

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 2014

**OFFICE ADMINISTRATION
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

The Office Administration (OA) examination is offered in January and May/June of each year. This year, some 17,197 candidates registered to sit the June examination. This number represents a decrease from last year where 17,992 candidates registered for the examination. Approximately 74 per cent of the candidates achieved Grades I–III, compared to 77 per cent in 2013.

The Office Administration examination comprises four papers of which candidates are required to sit three:

Paper 01 - Multiple choice

Paper 02 - Short answer

Paper 031 - The School-Based Assessment (SBA).

Paper 032 - The Alternative to the SBA

Paper 032 is normally done by candidates who do not have the supervision needed to carry out the SBA. This year, 2014, marked the beginning of the assessment of the revised OA syllabus.

The details of each paper along with candidates' performance on the different papers and the specific strengths and weaknesses observed during the marking exercises are addressed in the report below.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 — Multiple choice

Paper 01 consisted of 60 multiple choice items covering the entire syllabus. The items were set to cover Knowledge of content areas and Application of the knowledge. The overall mean was 34.16 or 56.93 per cent compared with 32.93 or 54.89 per cent for May/June 2013. Marks ranged from 1 to 57.

Paper 02 — Short Answer

Paper 02 assessed Knowledge of the syllabus content and Application of this knowledge to the procedures and processes associated with specialized office activities and routines. The paper consisted of seven questions which were further arranged in two sections. Section I comprised three compulsory questions covering Sections I-VII of the new syllabus, while Section II consisted of four optional questions taken from Sections VIII-XII. Candidates were required to answer **three** questions from Section II. In total, they were required to answer **six** questions from this paper. The mean on this Paper was 40.86 out of 90 or 45.40 per cent. Marks ranged from zero to 85. Each question on this paper was worth a maximum of 15 marks.

Section 1 - Compulsory Questions

Question 1

This question was designed to test the candidates'

- knowledge of the channels of oral communication
- knowledge of ways in which communication can flow in an organization
- knowledge of the kind of information that is obtained from reference sources such as thesaurus, maps and post office guide
- understanding of how to draft an advertisement for the newspaper.

The mean for this question was 9.28. Scores ranged from zero to 15.

For Part (a), candidates were required to name two channels of oral communication. It was worth 2 marks. Generally, candidates were able to give correct responses such as:

- *conversation, interview, meeting, teleconferencing, paging*

In Part (b), candidates were asked to list three ways in which communication can flow in an organization. It was worth 3 marks.

This part of the question was unsatisfactorily done as many candidates gave responses relating to written communication and meetings and hence, failed to give correct responses such as:

- *downward/top-down; upward/bottom up; horizontal/lateral; diagonal and grapevine communication.*

Part (c) required candidates to state the information that is obtained in reference sources: Thesaurus, maps and the post office guide. It was worth 3 marks.

Most candidates gave acceptable responses for 'maps' such as: *roads, streets and places in a country, locally and internationally*. However, some candidates misunderstood 'thesaurus' and gave incorrect responses relating to money and banking; some even changed the word to 'treasury'. Many candidates failed to give the correct information that is obtained in the post office guide, which is *information on postal services and regulations governing the sending of letters and parcels by post and postal rates*.

Part (d) required candidates to draft an advertisement in their answer booklet for the position of clerical assistant for insertion in the *Sunday Herald*, given specific information. It was worth 7 marks.

Most candidates were able to score 5–7 marks in this part of the question. In many instances, they were able to interpret the information given, and organize it using an appropriate format.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of:

- statutory provisions designed for employee protection at the workplace
- factors used to determine the period for retaining records in the office
- duties of a records management clerk
- how to write a letter of resignation to be sent to an employer

The mean for this question was 7.40. Scores ranged from zero to 15.

Part (a) required candidates to list three statutory provisions which are designed for employee protection at the workplace. It was worth 3 marks.

