



**CARIBBEAN
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL**

**CSEC® ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT
PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT**



Subject Report

May/June 2024

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2024

**ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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INTRODUCTION

The General Proficiency CSEC Electronic Document Preparation and Management (EDPM) examination is administered annually in May-June. In 2024, a total of 18 167 candidates were entered for the examination compared with 17 706 in 2023. Of the candidates who sat this examination, 81.13 per cent earned Grade I–III. The mean score for the examination was 50.08 per cent.

The examination comprised the following papers.

- Paper 01 — Multiple Choice (Theory)
- Paper 02 — Production Test
- Paper 031 — School-Based Assessment
- Paper 032 — Alternative to School-Based Assessment (for private candidates)

Candidates' performance on Paper 01 and Paper 02 declined while their performance on Paper 032 and the School-Based Assessment improved when compared with 2023 and 2022.

PAPER 01 — MULTIPLE CHOICE

Paper 01 covers all aspects of the syllabus and consists of 60 multiple choice items designed to assess candidates' knowledge and application of key concepts and theoretical principles in document preparation and management.

In 2024, the paper was marked out of 50. The mean score was 30.72 and the maximum score gained by any candidate was 47.50. Overall, candidates' performance declined slightly when compared with 2023 when the mean score was 32.46 and the maximum score gained by a candidate was 49.17.

PAPER 02 — PRODUCTION TEST

This paper comprises four compulsory questions — a speed test and three tasks that assess candidates' ability to apply production principles in preparing business documents, using appropriate software and formatting features and interpreting manuscript signs accurately.

Candidates' performance on Paper 02 declined slightly when compared with 2023. In 2024, the mean score was 25.37 compared with 37.71 in 2023. The highest score in 2024 was 77, while in 2023 it was 83.

Question 1 — Speed Test

This question was designed to assess candidates' speed and accuracy, and their ability to meet the standard of typing 35 words per minute.

Stronger candidates were able to attain the required typing speed of 35 words per minute and to demonstrate a high level of accuracy. In addition to ensuring that formatting features (including full justification, first-line indentation and correct font size) were observed, candidates also utilized acceptable line and paragraph spacing. Additionally, punctuation marks were used as they occurred in the original passage. However, some candidates fell short in the areas of spelling and typography. The error of omitting text was also observed.

Some candidates managed to type the entire passage but they made some errors. Weaker candidates were only able to type portions of the passage correctly. Strengths observed included the following.

- Correct paragraphing
- Appropriate spacing between paragraphs
- Accurate use and placement of punctuation marks
- Typing the passage accurately (Such candidates did not include text that was not a part of the passage.)

However, errors in candidates' responses included the following.

- Omission of text, for example, the title/heading of the speed test
- Incorrect capitalization
- Spelling and typographical errors
- Inclusion of text that was not a part of the passage
- Omission of formatting features such as not justifying the text and not indenting paragraphs
- Use of incorrect formatting features such as incorrect font style or size

Some candidates were unable to achieve the minimum typing speed of 35 words per minute and struggled to maintain accuracy even at a reduced speed. In most cases, only part of the first paragraph was reproduced and candidates made several errors. These errors included the following.

- Inability to maintain the correct spacing between words.
- Inappropriate capitalization.
- Incorrect spelling.

Common weaknesses were observed. These included the following.

- Incomplete work: Most candidates failed to type beyond the second paragraph and as a result could not earn the maximum score.
- Failure to apply required formatting features such as setting margins, line spacing, font style and size. Many candidates also failed to justify the passage, leaving it at the default setting, that is, left alignment.
- Although most candidates demonstrated the ability to include punctuation marks at the appropriate places, most of them failed to use the correct spacing before and after.
- Omission of entire sections or sentences within paragraphs: Some candidates began a paragraph and ended it with content from a subsequent one. This meant that in some cases, candidates did not end paragraphs at the correct point.
- In many cases, candidates did not use the correct paragraphing and spacing. The spacing between paragraphs was excessive or non-existent. Such errors occurred frequently.
- Improper use of capitalization: Candidates appeared unaware of the Change Case feature in Microsoft Word (as this was the most popular word processor used) and so they typed in block letters (all letters in uppercase) when they should have capitalized the beginning of each word or used sentence case.
- Incorrect spelling: There were several spelling errors in most candidates' work.
- Omission of the source: Most candidates did not type the source of the document after the passage. This formed part of the full document and the omission of this text meant that candidates who did not include it could not be awarded the maximum score.
- Omission of the degree symbol (°): Some candidates perhaps were not aware of where they could find this symbol and therefore omitted it. Others replaced the symbol with the word 'degree'.

