

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

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OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

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It is noted that some areas of the syllabus tested in this paper continue to present a challenge to the candidates. They, for instance, encounter great difficulty when they are asked to present information graphically, though they are given the choice of selecting an appropriate means for presentation.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 02 – Short Answer

Each question in this paper is worth 15 marks. All the questions in Section I are compulsory.

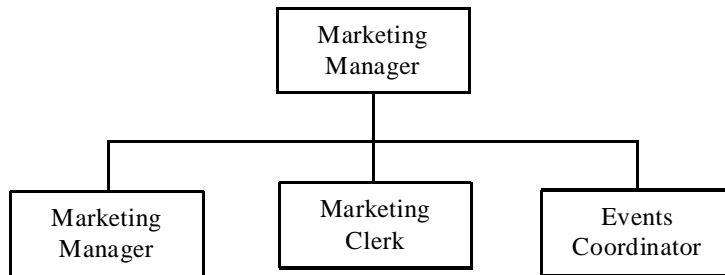
Question 1

This question tested Module I (objective 3) and Module IV (objective 3c).

For Part (a), candidates were required to list two advantages and two disadvantages of conventional/cellular and open plan layout of the office. This was worth 7 marks. Some candidates misunderstood the term “cellular”; others gave disadvantages for advantages and vice versa.

For Part (b), candidates were required to draw an organization chart to show the relationship among the Marketing Clerk, Graphic Artist, Marketing Manager and Promotion/Events Coordinator. This was worth 5 marks. This segment of the question proved to be challenging to the majority of candidates. Below is an example of an organization chart that would have been acceptable.

Example of an organization chart



(Graphic Artist and Marketing Clerk may be subordinate Events Coordinator)
(Marketing Clerk may be subordinate to Events Coordinator and Graphic Clerk)

In Part (c), candidates were asked to list three procedures that may be used for dealing with the visitor. This was worth 3 marks. Candidates demonstrated knowledge in this area and many were able to gain full marks.

Marks for this question ranged from 0 -15 and the mean was 7.58. The Examiners recommend that teachers expose students to the different terms used for the types of office and that they use pictures to illustrate. Teachers should also use charts /diagrams to expose students to a variety of organization charts.

Question 2

This question tested Module I (Objective 1c and 5), Module II (Objective 3) and Module V (Objective 3a).

For Part (a) (i), candidates were required to describe two ways in which (a) obtaining information and (b) conveying information can be achieved in an office. This was worth 4 marks.

For Part (a) (ii), candidates were asked to identify three skills that are essential to the clerk who is performing the functions mentioned in (i) (a) and (b). This was worth 3 marks. Some candidates identified traits/qualities instead of skills. This problem persists though it has been emphasized in previous reports.

These two segments of this question were well done.

For Part (b) (i), candidates were required to draft a notice of meeting to be sent out to sales representatives. This was worth 3 marks. Most candidates were able to correctly present the notice of meeting in an acceptable format. Many candidates neglected to indicate the name of the document by placing the heading – NOTICE OF MEETING.

For Part (b) (ii), candidates were to prepare a checklist of five tasks that must be performed in preparation for the meeting. This was worth 5 marks. The majority of candidates responded satisfactorily to this part of the question. Marks ranged from 0 -15 and the mean was 9.24.

Question 3

This question tested Module II (Objective 10a) and Module III (Objective 2b.)

For Part (a) (i), candidates were to state two characteristics of facsimile and e-mail, which are electronic channels of communication. This was worth 2 marks. The majority of candidates provided responses that were limited to the words 'speed and fast' as opposed to factors that relate to cost, equipment, capabilities, time barriers.

For Part (a) (ii), candidates were to list three steps in the procedure for handling incoming mail. This was worth 3 marks. The majority of candidates earned full marks. However, there were cases where candidates responded in the form of an e-mail. A few candidates did not answer the question.

For Part (b) candidates were to arrange information in the geographical filing order. This was worth 8 marks. This part of the questions challenged many candidates who rearranged the information and did not apply the principles of arranging information in alphabetical order within the geographical filing method.

Marks ranged from 0 -15 and the mean was 8.16.

Question 4

This question tested Module VI (Objective 1) and Module XII (Objectives 3 and 5).

For Part (a), candidates were to list three types of travel services that can be obtained from a travel agency. This presented some difficulty to the candidates. This was worth 3 marks. The Examiners recommend that part of the students learning experience should be to visit a travel agency in their area to find out about the services offered.

For Part (b), candidates were asked to write a cover letter to apply for the vacant sales representative position that was advertised. This was worth 8 marks. While the majority of candidates were able to provide correct letter format, many neglected to indicate that the résumé was attached.

In Part (c), candidates were required to identify four factors that are to be considered before applying for the vacancy that was advertised. This was worth 4 marks. This part of the question was generally well done.

The overall performance in this question was satisfactory. Marks ranged from 0-14 and the mean was 7.19.

Section II – Optional Questions

Question 5

This question tested Module IX (Objective 6d) and Module VII (Objective 4b).

For Part (a), candidates were to list six ways in which the Optical Character Reader (OCR) can be beneficial to the business. This was worth 6 marks. Candidates' performance indicated that many were unfamiliar with the term.

For Part (b), candidates were to use the headings 'Job Summary, Accountable to, Work involved, Knowledge and skills' in the draft of a job description. Some candidates were able to provide appropriate information under each heading, while others did not use the headings appropriately or provided irrelevant information. This was worth 9 marks.