Most candidates could only state two statutory provisions: occupational safety and health and the working environment, and welfare. Expected responses like termination of employment; equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation, and termination of employment were not given in most instances.

In Part (b), candidates were required to state two factors that are used to determine the period for retaining records in the office. It was worth 2 marks.

Candidates performed fairly well on this part of the question, giving correct responses such as: *need for record in the future, legal stipulations for documents to be kept; available storage space and proof of transaction.*

Part (c) required candidates to list two duties of a records management clerk. It was worth 2 marks.

This part of the question was satisfactorily done as many candidates gave correct responses such as:

- *managing records; selecting the most appropriate filing system; using different filing systems; organizing records for filing and placing in folders; maintaining confidentiality/safeguarding files from unauthorized persons, and retrieving information/records.*

For Part (d), candidates were to write a letter of resignation to be sent to their employer, given a scenario. It was worth 8 marks.

Responses to this part of the question were appropriate in most instances. However, some candidates failed to insert the date using an appropriate format; include a subject in the letter; and use matching salutation and complimentary close

Question 3

This question tested candidates' understanding of:

- the meaning and function of a tickler reminder system
- the duties that a receptionist is required to perform on a daily basis
- the statement ex officio member
- how certain given points could contribute to a successful meeting
- how to calculate time differences between countries, using 12-hour and 24-hour format

The mean for this question was 7.90. Scores ranged from zero to 15.

For Part (a), candidates were required to state the meaning and function of a 'tickler reminder system'. It was worth 2 points.

Many candidates used the same word 'reminder' for the meaning of the term. In most cases, candidates scored at least one mark for the *meaning* of the term, but failed to give the *function* of the tickler reminder system, that is: each time a file is borrowed, a card is placed in the system under the date the file is due to be returned. It is easy to check the card and chase any overdue file.

Part (b) required candidates to list three duties that a receptionist is required to perform on a daily basis. It was worth 3 marks.

The majority of candidates scored satisfactorily on this part of the question, giving correct responses such as:

- *receiving and screening visitors; keeping the reception register, operating the switchboard, and maintaining the reception area.*

Part (c) required candidates to explain the meaning of an ‘ex officio’ member. It was worth 2 marks. This part of the question was unsatisfactorily done by many candidates as they failed to indicate that *this is a person who is automatically a member of a board or committee by virtue of the office he holds.*

In Part (d) (i), candidates were given a scenario and the following points:

- Being on time
- Having an agenda
- Maintaining focus
- Being prepared
- Greeting/ welcoming staff

They were to state how each point could contribute to a successful meeting. It was worth 5 points.

Many candidates performed unsatisfactorily on this part of the question as they failed to connect their responses to the scenario, that is, how each point given contributes to a successful meeting. For example, ‘being on time’ would allow for a quorum, thus allowing meeting to start on time; and ‘having an agenda’ would allow the meeting to run smoothly and give the order of business to proceed.

Part (d) (ii) required candidates to calculate time differences between specified countries, using the 24-hour format, based on a given scenario. It was worth 3 marks.

This part of the question was satisfactorily done as candidates scored at least two marks from a maximum of 3 marks. Many candidates either failed to convert correctly from the 12-hour clock to the 24-hour format, or to write the time on the 24-hour clock, using an acceptable format, for example, 5:30 p.m. should be represented as 1730 hours, and not 17:30 p.m.

Section II – Optional Questions

Candidates were required to attempt any **three** of **four** questions from this section.

Question 4

This question tested candidates’ understanding of:

- specialized functions which are performed by the human resource clerk
- types of employee information that must be kept confidential by the human resource clerk
- the importance of certain concepts to the success of a business entity
- completing performance appraisals for employees
- ways in which an appraisal serves as an effective tool in managing unsatisfactory performance of employees

The mean for this question was 6.81. Scores ranged from zero to 15.

For Part (a) (i), candidates were required to list two specialized functions other than maintaining confidentiality, which are performed by the human resource clerk. It was worth 2 marks.