Recommendations

Teachers should

- engage students in regular practice drills to improve accuracy and speed; where possible these can include timed sessions at the start of each class
- implement a system of rewards or privileges for students who consistently improve their typing speed and/or accuracy
- correct students' formatting techniques and encourage them to set the format before entering text
- encourage students to improve their speed and accuracy by utilizing online resources such as websites that have typing tutorials
- emphasize proper keyboarding techniques to alleviate spelling errors, inclusion of irrelevant text or omission of relevant information
- provide passages such as newspaper articles and excerpts or extracts from documents where students would be required to reproduce the document provided, inclusive of formatting features.

Question 2 — Letterhead, Memo, Mail Merge, Business Card

This question assessed candidates' ability to follow standard procedures for preparing business documents. It included designing a letterhead, creating a mailing list, preparing a memo in indented style, performing a mail merge and designing a business card with multiple copies on a specified paper size using appropriate software.

Overall, candidates' performance was generally satisfactory. Most candidates successfully attempted the mail merge. However, many candidates experienced challenges in preparing the memo in indented style and applying design principles in order to create a letterhead with an appropriate logo and a business card according to the instructions provided. The overall presentation of the documents did not meet the requirements for producing mailable work. The following is a summary of the areas of strengths and weaknesses.

Letterhead, Memo and Mail Merge

Stronger candidates demonstrated proficiency in accuracy and speed. However, there were a few minor errors in spacing and punctuation. Some candidates experienced difficulties with spelling, insertion or omission of text, punctuation, capitalization, formatting and spacing. The responses of weaker candidates suggested that they had limited knowledge of the elements tested.

There were several areas of good performance. Some candidates demonstrated strengths as shown by their ability to

- prepare letterheads
- create business documents
- perform mail merge.

However, several weaknesses were observed. Some candidates were unable to accurately reproduce the information provided. Some candidates could not apply

- underpinning knowledge and skills to create mailable documents
- formatting principles consistently
- manuscript principles when editing given documents

Business Card

Stronger candidates demonstrated competence in the presentation and use of technology when producing mailable documents from skeletal notes. However, some candidates demonstrated that they only had partial knowledge of what should be done. Some candidates' work included minor errors in style

and spacing after the word Memorandum. Weaker candidates were unable to reproduce the required content.

This question assessed candidates' ability to follow standard procedures and guidelines to design a business card using suitable software. There were several areas of good performance. Some candidates demonstrated several strengths. However, some weaknesses were observed. These weaknesses included candidates' inability to

- apply underpinning knowledge and skills to create mailable documents
- utilize design principles to create business cards following instructions
- apply formatting principles consistently.

Recommendations

Teachers should

- provide clear instructions about tasks, including their purpose and benefits as it relates to the world of work
- demonstrate the process of reproducing common business documents
- offer feedback on common mistakes that may occur during document preparation
- provide opportunities for candidates to develop their speed and accuracy
- reinforce learning objectives throughout the instructional period
- foster a supportive learning environment for questions and clarification
- prepare and display sample mock-ups to reinforce learning
- encourage students to perform self-assessment before submitting assignments.

The following teaching/learning strategies can be utilized to increase students' conceptual understanding of how to use the application software during the examination.

Strategies for enhancing students' typing speed and accuracy are as follows.

- Touch typing training: Teach proper finger placement and home row keys, use interactive typing tutorials and games to track students' progress regularly.
- Proofreading and editing skills: Emphasize the importance of proofreading, identifying common typing errors and encouraging collaborative editing among peers.
- Formatting and autocorrect utilization: Teach document structuring, introduce autocorrect for common mistakes and familiarize students with keyboard shortcuts.

Strategies for improving presentation when creating business documents are as follows.

