

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

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

MAY/JUNE 2010

**ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT
GENERAL PROFICIENCY**

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GENERAL COMMENTS

Approximately 10,600 candidates wrote the examination in 2010, an increase of approximately 1,700 candidates over 2009.

The content of the written examinations was as follows:

Paper 01	-	Structured Questions
Paper 02	-	Production Test
Paper 03/2	-	Alternative to School-Based Assessment

Paper 03/1, School-Based Assessment was done by school candidates. Overall performance on the examination was excellent with 90 per cent of the candidates achieving Grades I–III.

Paper 01 – Structured Questions

Paper 01 consisted of ten compulsory questions that tested the knowledge and application of important concepts and theoretical principles involved in document production and management. The performance of candidates on this paper showed marginal improvement compared with 2009. The paper was marked out of 50 and the mean mark was 25.12. Fifty-four per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this paper.

Paper 02 – Production Test

Paper 02 consisted of four compulsory questions that tested candidates' ability to apply a variety of production principles to prepare business letters, creative displays and spreadsheets, format documents and interpret manuscript signs. The performance of candidates on this paper was good. The paper was marked out of 100 and the mean mark was 59.23. Seventy-five per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this paper.

Paper 03/2 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

Paper 03/2 consisted of two compulsory questions that tested candidates' ability to use a variety of production principles to prepare letters with mail merge, forms and PowerPoint presentations. The mean mark on this paper was 49.47. Fifty-one per cent of the candidates scored at least 50 per cent of the available marks for this paper.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Structured Questions

Candidates' performance on this paper indicated significant weaknesses in areas such as grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and expression.

Paper 01 is a theory paper covering all aspects of the syllabus. It is therefore mandatory that the theory in each module be taught in its entirety. It is important that emphasis be placed on grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and the importance of reading and following instructions carefully.

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of how to manipulate a computer system to create and edit spreadsheet documents. The question was attempted by 99 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on the question was good.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' ability to identify two types of application software that can be used to insert graphics into documents, to identify two letter styles and to state two differences between them. The question was attempted by 99 per cent of the candidates. Candidates had difficulty identifying two software applications that could be used to insert graphics. However, most candidates were able to identify the letter styles but could not differentiate between them.

Question 3

This question tested candidates' ability to identify and interpret manuscript signs. The question was attempted by 93 per cent of the candidates. This question was satisfactorily done by the majority of candidates.

Question 4

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of desirable work habits. The question was attempted by 94 per cent of the candidates. Overall performance on this question was unsatisfactory. Candidates seemed to have difficulty with the word 'desirable' and the majority of responses were inappropriate.

Question 5

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of types of professional documents and forms. The question was attempted by 94 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on this question was satisfactory. However, some candidates appeared to have challenges with the word "literary".

Question 6

This question tested candidates' ability to display a spreadsheet following a given set of instructions. The question was attempted by 99 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on this question was fair. Generally, candidates were able to differentiate between left and right alignment. However, consistent formats were not used in displaying the numbers, dates and decimals. Some candidates also had difficulty with the horizontal headings and gave vertical and oblique headings instead.

Question 7

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of punctuation marks, editing signs and manuscript signs. The question was attempted by 99 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on this question was satisfactory, with candidates performing better in Part (b), punctuation, and doing poorly on Part (a) which referred to the techniques used to edit paragraphs.

Question 8

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the different types of printers and their uses. The question was attempted by 99 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on this question was very good, with over 60 per cent of the candidates earning the maximum available score.

Question 9

This question was designed to test candidates' knowledge of file extensions. The question was attempted by 90 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on this question was satisfactory.

Question 10

This question tested candidates' knowledge of the types, sizes and layout of paper. The question was attempted by 95 per cent of the candidates. The overall performance on this question was satisfactory. The majority of the candidates were familiar with examples of paper type and size but appeared unfamiliar with the term 'layout'.

Paper 02 – Production Test

Overall, performance on this paper was good although accuracy continues to be a concern. Candidates completed the tasks in the time allocated but did not check the finished documents to ensure that they were free of typographical and formatting errors.

Question 1

This question was designed to test candidates' ability to produce a letter. The following features were required:

- (i) Creating a letterhead using a header
- (ii) Block style letter
- (iii) Inserting a spreadsheet
- (iv) Interpreting and applying manuscript signs
- (v) Integrating a logo

The question was attempted by all candidates. The mean mark was 16.1 out of a possible 27.

Overall, performance on this question was satisfactory. Candidates performed competently in areas such as using the typescript, inserting the table and creating the logo. The following created challenges for some candidates:

- (i) Block style format for dates
- (ii) Alignment of figures
- (iii) Spacing for lines and after punctuation marks
- (v) Interpretation of manuscript signs

Question 2

This question tested candidates' ability to create an invoice and to interpret and apply manuscript signs. The question was attempted by 97 per cent of the candidates. The mean mark was 11.80 out of a possible 21. The overall performance on this question was fair. Candidates performed satisfactorily on the tabulation and creating and formatting the required headings. However, some candidates had difficulty inserting the logo and aligning the figures correctly.

Question 3

This question tested candidates' ability to interpret and apply manuscript signs to produce a document. The question was attempted by 97 per cent of the candidates. The mean mark was 18.18 out of a possible 26. The overall performance of candidates on this question was good. Candidates were able to create the appropriate headings, apply the correct margins and insert the paragraphs as instructed. However, some candidates experienced challenges with the punctuation and applying the appropriate line spacing.

Question 4

This question tested candidates' ability to prepare a flow chart. The question was attempted by 89 per cent of the candidates. The mean mark was 16.66 out of a possible 26. It was extremely well done by the majority of the candidates. The major challenges encountered included inserting the arrows and connecting them to the boxes.

Paper 03/1 – School-Based Assessment

Overall, the work produced by students in the School-Based Assessment (SBA) was satisfactory. However, some SBA samples did not include all the required components. In addition, it was also evident that some of the work submitted was not students' original work, since similar copies were submitted by more than one student.

Recommendations

1. Moderation sheets must be completed in totality.
2. Teachers are reminded to refer to the specifications set out in the syllabus and to advise students accordingly.
3. Students and teachers are reminded that the registration number of students should be included on the moderation sheets as well as on the assignments.
4. Students should be given ample practice using the tools and features of the various software packages. Mastery of these tools is necessary for the production of accurate, professional documents.

Paper 03/2 – Alternative to the School-Based Assessment

This paper attempts to assess the same skills that would have been tested in the SBA and consisted of two questions.

Question 1

This question was intended to test candidates' ability to create and edit a database, perform simple spreadsheet tasks and interpret manuscript signs. The performance of candidates on this question was very good. However, many candidates did not follow the instructions given throughout the document.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' ability to create a letterhead and perform a mail merge. The performance of candidates on this question was satisfactory. The majority of candidates showed strength in completing the mail merge.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Teachers should place more emphasis on the importance of students reading and interpreting instructions before they begin an exercise.
2. The theoretical aspects of the syllabus must be given the same consideration as the practical during the instructional process.
3. Grammar and spelling should be reinforced and tested continuously by the teacher.
4. Teachers need to give students exposure to a variety of current software applications, as well as ensure that relevant software tools are available for use.
5. Teachers should provide samples of various office documents as a reference for students.
6. Emphasis should be placed on the need for consistency in a finished document.
7. Students should be exposed to up-to-date office equipment and resources through field trips, print media or multimedia presentations.