of objectives from the syllabus while at the same time measuring the profile level of Knowledge and Comprehension and Use of Knowledge. For this, year the mean on this paper was 33 out of 60 or 55 per cent.

### **Paper 02-Structured Essays Questions**

The Paper 02 consisted of two parts – Parts A and B. Part A comprised three compulsory questions while Part B consisted of four questions from which candidates were required to respond to two. Each question was awarded a total of sixteen marks, six marks for the Knowledge and Comprehension profile and ten for the Use of Knowledge profile. The mean mark was 33 out of the maximum possible 80 marks or 42 per cent. Candidates’ marks ranged from 0 to 71.

#### **PART A**

This part consisted of three compulsory questions. The questions assessed Modules 5, 7 and 10 of the syllabus. Although the syllabus specifically states that each year these questions will be based on the stated modules, candidates’ performance continues to be below the acceptable standard. Performance this year, however, reflected some improvement in the overall grasp of the subject matter.

#### Question 1

This question tested candidate’s knowledge of what is meant by the term ‘career’ and how to prepare for ‘career choices’. The mean on this question was 6.51 out of 16 or 41 per cent. Marks ranged from 0 to 16.

Part (a) (i) tested candidate’s knowledge of the definition of the term ‘career’. This part was poorly done as most candidates referred to ‘career’ as ‘a job, a task, a goal, something you want to achieve in life/future’. Most candidates did not associate careers with deliberate academic or experiential preparation. Few saw the relationship to lifelong goals and fewer still related this quest or achievement to professional action. Where these ideas were present even in simpler language, in candidates’ responses, they were given credit.

In Part (a) (ii) the candidates were required to state two actions which could help them to prepare for their career choices from as early as secondary school and to give two reasons for each action. This part was fairly well done as most candidates were able to list two actions. However, some of the reasons given for the actions were not appropriate. They were more focused on how to get a highly paid job rather than preparing for a career. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and instead gave responses relating to

the 'Values Triangle' and the 'Management Processes'. Examples of inappropriate responses are setting goals, planning, organizing and implementing.

**Some of the expected responses included:**

- *Select the subjects required by the career*
- *Begin exploring the career: visiting work places, talking to persons in the same career*
- *Researching the requirements: qualifications, demands of the career*
- *Volunteering*
- *Think about possible career options*

**Some acceptable responses included:**

- *Researching, for example, on Internet and in magazines, books*
- *Going on field trips*
- *Speaking to Guidance Counselor/Teacher/Parents*
- *Attending Career Seminars/Workshops*

Part (b) (i) tested candidates' understanding of actions to be taken by those who are 'unsure' of their career choices, and reasons for such actions.

In answering this part of the question, several candidates incorrectly repeated responses which were given for Part (a) (ii). These included:

- *Researching*
- *Speaking with Guidance Counselor/Teacher/Parents/Persons in the field*
- *Attending Career Seminars/Workshops etc*

Some acceptable responses were:

- *Going back to school, for example, community college, six form, training centers*
- *Job attachment*
- *Researching*
- *Work experience*
- *Volunteering*

Part (b) (ii) required candidates to state two actions that candidates who are confident about their career choices should take in preparation for their career and to give one reason to show how this action is likely to make them better prepared. This section proved to be the most challenging as many candidates misinterpreted the question and gave responses related to (a) (i) and (b) (i). Included in these responses were:

- *Having the relevant subjects for career*
- *Planning goals and sticking to it*
- *Writing resume and application letter*
- *Having the right type of clothes and attitude for the job*

**Acceptable responses included:**

- *Collect relevant information on the career of one's choice, for example, requirements, conditions of work*
- *Apply to begin further study if that is necessary*
- *Enter an apprenticeship programme*

## Question 2

The question covered a section of the money management topic including the definition of some terms related to the area, means of acquiring money other than work, with emphasis on legality (ethics), and balancing of income and expenditure. The mean was 7.55 or 47 per cent. Marks ranged from a low of 0 to the maximum possible 16.