- Use visual aids and online tutorials as learning tools, in conjunction with the syllabus, to aid document preparation.
- Utilize collaborative learning strategies that provide opportunities for students to engage in peer-to-peer learning using online platforms, textbooks and the syllabus. Such strategies can be used to engage students in the formatting and presentation of business documents while emphasizing page setup, alignment, font styles, editing principles and manuscript signs with abbreviations.
- Provide customizable templates and guide students on personalizing them while maintaining document preparation principles.
- Organize peer review sessions to offer constructive feedback and facilitate group discussions on document preparation principles and techniques.

Question 3 — Press Release and Bill of Quantity

This question assessed candidates' ability to follow standard procedures for preparing business documents (prepare a press release and bill of quantity) using appropriate software.

Candidates' performance was below average. While most candidates attempted the press release and demonstrated a reasonable grasp of its structure, there were significant oversights in completing the document correctly. Many candidates appeared unfamiliar with the standard date format used in business documents.

Moreover, candidates performed poorly in preparing the Bill of Quantity. Candidates demonstrated limited knowledge of spreadsheet functions, including manipulating data in cells and performing calculations. Most candidates did not attempt this component. Additionally, candidates' error rate was high.

Press Release

Stronger candidates demonstrated proficiency in preparing the press release. They successfully inserted the header from Question 2, included the subject line and ended the document as instructed. However, minor errors were noted such as incorrect date formats and failure to fit the press release on a single page. This resulted in candidates losing marks.

Candidates showing partial competence completed the press release but made errors that affected accuracy and presentation. Common issues included the following.

- Using the wrong date and omitting the word END to close the document
- Typographical and spelling mistakes, for example, using 'Deatil' instead of *Detail* in the spreadsheet section
- Omission of an entire line of text in the first paragraph
- Incorrect punctuation, for example, using a period instead of a comma after the word 'department', which led to the automatic capitalization of the word that followed
- Failure to expand abbreviations, for example, writing 'org'. instead of *organization*.
- Inconsistent spacing, for example, using single spacing between the lines beginning with the words 'Embargo' and 'From'.

Weaker candidates were unable to earn marks for accuracy and speed. Their responses often contained multiple errors such as the following.

- Omission or incorrect application of formatting features such as underlining the words ‘for immediate release’ and failing to use uppercase for the words ‘PRESS RELEASE’
- Incorrect line spacing in typing the subject line
- Misinterpretation of manuscript signs, for example, typing ‘//’ instead of starting a new paragraph
- Failure to expand abbreviations, for example, using ‘orgs.’ instead of *organization*
- Incorrect date formats
- Inability to end the press release as instructed

However, some candidates included the header, typed the content on a single page and inserted the subject line as expected.

Candidates performed well in some areas by doing the following.

- Structuring the press release with appropriate sections such as the header, subject line and body
- Recognizing the importance of including a header in a press release as a standard business practice
- Carrying over the letterhead from the previous question effectively
- Including essential elements of a press release such as key phrases *PRESS RELEASE* and *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*
- Typing the content of the press release on a single page.

Candidates were weak in the following areas.

- Adhering to the standard date format and using a variety of inconsistent formats instead
- Paying attention and following formatting instructions, which negatively affected overall presentation and alignment
- Applying instructions for ending the document as required

Bill of Quantity

Stronger candidates demonstrated proficiency in preparing the Bill of Quantity. This was evident in their ability to

- utilize the spreadsheet software as the most appropriate tool
- insert a header consistent with the one in the press release
- include both the customer and job details as instructed
- include all five job elements to earn three marks
- accurately calculate subtotals for all five job elements

- correctly calculate the total for the entire expected works
- display major gridlines as shown on the exam paper
- apply shading to each element as instructed
- right-align the columns titled 'Rate' and 'Amount' only.

However, some candidates lost marks for failing to centre the table horizontally and vertically. Overall, these candidates demonstrated that they were fully competent in both spreadsheet and word processing software applications.

Some candidates demonstrated that they were partially competent in preparing the Bill of Quantity. These candidates were able to

- select spreadsheet software as the most appropriate tool for preparing the bill of quantity
- correctly insert the customer details as instructed
- include all five job elements as instructed
- apply shading as indicated
- right-align the columns titled 'Rate' and 'Amount'.

However, some of these candidates failed to

- utilize the correct page layout to centre the table horizontally and vertically
- insert the header created in Question 2 as instructed
- include the job details
- perform any calculations for the subtotals and overall total.