This part of the question was done fairly well, with candidates giving correct responses such as: *attending to staff welfare; preparing for interviews; preparing various forms of business communication, and assisting with the functions of the HR management office*. There were, however, many candidates who gave the functions of the HRM office such as recruitment, firing, and deployment.

Part (a) (ii) required candidates to give two types of employee information that must be kept confidential by the human resource clerk. It was worth 2 marks.

In most instances, candidates scored one mark, giving either personal/private information such as salary, or information on medical history. Rarely, did they give expected responses such as 'employee disciplinary records, benefits received and appraisals.

Part (b) required the candidates to explain the importance of any two of the terms below to the success of a business entity. It was worth 2 marks.

- collection of accounts
- credit control
- audit

This part of the question was fairly well done. The weaker candidates, however, could for the most part, explain only one of the terms satisfactorily as they relate it to their personal lives and not to the success of a business entity. Expected responses for each term included:

- *Collection of accounts: payments collected and recorded; management informed of delinquent debtors; use of debt chasers to collect amounts due*
- *Credit control: system of selling only up to a certain value of goods on credit to a customer; to avoid tying up too much capital in credit*
- *Audit: investigated financial records to determine if they are accurate and complete; to ensure assets are protected; to report any discrepancy in books/records.*

Part (c) (i) required the candidates to examine a given appraisal for an employee and to complete the labeled sections with likely responses. It was worth 6 marks.

This part of the question was done satisfactorily by those candidates who interpreted the appraisal rating correctly. Some candidates were challenged in writing appropriate responses in the 'comment', 'overall performance rating' sections, and in using the correct dates for both the supervisor and the employee.

Part (c) (ii) required the candidates to state three ways in which an appraisal serves as an effective tool in managing the performance of an employee whose appraisal results are unsatisfactory. It was worth 3 marks.

The majority of candidates were able to score at least one mark in this part of the question as they gave correct responses such as:

- *it determines one's strengths and weaknesses/needs of employee; actions to be taken, e.g. transferring, deploying or mentorship, and training skills/knowledge and qualities required to maximize potential.*

This question was the *second* of the *most popular* optional questions

Question 5

This question was designed to test the candidates' knowledge and understanding of:

- the functions of the procurement and inventory management office
- the difference between a standing order and a letter of credit
- how to prepare a currency memorandum for employees
- how to prepare a cash summary for the bank in the amount to be paid to employees

The mean for this question was 4.45. Scores ranged from zero to 15.

For Part (a), candidates were required to state two functions of the procurement and inventory management office. It was worth 2 marks.

For the most part, candidates were able to score one mark, giving invariably, the correct responses of 'liaising with other departments', and 'determining items to purchase'.

For Part (b), candidates were required to explain the difference between a 'standing order' and a 'letter of credit'. It was worth 4 marks.

This part of the question was done unsatisfactorily as in many instances, candidates failed to differentiate between the two types of payment.

The standing order is an order given by an account holder to his bank to transfer a certain sum of money to another account at regular intervals, while the letter of credit is addressed to a bank in a foreign country to honour bills of exchange or permit the user to withdraw funds when, and if necessary.

For Part (c) (i), candidates were required to prepare a currency memorandum for employees by giving the highest currency at all times possible. They should ensure that each employee gets at least one \$500.00 note. It was worth 6 marks.

Most candidates performed unsatisfactorily on this part of the question as they failed to give the highest currency at all times, and to give each employee at least one \$500.00 note as instructed.

The expected response for this question is shown below.

CURRENCY MEMORANDUM

| NAME | NOTES | | | | | | | COINS | | | | TOTAL |
|--------------|--------|-------|-------|------|------|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| | \$1000 | \$500 | \$100 | \$50 | \$20 | \$10 | \$5 | .50 | .25 | .10 | .05 | \$ |
| Sasha Thomas | 1 | 2 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | 2010.25 |
| Rajesh Maraj | 1 | 2 | 4 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 2400.75 |
| Karla Burns | 2 | 2 | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 3005.15 |
| Paul Deans | - | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1490.30 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | 8906.45 |

For Part (c) (ii), candidates were required to prepare a cash summary for the National Commercial Bank in the amount to be paid to the employees. It was worth 3 marks.