In Part (a), the majority of the candidates were able to correctly define the terms ‘net income’ and ‘flexible expense’. However, a few candidates gave incorrect responses such as:

- Net income – money earned on the Internet, income that is broadcast over the net, bottom line of a business.
- Flexible income – money used for anything you want, money used to purchase your wants, money you can get from a flexi-card.

In Part (b), candidates were asked to state two means other than work by which money is *legally* earned. Some candidates seemed to misinterpret the word ‘legal’ for ‘illegal’ and gave responses such as:

- Lottery scam
- Stealing
- Selling drugs
- Killing
- Black market

Others seemed to have broadened their understanding of the expression “earned money” and gave answers that reflected a range of economic activities that are pursued by individuals. The responses indicated that they drew heavily from the occupational activities that take place around them. These included responses that reflected income from self-employment or entrepreneurial ventures like working for themselves trading.

Some unexpected but credible responses included:

- Selling goods and services
- Loans/ credit cards from bank
- Working for someone
- Farming

Overall, Part (c) was poorly done. The question required candidates to identify items such as income or expenditure and to calculate a balanced budget for an income and expenditure statement.

In (c) (i) the majority of candidates were able to place the figures correctly in each column therefore gaining maximum marks.

In (c) (ii) candidates were required to calculate the outstanding sum to be raised in order to balance the statement and then place the figure in the correct position on the table. Candidates seemed to be unsure of which items were classified as income and which as expenditure. This task was poorly executed. While the majority of candidates did not attempt this part of the question, those who did could not calculate the figure correctly. A small percentage calculated the outstanding figure correctly but did not place it in the right column of the statement.

Part (c) (iii) asked candidates to calculate and insert the total for each column in its correct place in the table. As many candidates responded poorly to Parts (c) (i) and (c) (ii) they were not able to accurately calculate the totals for each column.

### Question 3

This question assessed knowledge of ‘safety in the kitchen and safety features of appliances or equipment’. The mean on this question was 6.80 or 43 per cent. Marks ranged from 0 to 16.

Part (a) assessed candidates’ ability to recall the types and causes of injuries that could result from accidents in the kitchen. This section was fairly well done as most candidates were able to give at least one satisfactory response.

Some acceptable responses were:

- *broken bones from spills and falls*
- *burns from stove, open flame or hot oil*
- *cuts from improper handling of knives and other cutting implements*
- *poisoning from ingestion of harmful substances*

Some candidates stated the cause of the injury without stating the type of injury and gave responses that stopped, for example, at ‘fall’, ‘spill’ and ‘slide’ and did not say what type of injury would result from these actions. Many candidates correctly identified a cut as an injury; however, some gave the incorrect response ‘knife in water or in sink of water’.

Part (b) required candidates to identify two safety features on a labelled diagram of a domestic iron. This part was generally very poorly done as many candidates gave the use of the safety features rather than identifying or *naming* the part correctly.

Part (c) assessed candidates’ understanding of hurricane preparedness. Candidates were expected to suggest five tasks to be carried out in preparation for the hurricane season by (i) families and (ii) community officials.

This part was fairly well done. However, it was noted that many of the candidates misinterpreted the question by suggesting tasks to be done *during* a hurricane rather than in *preparation for the hurricane season*.

It was observed that the following unfavourable responses were quite popular:

(i) *Family*

- *batten down windows and doors*
- *put furniture on blocks*
- *charging cell phones*
- *filling gas tanks of cars*

(ii) *Community officials*

- *handing out food to people*
- *evacuating people from flood-prone areas*
- *putting sand bags in place*
- *taking the elderly to a shelter*

The following are some responses which were considered acceptable.

(i) Families:

- secure the roof of the house
- stock up on non-perishable foods
- secure clean water
- secure first aid kit

(ii) Community officials:

- get shelters in good condition
- clean gullies and drains
- identify and assist the vulnerable groups in the community
- inform residents of safety measures to adopt in preparation for hurricanes.

## Part B

This part comprised four questions of which candidates were required to answer two. The questions in this section were based on the modules which were not tested in Part A.