Additionally, some candidates lost marks for not displaying the major gridlines as shown on the exam paper.

Weaker candidates demonstrated limited competence in preparing the Bill of Quantity. While most of them selected spreadsheet software, which was the appropriate tool, several critical omissions affected their scores. Customer details were entered correctly but job details were excluded. Data for only some of the five required elements was provided, resulting in a one-mark deduction. Shading was applied as instructed.

Most of them lost additional marks due to the following.

- Failure to include the header from Question 2
- Omission of calculations for subtotals and the overall total
- Absence of major gridlines as required in the question
- Incorrect alignment of the 'Rate' and 'Amount' column headings

Overall, candidates performed well in selecting spreadsheet software as the most appropriate tool for preparing a document of this nature, organizing data effectively within the spreadsheet and using the shading tool to enhance presentation and readability. However, candidates' performance in the following areas was weak.

- Setting the correct page layout for the spreadsheet
- Failing to centre the table horizontally and vertically
- Using spreadsheet functions for data entry and basic formatting such as cell merging (Job Details) and text alignment (Rate and Amount)
- Performing calculations (omission of subtotals and the overall total)
- Including a header as a standard business practice
- Utilizing the header section of the spreadsheet to insert the header
- Differentiating between documents from different businesses (The same header was used for documents originating from different businesses.)
- Displaying gridlines (This would have improved readability.)

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to do the following.

- Conduct mock exams under timed conditions to help students get familiar with managing their time effectively.
- Guide students in identifying connections across the entire exam as the method employed often involves a single company theme.
- Increase the frequency of practice sessions to familiarize students with exam formats and expectations.
- Utilize online resources and tutorials that students can access at their own pace to reinforce classroom instruction.
- Use real-world examples to illustrate the practical applications of tasks and concepts covered in the exam.
- Ensure students understand the purpose and benefits of each task in relation to industry standards and practices.
- Encourage the use of digital tools and software that simulate real-world business environments for hands-on experience.
- Implement regular review sessions to address common mistakes and reinforce key concepts.
- Facilitate peer review activities where students can evaluate and provide feedback on each other's work, promoting collaborative learning.
- Provide resources for students to access additional practice materials and examples relevant to the requirements of the syllabus.
- Compile a list of common errors and review them regularly in class to help students recognize and correct mistakes.

The following teaching and learning strategies can be utilized to increase students' conceptual understanding of the use of the application software utilized during the conduct of the examination.

- Utilize tools such as Quizizz and other interactive exercises to test students' understanding of key concepts in word processing and spreadsheets.
- Provide pre-designed templates and sample documents using word processing and spreadsheet software for students to practise formatting and data organization.
- Use guided tutorials to demonstrate basic spreadsheet functions.
- Conduct practical sessions where students create business documents such as invoices, budgets and other documents requiring calculations in spreadsheet.
- Integrate case studies and simulations to illustrate how spreadsheets are used in actual business settings.
- Organize visits to business establishments to provide students with practical, real-world insights and applications.
- Provide examples of well-written press releases and other business documents for students to analyse and discuss. Focus on essential skills such as formatting, document layout, and text editing.
- Assign regular practice tasks where students create and edit spreadsheets for different business purposes. Focus on key skills such as data entry and formula application.
- Encourage students to work in pairs or small groups on projects to foster collaborative learning and problem-solving.
- Invite professionals to discuss how they use productivity tools in their work.

Question 4 — Creation of a PowerPoint Presentation

This question assessed candidates' ability to prepare and design a PowerPoint presentation using appropriate software while adhering to the given instructions and guidelines. Overall, most candidates attempted to provide an answer and they performed satisfactorily. However, many candidates experienced challenges with accuracy and speed in completing the presentation. Despite these difficulties, candidates performed well in areas such as applying design templates and inserting the organization chart.

Generally, candidates were competent in preparing a PowerPoint presentation. Stronger candidates successfully created a complete presentation and were able to

- apply an appropriate design
- insert suitable graphics on all slides
- interpret the manuscript accurately
- include the required chart as instructed
- type the main headings in initial caps and a larger font style.

Overall, these candidates displayed excellent keyboarding skills and excelled at demonstrating accuracy and speed.