This part of the question was also done unsatisfactorily by many candidates who failed to indicate the correct number of notes/coins and the correct amounts at right column of the cash summary. The expected response for this question is shown below.

CASH SUMMARY

| No. of Notes | | Notes/Coins | | Total (\$) |
|--------------|---|-------------|---|-----------------------|
| 4 | × | 1000 | = | 4000 |
| 8 | × | 500 | = | 4000 |
| 8 | × | 100 | = | 800 |
| 1 | × | 50 | = | 50 |
| 2 | × | 20 | = | 40 |
| 1 | × | 10 | = | 10 |
| 1 | × | 5 | = | 5 |
| 1 | × | .50 | = | .50 |
| 3 | × | .25 | = | .75 |
| 1 | × | .10 | = | .10 |
| 2 | × | .05 | = | .10 |
| TOTAL AMOUNT | | | | <u>8906.45</u> |

This was the *least popular* of the optional questions.

Question 6

This question was designed to test the candidates' understanding of:

- the factors that can influence the procedures for purchasing goods and acquiring services in the Procurement and Inventory Management Office
- the duties of the clerks in the Sales and Marketing offices
- calculating and completing stock card for a company
- ways in which the electronic method of stock control can benefit an organization

The mean for this question was 6.50. Scores ranged from zero to 15.

For Part (a), candidates were required to state two factors that can influence the procedure for purchasing goods and acquiring services in the Procurement and Inventory Management Office. It was worth 2 marks.

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this part of the question, giving desired responses such as *the level of urgency; the cost of goods and service rendered; terms and conditions offered and the quality of goods and speed of delivery.*

Part (b) required candidates to identify two duties of the clerk in the Sales and Marketing offices. It was worth 4 marks.

Most candidates were able to score at least one mark for each office. *Correct responses for the Sales Office include: maintenance of sales records, calculation of commissions and discounts, and preparing relevant records; the correct responses given for the Marketing Office include: maintaining mailing lists, preparing simple and routine press release, and assisting with promotional, trade fairs/exhibitions and advertising material.*

For Part (c) (i), candidates were required to use the form given as an insert to calculate and complete the stock card for a company. It was worth 7 marks.

This part of the question presented a challenge to many candidates as they failed to calculate and complete the form to give the correct running balance at the end of the month.

Part (c) (ii), required candidates to outline two ways in which the electronic method of stock control can benefit a company who decided to change from a manual recording system of stock control, and whose staff members are resisting the change. It was worth 2 marks.

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this part of the question, giving correct responses such as:

- *quicker mode for keying in information; easy retrieval/transfer of information; save storage space; quicker means of calculating/organizing information, and easier mode of identification as all stock items are labeled with a unique bar code.*

Question 7

This question was designed to test the candidates' understanding of:

- the functions of the Operations and Despatch Offices
- the purpose of the Destination sheet and the Advice note
- how to use the form provided to calculate and write the required information on an invoice

The mean for this question was 5.77. Scores ranged from zero to 15. This question was the *most popular* in the section.

For Part (a), candidates were required to state two functions each of the Operations and Despatch Offices. It was worth 4 marks.

Most candidates performed unsatisfactorily on this part of the question as responses given relate mainly to the HR office and mail/postal services. The more able candidates gave correct responses for the functions of the Operations Office such as:

- *coordinating activities related to production; maintenance of operations records, quality assurance, and costing of finished goods*
- *Correct responses for the functions of the Despatch Office include: maintain documents for despatch of goods; maintain database of couriers, contracts and agents, adhere to statutory requirements, coordination of delivery of goods, and work in collaboration with the sales office*

Part (b) required candidates to state the purpose of the Destination sheet and the Advice note. It was worth 2 marks.