### Question 4

This question tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of the family, the effects of the changing family structure, and how family and community can help to mitigate the negative effects of social changes that members of the family might undergo. The mean on this question was 7.52 or 47 per cent. This was the highest mean among the optional questions. The marks on these questions ranged from a low of 0 to a high of 15.

Part (a) examined candidates' knowledge of the negative effects of a changing family structure on two different age groups, namely (i) preschoolers and (ii) adolescents. This part of the question posed some challenge for some candidates as they tended to focus on what caused the change in family structure and how it affected the parents, rather than on the changes experienced by preschoolers and adolescents. Some inappropriate responses were:

- has to work outside the home
- they may be neglected by parents

However, candidates were credited for responses such as *feeling lonely*.

Part (b) tested candidates' knowledge of the roles of an adolescent as a member of the family. Most of the candidates gave responses related to *responsibilities* of the adolescent as well as *functions of the family* instead of their roles. Some of the more popular responses were:

- Taking care of their younger siblings.
- Helping with household chores.
- Working to take care of the home

Part (c) (i) required candidates' understanding of immediate actions parents might take in an effort to locate a missing child. Most candidates interpreted and responded to this part of the question quite well and obtained maximum marks for this part. Some good responses were:

- *Immediately call the police.*
- *Inform family members and parents requesting assistance.*
- *Alert community members to form a search team.*

Some responses for which no credit was given included *demonstrate and block the street*.

Part (c) (ii) tested candidates' understanding of activities that a community can take to prevent adolescent boys from joining gangs. This section seems to be well understood by most candidates and their responses were awarded maximum marks for this part. Some exemplary responses included:

- *Start sports clubs like cricket and football*
- *Encourage them to join service clubs*
- *Provide mentors and role models for them*
- *Get them to join the Boys Scout or the Cadets*
- *Put on evening schools for them to learn skills*

### Question 5

This question assessed candidates' understanding of the impact of values and goals on family decisions and how family members relate to each other. A scenario was given which formed the basis on which candidates should respond. Candidates were tested on knowledge and understanding of values and goals and application of these in the family setting. This was the most popular question in Part B. The mean was 6.32 or 40 per cent.

Part (a) (i) required candidates to identify goals of a given family member from the scenario. In general, this part was fairly well done by most candidates. The main weakness is that some candidates identified the different types of goals generally, rather than selecting the goals from the scenario given. For instance, many candidates responded by giving long-term and short-term goals, rather than giving the expected responses such as:

Shana's goals are to:

- *become a fashion designer*
- *own her own boutique*
- *achieve an associate degree*

For part (a) (ii) most candidates provided incomplete or inaccurate responses for the definition of the term 'values'. They provided definitions such as:

- Values are things we hold dear
- Things we use to achieve our goal
- What you work for, your payment and your income
- Things like your attributes and resources you cherished

Some acceptable responses included the following:

- *Values are learnt beliefs and attitudes that are chosen freely, prized and acted upon*
- *The personal guidelines that are used to establish what is useful or desirable*
- *Those cherished beliefs that influence behaviour*

Part (a) (iii) required candidates to identify two values from the scenario given. Most candidates attempted this part of the question. However, some candidates were not able to adequately identify the values. Some of their answers included:

- Her ambition
- Her confidence
- Set the standards
- Collecting the facts

Acceptable responses included the following:

- *Commitment to education*
- *Belief in work*
- *Independence*
- *Perseverance*

Part (b) of the question was subdivided into three parts and required candidates' to interpret and analyse the information given in the scenario and to apply their knowledge the understanding of the perspectives from the persons involved.