Some candidates performed moderately. Such candidates were able to insert appropriate design themes and type the main headings in initial caps and a larger font style. Additionally, they

- created a PowerPoint presentation using a template
- applied an appropriate design theme
- inserted graphics on five slides (even though some were unsuitable)
- did not include the required chart
- interpreted some manuscript signs correctly.

Overall, candidates demonstrated fair keyboarding skills but lost marks for accuracy and speed. Weaker candidates demonstrated limited competence in preparing a PowerPoint presentation. These candidates inserted only one slide which contained half of the required information. However, most of them failed to complete the full PowerPoint presentation, resulting in the loss of marks for accuracy and speed. Overall, weaker candidates displayed poor keyboarding skills.

Generally, candidates demonstrated good performance in some areas. This was evident in their ability to prepare the PowerPoint presentation utilizing a design theme and inserting smart art onto the slides. However, candidates did not perform well in utilizing appropriate graphics in relation to the question, interpreting manuscript signs and abbreviations appropriately, applying formatting principles consistently and applying the fundamentals of speed and accuracy.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to do the following.

- Conduct mock exams under timed conditions to help students get familiar with managing their time effectively.
- Guide students in identifying connections across the entire exam.
- Increase the frequency of practice sessions to familiarize students with exam formats and exam expectations.
- Utilize online resources and tutorials that students can access at their convenience to reinforce classroom instruction.
- Use real-world examples to illustrate the practical applications of tasks and concepts covered in the exam.
- Ensure that students understand the purpose and benefits of each task in relation to industry standards and practices.
- Encourage students to use digital tools and software that simulate real-world business environments in order to gain hands-on experience
- Implement regular review sessions to address common mistakes and reinforce key concepts.
- Facilitate peer review activities during which students can evaluate and provide feedback on each other's work in order to promote collaborative learning.
- Provide resources for students to access additional practice materials and examples relevant to the syllabus requirements.
- Compile a list of common errors and review them regularly in class to help students recognize and correct mistakes.

The following teaching and learning strategies can be utilized to increase students' conceptual understanding of application software used during the examination.

- Provide clear instructions about the tasks and their purpose and benefits as it relates to the world of work.
- Review common mistakes to be mindful of during the completion of each task.
- Provide opportunities for speed and accuracy development and offer timely feedback on student's progress.
- Reinforce to students the importance of reading the question to ensure that they adhere to the instructions.
- Foster a supportive learning environment for questions and clarification.
- Utilize visual aids or mock-ups to assist students during the completion of tasks.

Teachers should implement the following strategies to enhance the presentation quality of business documents.

- Encourage students to work collaboratively and focus on formatting and editing principles. Examples of collaborative methods instruction include peer-to-peer learning and guided instruction.
- Provide customizable templates and guide students on personalizing them, employing formatting and editing principles consistently.
- Organize peer review sessions to allow students to offer constructive feedback and facilitate group discussions on presentation techniques.

PAPER 031 — SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT (SBA)

The School-Based Assessment (SBA) consists of a portfolio and three assignments developed by the teacher to test students' accuracy, speed, skills in presentation of documents and their use of technology. In 2024, students' performance remained the same when compared with 2023. Most assignments were not consistent with syllabus requirements, particularly regarding length and content. Additionally, there are still areas for improvement.

The Portfolio

Overall, students' performance on the portfolio ranged from strong to weak. Stronger students submitted all required pieces and focused on proper formatting, accuracy and good presentation. Their work reflected a clear understanding of syllabus requirements as they included correct margins and line spacing, and the headings were applied consistently. These students also displayed high levels of knowledge, comprehension and keyboarding speed and accuracy.

Students with moderate performance submitted most required pieces but displayed recurring errors such as incorrect line spacing, inconsistent paragraphing and omission of essential elements like cover pages, bibliographies, descriptions of components, and properly numbered tables of contents. In some cases, organization charts included varying shapes that were not appropriate. While a few documents were well presented, many lacked consistent formatting and alignment.