Most candidates demonstrated understanding of the Destination sheet by giving correct responses such as:

- Gives direction/distance to place of delivery of goods; gives the name/address of the customer to whom the delivery is to be made; describes the contents of delivery, states driver's name and vehicle number, and serves as proof of receipt of goods.

The Advice note posed a challenge to many candidates as they failed to give correct responses such as:

- Identification of carrier/method; used as an invoice before goods are shipped to the customer to inform payment agreement, terms and conditions of delivery, and the time goods are expected to arrive; used to inform customers that goods are on their way.

For Part (c), candidates were required to use the form provided to calculate and write the required information on an invoice. It was worth 9 marks.

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this part of the question, invariably filling in the form correctly. The weaker candidates failed to calculate the VAT and write the correct totals in each column and the grand total.

Recommendations

The examining committee would like to recommend the following approaches to teachers.

- Place greater emphasis on the correct format for letters and other documents.
- Vary teaching methodology to include the integrated approach to learning Office Administration. Cross-disciplinary collaboration and teaching involving teachers of English Language, Principles of Accounts, Electronic Document Preparation and Management and Office Administration could lead to greater articulation and reinforcement of concepts, procedures and processes.
- Emphasize the use of basic documents/forms such as: invoice, order, currency memorandum/cash summary, appraisal, advertisement and letters
- Pay keen attention to the new syllabus and to revised textbook content written by a variety of authors.
- Invite guest speakers and plan field trips to reinforce understanding of key areas, functions of workers in the different departments and documents and equipment used to enhance efficiency.

The committee wishes to recommend the following to candidates.

- Visit the CXC websites and read reports posted, join small study groups and network with teachers and peers.
- Make study schedules or timetables and stick to them consistently and conscientiously, to help in preparing for the examination.

Paper 032 – Alternative to the SBA

This paper targeted private individuals who would not have the opportunity to complete SBA projects as school candidates. It took the form of a written examination designed to test the candidates' ability to use their personal experiences of routine office activities acquired through observation or from performing the actual office tasks as real employees.

The paper consisted of eight short, structured essay-type questions, based on an office case entitled, 'The Economic Plunge'. Questions 5 and 8 contained sub-sections – Parts (a) and (b). For this examination, the case focused on Section I of the syllabus which covers Office Orientation.

It was noted in this paper that some areas continued to challenge candidates and affected their overall performance. The overall mean for this paper was 23.78 or 48 per cent, compared with 22.38 or 45 per cent in 2013. Marks ranged from 0 to 44 out of a maximum of 50.

The case entitled: *The economic Plunge*, summarized the following main points:

Marci and Marci Company Ltd operated a large clothing company from Georgetown in Guyana for fifteen years. The company experienced a significant drop in sales with profit returns of 45-60 per cent for the last two years.

After a review of its financial report, the board members voted on three major changes which include downsizing the company, diversifying its product by retailing cell phones and computer accessories, and change from the traditional to a modern office system.

Following the board's decision, the company's mission, vision and objectives had to be changed to reflect its new perspective.

Question 1

Based on given information, candidates were required to list three important points that should be considered in revising the company's Mission Statement to reflect its new perspective.

Candidates performed unsatisfactorily on this question as they were not able to delineate points such as: *core values; shared aspirations; strategy for accomplishing company's goals/objectives/activities; company's main purpose/focus/aims, and target group*

Marks ranged from 0 to 3 and the mean was 0.79 or 26 per cent.

Question 2

Candidates were to suggest three actions that the company should take to effectively downsize to a small business.