Candidates' performance on this question was fair. While marks ranged from 0-15 most of the candidates scored between 0-9.

Question 6

This question tested Module X (Objective 3f) and Module IX (Objectives 4a and 5a).

For Part (a) (i) candidates were to list four advantages that can be derived from purchasing a risograph for a school. This was worth 4 marks. Some responses evidence of candidates' lack of information on this piece of equipment.

For Part (a) (ii), candidates were to describe a situation in which it is more economical to use a photocopier. To the candidates who were able to respond to Part (a) (i) this segment of the question presented little difficulty. This was worth 2 marks.

For Part (b) (i), candidates were to use the form provided to complete a purchase order. This part of the question was well done. The majority of candidates obtained maximum marks. This was worth 7 marks.

For Part (b) (ii), candidates were asked to outline two stock control measures that the supervisor can enforce to ensure that the stocks he ordered for the new school year are not stolen. The performance on this part of the question was satisfactory. This was worth 2 marks.

This question was attempted by the majority of the candidates. Marks ranged from 0-14, and the mean was 7.62.

Question 7

The question tested Module VII (Objective 5) and Module VIII (Objective 3).

For Part (a), candidates were asked to list three internal factors and three external factors that contribute to high employee turnover in an organization. This was worth 6 marks. Some responses indicated candidates' inability to distinguish between internal and external factors.

For Part (b) (i), candidates were to complete the currency memorandum form provided. This was worth 5 marks. This segment of the question was well done. In some instances however, some candidates did not adhere to the instructions to use the highest denominations.

For Part (ii), candidates were required to prepare the cash summary for the bank. This was worth 4 marks. Many candidates failed to transfer the correct information from the currency memorandum to the cash summary. Some incurred errors in the totaling process.

This question was also a popular optional question. Marks ranged from 0-15 and the mean was 8.70.

Question 8

This question tested Module VIII (Objective 1f) and Module XI (Objectives 3a and c).

For Part (a), candidates were to identify three types of bank accounts, and for each type identified, they were to state one characteristic. It was worth 6 marks. Some candidates were unable to satisfy the requirements of the question.

For Part (b), candidates were to state the procedure to be followed in solving the problem of non delivery of goods. Candidates were also asked to make recommendations to resolve the problem. This was worth 9 marks. This segment was done fairly well. Marks ranged from 0-12 and the mean was 5.24.

Paper 03/2 General Proficiency

The Alternative to the School-Based Assessment

A short case was provided and candidates were required to read and respond to the 10 structured questions asked. This paper was worth 50 marks.

The Case

The case was entitled 'Keys to Employability Success'. It highlighted the life skills that young people should possess as they embark upon the job market. The central idea of the case was that in spite of the position sought and the academic and vocational abilities possessed, skills in critical thinking, human relations, planning and organizing, communication, decision-making, team-building and ethics are also essential requirements.

Question 1

Candidates were required to state three questions on career choices that they would ask the career guidance officer. This was worth 3 marks. The mean was 2.09. Some candidates wrote statements rather than questions, while others asked questions relating to their career choice rather than those of a general nature.

Question 2

Candidates were asked to develop a checklist of six 'things to do' to prepare for career week. This was worth 6 marks. The mean was 2.96. The candidates responded fairly well to this question. However, some candidates listed such items as pencils which are more suited for an interview. Some candidates ignored the stem which should have been used to guide them in preparing the checklist.

Question 3

Candidates were required to write a notice of a meeting to decide on the theme for the career address. This was worth 4 marks. The mean was 2.50. Candidates' responses to this question were satisfactory. Many candidates, however, failed to include a heading for the notice. While the venue, the time and date were in most cases included, the purpose of the meeting was often omitted.

Question 4

This question asked candidates to prepare a five item document for the meeting to decide on the theme. This was worth 5 marks. The mean was 2.56. This question was done fairly well. However, many candidates neglected to name the document.

Question 5

In this question, candidates were to prepare a press release to inform the school population and the community of career week. This was worth 7 marks. The mean was 3.26. Many candidates seemed unable to write a press release. Many gave unnecessary details and failed to include the pertinent points that would have informed the school and community of career week.

Question 6

Candidates were asked to write a letter to thank the guest speaker for his presentation. This was worth 7 marks. The mean was 4.50. Candidates' performance in this question was satisfactory. Candidates need to remember that they must follow the conventions of letter writing and include: date, salutation and appropriate complimentary close. be provided using an assumed name.

Question 7

Candidates were asked to draw a comparative graph to represent the data on expenditure for 2007 and 2008. This was worth 7 marks. The mean was 2.76. Many candidates failed to include a heading for the graph and the names of the axes.

Question 8

This question asked candidates to outline two benefits to an organization of working as a team. This was worth 2 marks. The mean was 1.58. Candidates' responses to this question indicated an understanding of teamwork and its benefits.

Question 9

Candidates were required to write two recommendations on improving career week. This question was worth 2 marks. The mean was 1.05. The question was fairly well done; but some candidates gave general recommendations for ensuring a successful career week ignoring the part of the question that indicated they should make recommendations to next year's business students.

Question 10

This question asked candidates to complete the résumé form provided. This was worth 7 marks. The mean was 5.87. The question was done well. Some candidates gave the name of the referees but did not provide contact details such as addresses telephone number.

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Candidates should acquire a personal copy of the syllabus and incorporate it in their examination preparation process. They must also use the schools' report which would highlight points that they should use in their preparations. Teachers must continue to encourage students to do more practice exercises.