Weaker students submitted incomplete portfolios or documents that did not meet syllabus guidelines. Common issues included missing components, poor layout, typographical and spelling errors, and failure to apply basic document preparation principles. In several cases, students lost marks because they did not focus on accuracy and they did not know the requirements and presentation standards. Most of these students submitted only four pieces, all of which contained errors. Examples of errors included omission of the two-page letter, incorrect line spacing, improper capitalization and spelling mistakes. Additionally, essential elements such as descriptions of components, the title page, the table of contents and the bibliography were absent.

Recommendations

Portfolio submissions can be improved if students place greater emphasis on accuracy, knowledge and comprehension, and presentation/use of technology. Teachers and students should pay keen attention to the requirements and rules governing document preparation which include

- correct margins and page layout
- proper tabulation of headings (for example, multiple headings aligned vertically or obliquely)
- continuation pages that include the topic, date and page number
- consistent line and character spacing (for example, double space after a full stop or colon).

If students adhere to these standards, their portfolios will meet syllabus guidelines and reflect professional document preparation practices.

Assignment 1

Stronger students presented their work well and applied most formatting principles correctly. Their work showed logical organization and minimal errors. These students earned high marks for accuracy, knowledge, and presentation.

Students who performed moderately completed the assignment but made punctuation errors, used incorrect heading styles and paragraphed inconsistently. While some documents were well formatted, others were improperly formatted in the aspects of font styles and page continuation. Some students also used the incorrect heading styles.

Weaker students submitted work with multiple errors including incorrect line spacing, improper capitalization and failure to apply paragraphing rules. In several cases, essential elements such as continuation page headings were missing, and formatting principles were inconsistently applied.

Assignment 2

Stronger students presented their work well and used technology appropriately. They organized their work logically and there were no errors. Such students earned high marks for accuracy, knowledge and presentation.

Students who performed moderately presented their work satisfactorily and completed the assignment; however, some recurring issues were noted. These included punctuation errors, incorrect line spacing after headings and improper bibliography formatting. Some documents were well presented; however, in others, students used incorrect font styles and did not use proper continuation page formatting. In several cases, attachments were incorrect and in-text citations were missing. Additionally, continuation pages were not correctly labelled and inconsistencies in paragraphing were observed. Although most students applied basic rules for paragraphing and abbreviations, errors in heading styles were common.

Weaker students submitted work with multiple errors which included poor paragraphing, absence of in-text citations and failure to use email features. Common omissions included cover pages, bibliographies and continuation page headings. In several cases, there was no evidence of research or proper email transmission. In such cases, students were given very low marks. These students also displayed weaknesses in accuracy and speed. In addition, they made frequent errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. There were also typographical mistakes as well as omitted or inserted words. Students' knowledge and comprehension were limited. There was incorrect line spacing for headings, inappropriate spacing throughout the document and incorrect bibliography which did not adhere to the APA style. Some students' presentations and use of technology were also poor. There were

inconsistencies in paragraphing, absence of in-text citations, no evidence of search engine use, incorrect capitalization, missing email attachments and continuation pages that were not correctly headed.

Assignment 3

Overall, students' performance ranged from strong to weak. Stronger students demonstrated excellent presentation and use of technology. Their work was logically organized and they used correct formatting and creative design, effectively using application features. Students' accuracy and speed were commendable and there were no errors noted in spelling, punctuation or capitalization.

Students who performed moderately presented satisfactory work but displayed recurring issues such as punctuation errors, grammatical mistakes, inconsistent font styles, improper capitalization and lack of references. While the content was logically organized and relevant to the topic, weaknesses were observed in design elements, which included insufficient emphasis using font styles, absence of WordArt or graphics and incorrect line spacing. In some cases, there was no evidence of students using search engines for research.

Weaker students submitted incomplete or inappropriate work. Common issues included failure to use presentation software as required; some students submitted spreadsheet tables instead of slides. These submissions lacked design and formatting, resulting in zero marks for presentation and use of technology. Other errors included incorrect line spacing, poor layout, and omission of essential elements such as references and continuation page headings. Accuracy and speed were very low, with some students earning only minimal marks for line-ending hyphenation and abbreviations. Knowledge and comprehension were also poor, as there was no competent discussion of the topic or logical presentation of information; marks were lost because the work did not meet syllabus requirements. Presentation and use of technology were inadequate, as the expected design and formatting features were absent from spreadsheet submissions.

Recommendations

Teachers are encouraged to do the following.