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this question, giving correct responses such as:

- *Decide on number of staff members required for the new company*
- *Make some workers redundant*
- *Re-train staff for new operations*
- *Deploy staff to relevant departments*
- *Purchase new/modern office equipment/stock*
- *Consider possibility of relocation*
- *Consider impact of changes on the budget*

Marks ranged from 0 to 3 and the mean was 1.78 or 59 per cent

Question 3

This question required candidates to offer suggestions to persons who are still uncertain about the decision of downsizing from a large to a small company, of three advantages a small business may have compared to a large business.

Performance on this question was satisfactory and includes correct responses such as: better interpersonal relationships with management and staff; employees perform several tasks and become multi-skilled in office activities; less bureaucracy in decision-making; simple organization structure, and clearer lines of communication

The weaker candidates compared large and small business generally instead of applying the question to the case and responding in relation to the downsizing of the business.

Marks ranged from 0 to 3 and the mean was 1.51 or 50 per cent.

Question 4

Candidates were required to write a memo to the office manager recommending three pieces of modern equipment they would like ordered for the newly designed office and suggest how they may be used in this office to enhance sales.

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this question. They headed up the memo correctly, gave an appropriate introduction and relevant equipment and purposes. Equipment included the: *Risograph – high speed digital printing system for high volume photocopying and printing*
Computer – input/output information; process raw data into information
Printer/photocopier - print/provide hard copy of promotional material
Scanner – capture images of data for conversion into electronic files
Facsimile (fax) – transmits and receives exact copies of document
Digital cameras – capture digital images for presentation or printing

Marks ranged from 0 to 6 and the mean was 3.85 or 64 per cent.

Question 5 (a)

Candidates were required to give four reasons why the modern office system would be better for the company to adapt in order to maintain efficiency in its new line of operation.

Most candidates performed unsatisfactorily on this question. Those candidates who attempted it gave correct responses such as:

- *Designed to accommodate modern equipment/furniture/work stations*
- *More flexibility in structure and arrangement/relocation of furniture/work stations*
- *Less costly to construct/better acoustic*
- *Facilitates interpersonal interaction with colleagues/team work encourages*
- *Overheads are less expensive*
- *Swift actions and decisions taken by different levels of workers*

Question 5 (b)

The company is considering changing its structure from a traditional to a modern office and based on the principles of ergonomics, candidates were to suggest four factors that the company should consider when designing its new office.

Many candidates received full marks for this question and gave correct responses such as:

- *Office and workstations layout; personal space, plants, temperature and lighting and design and layout of equipment*

Marks ranged from 0 to 8 and the mean was 3.61 or 45 per cent.

Question 6

Now that the company is considering diversifying its product line to meet customer demand, candidates were to suggest three activities that the company could centralize in order to be more efficient in its operations

For the most part, candidates' performance on this question was poorly done. Those candidates that attempted it failed to give correct responses such as:

- *Data inputting, photocopying, reproduction of documents/reprographics, word processing, legal services, and filing/records management.*

Marks ranged from 0 to 2 and the mean was 0.29 or 10 per cent.

Question 7

For this question, candidates were required to draft a job description, outlining four duties of a Level 1 Junior Office Clerk

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this question. The main areas of weakness were in supplying the relevant information for the headings at: Department, Responsible to and Job summary. Correct duties and responsibilities given include:

- *General clerical functions*
- *Answer the telephone*
- *Type correspondence*
- *Answer enquiries*
- *Deal with customers*
- *Use office applications*

Marks ranged from 0 to 8 and the mean was 4.13 or 52 per cent.

Question 8 (a)

This part of the question tested candidates' ability to draft an advertisement for the notice board to include two attributes and two skills that office workers should possess.