Part (b) (i) required candidates to state qualities that the individual in the scenario should have demonstrated in order to achieve goals while giving support at home. Most candidates were not able to give the two qualities that were required. The responses given most often were unrelated to the scenario provided. Some candidates gave incorrect responses such as:

- Good working quality
- Should also be respectful
- Good organizational skill
- Should be responsible
- Paying the bills and being on time for classes

Acceptable responses included the following:

- *Perseverance*
- *Commitment*
- *Patience*
- *Caring*
- *Discipline*
- *Time management*
- *Thriftiness*

In Part (b) (ii) candidates were required to give two reasons why the suggestions made by the father in the scenario were reasonable. The responses to this question indicated that some candidates did not understand how to interpret the information. Some candidates re-stated the information given instead of saying why the suggestions were reasonable. Many candidates misunderstood the mother's state of pregnancy as being a hindrance to her performing duties in the home. They also misunderstood the respective roles of the father, the daughter and the family in general.

Some of the incorrect responses included:

- The mother is unable to cope for she is pregnant
- The family was experiencing hardship because of the baby that was on the way
- The father is the one paying all the bills
- Mother would not have any more time to waste
- Mother needs bed rest

Expected responses included:

- *Need for financial contributions from all working members of the family*
- *Good training in being a responsible adult*
- *A sense of equity and fairness*
- *Shanna must learn to multi-task*
- *All persons who live in the home should contribute to completing house chores*

In Part (b) (iii), candidates were required to give two important steps that Shana should take to fulfill her father's request to assist with the household bills and the chores as her mother was expecting a baby. Most of the steps given were inappropriate. The steps that were appropriate were either not discussed or were inadequately discussed. Examples of these included:

- Implement the request and then evaluate the alternatives
- Ease her mother from stressing herself
- Focus
- Obey

Among the acceptable responses were:

- *Invite her family to have a family meeting or family council*
- *To discuss family management in light of the changing status of Shanna and mother to work out the details of her contribution to the house hold*
- *Make a plan: take some time to examine her situation and determine how much she can contribute to the family's expenses and activities*
- *Align work, study and work schedules to avoid conflict*

### Question 6

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of consumerism. The mean of 3.95 on this question or approximately 25 per cent was the lowest mean on the paper. This question was one of the two questions which had approximately twenty-two per cent of the candidates giving a response.

Part (a) required candidates to state the main difference between the terms:

- (i) Consumer rights and consumer responsibilities
- (ii) Debit card and credit card
- (iii) Commercial bank and credit union

Many candidates could not explain the difference between consumer rights and responsibilities. They instead stated what consumers have a right to do and for what they are responsible. Most of the candidates were, however, able to state that *money is withdrawn immediately from your account when a debit card is used*, and that a *credit card is used to get items on credit*.

The majority of candidates found it challenging to differentiate between a commercial bank and a credit union. They stated that "the bank is for salary and savings, while the credit union is for loans". Although this part of the question was poorly done, there were some very good responses. These included:

- *Consumer rights are things the consumer are entitled to while consumer responsibilities are what they are expected to carry out.*
- *A debit card is used to pay for goods and services, but the money comes out from your bank account, however, when a credit card is used, the money has to be repaid to the bank. It is not your money it is a loan from the bank.*
- *A commercial bank is an institution where anyone can open an account while a credit union is an organization that persons join to become members.*

Part (b) of the question gave a scenario of a family that saved some money to acquire a set of living room furniture.

In (b) (i), candidates were required to state two important factors, with a different reason for each, which the family should consider when purchasing the living room furniture. Most candidates were able to answer correctly. Some of the popular acceptable responses were:

- *Size of the furniture. Reason: Furniture should be able to fit into the living room space and not be too big or too small.*
- *Colour. Reason: The colour should match with the living room and not get dirty easily because they have young children.*
- *Material. Reason: The furniture should be made from a material that is easy to clean because they have young children.*
- *Durability. Reason: The furniture should be able to last for a long time because they may not be able to buy another one soon.*

In (b) (ii), candidates were required to use the circumstances outlined in the scenario to give two points to support both cash and hire purchase payments. In most instances, candidates responded by stating the *difference* between cash payment and hire purchase, or gave points to support either method of payment. There were, however, some good responses for each as outlined below.