- Ensure that the assignments align with syllabus requirements so that moderation can be conducted fairly.
- Pay attention to the accuracy in totalling the marks awarded for the profiles in each assignment.
- Use correct file extensions when saving files to ensure accessibility during the moderation process.
- Ensure that students label assignments appropriately to aid the moderation exercise.
- Start planning for the SBA early in the school year to ensure that adequate time is allocated for the design, preparation, administration and marking of each student's work and for the selection, packaging and submission of the required samples.

- Provide students with ample practice using the tools and features of various software packages, as mastery of these tools is essential for producing accurate, professional documents.
- Adhere strictly to the marking guidelines outlined in the syllabus and ensure students are aware of these standards.
- Provide students with feedback on their work and give them the opportunity to amend and improve their initial drafts.
- Ensure that students check their work for errors before they are submitted to the teacher.
- Teach the correct format for each document type including date format and paragraph formatting for each type of letters.
- Teachers should engage in collaboration with their peers to ensure quality submissions.

In Assignment 1, students continue to present content that does not align with a speed test. In Assignment 2, there was little evidence of research or email transmission, yet full marks were sometimes awarded by teachers. Submissions for Assignment 3 must be contextualized to the nature of the research and aligned with syllabus requirements.

Students should pay particular attention to the use of backgrounds, discussion of the selected topic, and modes of presentation, as these influence marking. Portfolio submissions must comply with syllabus requirements. Students continue to submit assignments that do not follow accepted rules for formatting and document layout.

Students must also ensure the mailability of the work that is included in the portfolio. Documents frequently contained one or more of the following.

- Typographical errors
- Spelling errors
- Grammatical errors
- Errors in content
- Formatting errors as it relates to dates, character and line spacing, appropriate margins and layout of continuous pages

PAPER 032 — ALTERNATIVE TO SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Paper 032 consists of two compulsory questions designed to assess candidates' ability to apply a variety of production principles in creating business documents from skeletal notes.

The maximum possible mark was 100 and the mean mark was 41.14. The maximum score achieved was 93 marks.

Question 1 — Prepare Circular Letter and Create Feedback Form

This question required candidates to prepare a letterhead, draft a circular letter in the semi-blocked style and create a feedback form.

Candidates performed well in the following areas.

- Preparing the letterhead
- Creating a draft circular letter
- Designing the layout (page setup)

The following are some of the areas in which candidates did not perform well.

- Preparing a letter in the semi-blocked style
- Inserting watermarks within a document
- Applying design principles as it relates to the outside border as well as the table within the document
- Applying footnotes within a document
- Interpreting manuscript signs

Candidates who performed well demonstrated excellent presentation skills and used technology well. They organized their work logically, formatted it accurately and used appropriate design elements. Their letterheads were well prepared and they used the correct logos and consistent themes, although there were minor issues such as capitalization errors. These candidates displayed a clear understanding of the semi-block style and successfully created the feedback form according to the requirements.

Candidates who performed moderately completed most tasks but there were some recurring issues. While candidates included the correct letterheads and logos, weaknesses were observed in their formatting and design choices, such as inappropriate borders in the feedback form. Some candidates demonstrated knowledge of features like watermark insertion and manuscript signs; however, inconsistencies in layout and style reduced overall quality. The feedback form was generally well done and candidates showed understanding of the correct use of the software. However, design elements such

as borders were often inappropriate for the assignment and formatting principles were not consistently applied.

Weaker candidates submitted work with multiple errors and omissions. Common issues included incorrect capitalization, spelling mistakes and failure to apply required formatting principles. Letterheads were poorly constructed and circular letters contained errors in spacing and alignment. Candidates' knowledge and comprehension were limited, as they did not understand key terms such as *date as postmark* and *semi-block*. Overall, these candidates' understanding of business document preparation was weak. Feedback forms were incomplete or incorrectly formatted and there were missing elements such as text boxes, lines, enumeration, borders and footnotes. These observations reflected that candidates had limited understanding of the requirements and used application features inadequately.

Question 2 — Creation of a Web Site Map and Database

This question tested candidates' ability to utilize production principles to create business documents. Candidates were required to prepare a website map, create a database to enter records, create a query and prepare a report from notes provided.

Candidates were able to do the following well.