Candidates performed satisfactorily on this part of the question, giving correct responses such as:
Attributes – *punctuality, integrity, honesty, confidentiality, good deportment and grooming, high self-esteem and positive work ethics.*

Skills – *Literacy and numeracy, effective communication, time management, analytical and problem-solving, computer literacy; proficiency in the use of productivity tools and intra/interpersonal relation*

Question 8 (b)

Part (b) required candidates to suggest ways in which a good relationship among staff such as supervisor, colleagues and external customers, can improve productivity at the company

This part of the question was well done by most candidates as they were able to give the correct response for:

Supervisor: sets objectives and ensures that they are met on a timely basis; respects and motivates staff to enhance morale/performance, and makes use of open communication/participation

Colleagues: Exercise good manners/respect/team spirit/tact for improvement and optimal effort; move capable employees to assist the less capable to achieve their objectives, thus achieving corporate goals

External customers: offer good customer service to make clients feel satisfied/confident and want to come back; exercise care/courtesy/respect/consideration to build loyalty to organization

Marks ranged from 0 to 14 and the mean was 8.32 or 59 per cent.

Recommendations

Candidates need to:

- Visit the CXC website and read comments presented in the subject reports to assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses.
- Practise writing mission statements, memoranda, and job descriptions
- Note key words in the examination questions which provide guidance in presenting information in a logical and organized manner. These words are normally highlighted.

Paper 031 — School Based Assessment (SBA)

The school-based assessment component of the Office Administration course is designed to assist candidates in acquiring specific competencies for application in real-life situations. The research project is intended to develop in candidates the basic skills of research and requires them to collect data in a scientific manner.

The information gathered is compiled in a report and is assessed on three criteria: Preparation, Gathering Data, and Presentation with a weighting of 13, 15 and 22 marks, respectively. This paper was worth 50 marks. The mean was 30.95 or 62 per cent.

Criterion 1: Preparation

- Most candidates generated fairly good topics for their projects, but some topics were too wide and not clearly stated. In many instances, the title page lacked requisite elements such as the territory and candidate number.
- Candidates provided an appropriate table of contents (TOC), but there were instances where they did not number the pages correctly in the project as indicated in the TOC.
- Some candidates failed to identify a specific department in the firm for their project, while others failed to provide aims that were consistent with the topic under investigation. There were times when aims were confused with functions, and vice versa.
- Most candidates included correspondence requesting permission to conduct the project. Nonetheless, they failed to provide an appropriate salutation which is aligned to an acceptable complimentary close. General layout and signatory were not presented in an appropriate manner.

Criterion 2: Gathering Data

- Most candidates provided a suitable specimen of a data-gathering instrument. Notwithstanding this, the explanations of the usage of the instrument were limited and justifications were not forthcoming.
- In many instances, candidates presented the five research questions but they were inconsistent with the aims, functions and topics under investigation.
- On many occasions, candidates failed to identify legislation governing the workplace. However, most were able to provide a health and safety practice they observed and a staff rule they had to comply with in carrying out the project.

Criterion 3: Presentation

- Most candidates produced a report consisting of findings, challenges and problem-solving strategies. Rarely did candidates' reports include the relevant charts, tables and graphs.
- Most candidates provided a business document but it was sometimes inconsistent with the topic/department under investigation.
- In some cases the four-column table which included the equipment used in the firm, provided general uses of the equipment identified instead of specific uses of the equipment by the

department studied.

- Generally, candidates did not follow the guidelines for preparing the bibliography.
- Most candidates scored satisfactory marks on the overall presentation of the project.

Major Strengths: Neat and well arranged, word-processed projects.

Weaknesses:

- Failure to attach to the project, a current mark scheme indicating how the projects were marked
- Failure to state how candidates became aware of the legislation regulating the workplace
- Failure to state the *department* of the organization under study
- Incorrect sources of information
 - Reference for persons interviewed: date, place and job title were not included
 - Incorrect use of publication styles, namely APA or MLA or other approved styles
 - Reference for Internet sites: address on the website, name of authors and organizations were not correct.

Recommendations to Teachers

- Encourage students to pay keen attention to detail in order to earn scores close to, or at the maximum marks allocated.
- Monitor students consistently throughout the project to ensure that the project is done correctly, it represents the candidates' own work, and that the stipulated guidelines in the current syllabus are being pursued.