1. Points to support cash were:

- *They will not have to pay interest so they will save some money*
- *They will not have a monthly payment to make*
- *They will own the furniture as soon as they pay for it*
- *It would be cheaper because they may get a discount for paying cash*

2. Points to support hire purchase were:

- *A smaller amount of money could be paid each month and they would be able to save for other items*
- *They will get the set immediately and use it while they are still paying.*
- *They could use some of the money for some other business*

There is still need for more attention to be paid to helping students to differentiate between these concepts as such knowledge will definitely influence their behaviour as consumers. Perhaps field trips and professional talks from service organizations and financial entities on the use of related items like bank cards and cheques, could be used in the teaching of these concepts.

### Question 7

This question focused on the family and housing. This was one of the two questions which had twenty-two per cent of candidates responding. The mean was 4.65 or approximately 30 per cent. The marks ranged from 0 to 15.

For Part (a), candidates were required to identify two social and two economic effects of overpopulation on families. This section was fairly well done. However, some candidates were unable to differentiate between social and economic effects of overpopulation on families.

Part (b) required candidates to describe one effect of under population on the economy. This section was not well done. Many of the candidates gave the meaning of under population instead of the *effect* of under population on the economy. One popular inappropriate response was ‘not many people are living in the area; therefore resources are plentiful and will eventually go to waste’.

Part (c) (i) gave drawings of a single-storey building (cottage) and an apartment building (multi-storey) building. Candidates were required to state two advantages and two disadvantages of each building. This section was generally not well done. Many candidates listed advantages and disadvantages but failed to identify the type of housing to which they referred. Some candidates used the “busy market street”, given as part of the question as the focal point instead of the types of housing identified. These did not differentiate between the housing types. They included responses such as:

- The odour/stench will affect families
- Easy to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables
- Regular stealing and crime

Part (c) (ii) request candidates to describe one community-based activity in which the residents of the newly built houses could be involved to ensure the protection of their homes from rats and other pests. This part was well done and most of the candidates were able to gain full marks for this part.

### **Paper 03 – 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 2012. The mean mark for each year was 47. More than 60 per cent of the candidates scored above 50.

### **General Comments**

The current syllabus requires that the compulsory questions on Paper 02, be based on objectives 5, 7 and 10. Although this has been the practice for the life of this syllabus, it has had little impact on the quality of the candidates’ responses. This year’s performances, however, reflected some moderate improvement in the grasp of the subject matter tested. Although candidates continue to use non-standard English to present their responses, there was evidence that some concepts were better understood than previously.

Some candidates were able to identify closely with some of the concepts being tested, especially in Questions 2 and 5 and they relied heavily on their everyday experiences in responding to the questions.

The popularity of Question 5 as an optional question confirms the notion that Home Economics: Management is a subject that helps the candidates to better understand themselves in the context of everyday living while at the same time, they learn to make critical decisions for the improvement of home and family life.

While the language usage proffered by candidates was academically weak, for the most part, their creativity in expressing their responses indicated their clear understanding of the objectives being tested and the content and context of the question. The extended responses captured key words and concepts that revealed their deliberate encounter with the subject matter.

Candidates who gave excessively lengthy responses to show their command of the content were often disorganised and often confused categories in the organisation of their responses. Responses were often not logically laid out and therefore posed a challenge for the examining team.

Some candidates continued to confuse the appropriate language for capturing concepts such as roles, functions, rights, responsibilities, guidelines, effects and factors. These errors were generally reflected in short-answer responses in Paper 02. While the candidate may be able to show awareness of the subject matter by use of the appropriate words or phrases, their inability to clearly articulate responses in a reasonably simple but accurate manner greatly affects the quality of their responses. This problem has been perennial in this subject and schools should make every effort to help students to improve the quality of expression.

There is need to reiterate a comment from the last subject report regarding the need to provide greater academic support to candidates who are being prepared for this examination. It is important to stress again and again that there must be concerted efforts by teachers to help candidates learn how to read and interpret the essay questions and provide reasonable responses that will earn the maximum marks. The low scores of some candidates who took this examination suggests that some candidates did not study the subject or at best did not prepare well.