- Prepare the website map
- Utilize page setup

However, several weaknesses were observed. These included candidates' inability to

- apply design principles to prepare business documents
- utilize formatting principles according to instructions given
- interpret manuscript signs
- prepare and manipulate databases.

Stronger candidates performed well in both sections. They successfully created the website map using a word processor and clip art. They applied formatting features and manuscript signs accurately. Only minor errors such as a single typographical mistake were noted. In addition, these candidates showed competence in using Microsoft Access to create a database table, query and report as required. Overall, their work reflected that they had a clear understanding of the tasks. Only minor weaknesses such as difficulty interpreting the manuscript symbol for transposing text were observed.

Candidates with moderate performance demonstrated good knowledge and understanding in preparing the website map using a word processor and clip art. Formatting features were generally applied correctly, and the overall presentation of this section was satisfactory. However, performance on the database section was weak. Common issues included incorrect table design, omission of field names and primary keys, and errors in data entry such as transposition, typographical mistakes, and insertion or omission of text. Queries and reports were often incomplete or missing, indicating limited exposure to database software. Instruction in this area is necessary for candidates to improve future performance.

Weaker candidates performed poorly. While some of them attempted to prepare the website map, numerous errors were observed, including incorrect formatting and lack of knowledge of using clip art and other design features. The database section was not attempted by most candidates, reflecting a lack of required knowledge and skills in database creation and manipulation.

Recommendations

Instructors should

- engage those who are preparing for the Paper 032 exam in activities that require them to compose mailable documents from skeletal notes
- ensure exposure to the CXC syllabus requirements and past paper questions because these will give a better understanding of what is expected.

The following teaching and learning strategies can be used to increase candidates' conceptual understanding of application software during the examination.

- Provide clear instructions about the tasks, including their purpose and benefits as they relate to the world of work.
- Demonstrate the process of reproducing common business documents.
- Offer feedback on common mistakes that may occur during document preparation.
- Provide opportunities for speed and accuracy development.
- Reinforce learning objectives throughout the instructional period.
- Foster a supportive learning environment for questions and clarification.
- Encourage students to conduct a self-assessment before submitting assignments.

Strategies to improve presentation when creating business documents include the following.

- Use visual aids and online tutorials alongside the syllabus to aid document preparation.
- Incorporate collaborative learning strategies that allow students to engage in peer-to-peer activities focused on formatting and presentation of business documents, emphasizing page setup, alignment, font styles, and editing principles.
- Provide customizable templates and guide students on personalizing them while maintaining document preparation standards.
- Organize peer review sessions to offer constructive feedback and facilitate group discussions on document preparation techniques.

General Recommendations

Teachers should ensure that they are using the current syllabus and should check CXC's website occasionally for syllabus amendments.

Accuracy and speed continue to be a challenge. Teachers must help students to reduce errors in document presentation. One of the aims of CSEC Electronic Document Preparation and Management (EDPM) is to equip students with the requisite skills to perform clerical and administrative roles; therefore, the level of work produced must reflect professional standards. Documents should be error-free and presentation-ready and students should be encouraged to produce work to an acceptable standard.

Attention must also be paid to spelling and grammar, as these significantly impact the quality of work. Teachers should have access to a wide range of computer-generated documents (including displays) for use as exemplars and for task-based practice. Recommended sources include

- the career section of the Sunday newspaper
- restaurant menus
- annual reports produced by companies such as financial institutions
- websites maintained by publishers of EDPM textbooks
- other teachers.

Teachers should ensure that they teach students the fundamentals of the software applications such as document creation, editing, formatting and dissemination rather than focusing solely on manipulating a specific application. A good strategy is to expose students to a variety of current software applications.

The theoretical aspects of the syllabus are important; strategies should be employed to ensure adequate time and cognitive effort are devoted to these areas during the instructional process. Teachers should also emphasize the development of skills examined under Profile 3 (Presentation and Use of Technology) to ensure all documents produced are professionally completed.

For examination preparation, students should be provided with adequate opportunities to develop test-taking skills. Teachers must emphasize the importance of reading and interpreting instructions before attempting any question or task. Additionally, students should practise keyboarding skills consistently to attain, maintain, and exceed the minimum accuracy and speed threshold required by the syllabus.