



CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

Certificate of Professional Competence

International Road Haulage (R2 - 05689)

December 2012

General comments

I am pleased to report that many well-prepared candidates appeared to take the time to carefully read and apply the information in the case study with their knowledge to give clear and correct answers and earn high marks.

The standard of presentation and use of language was an improvement on previous answer papers. Those who did not pass this examination should remember that examiners cannot award marks for answers that cannot be read or understood and are more likely to recognise a correct answer that is clearly explained in straightforward terms. Vague answers and answers not to the point of a question will not earn marks. However, the improvement in presentation was pleasing, as was the increase in the pass rate, the highest of the last three sessions at 42%.

There were two questions in this paper that specifically acknowledged the 'open book' arrangements for candidates and were intended to allow reference materials to be used to find correct answers and earn marks. My comments on questions 3 and 4 reflect an apparent misconception by some and I remind candidates that answers must relate to the information provided in the case study and respond to the question asked. Marks will rarely be earned by copying long sections from manuals and valuable time is likely to be spent listing points which will not gain marks.

Questions 2 (costing) and 3 (operator licensing) were on subjects known to be examined and candidates performed less well on these topics than hoped.

Marking was flexible on three questions that allowed unlimited answers from candidates. Future papers are more likely to identify a specific number of responses required in each question, thus limiting those that will be marked to that number. This should have the effect of reducing the "scattergun" approach adopted by many candidates and reward those candidates who relate their answers more closely to the case study and the requirements of the question and demonstrate the application of their knowledge.

Taking the above points into account, and the relative difficulty of the paper as a whole, the awarding committee set the pass mark at 30.

Q.1

This question required candidates to apply information from the case study, including the extract from OCR's company policy manual. It was crucial that candidates realised that the vehicle became available at 1000 hours on Tuesday, not before, and that the delivery at Nantes must begin before noon on Wednesday. Applying this information, OCR's policies and Regulation EC 561/2006, correct answers produced a schedule that arrived at Nantes at 1145 hours on Wednesday. The following points were key:

- The driver starts at 0945 with 15 minutes dealing with paperwork. This requirement was highlighted in bold on page 2 of the case study, was in the current Nantes schedule and earned one mark.
- The daily walkaround check was at 1000. Candidates who began the walkaround check at 0945 did not earn the mark for that line, but examiners continued marking the schedule. However, any walkaround check scheduled for any other time before the vehicle was available was not forgiven and marking stopped at that point.
- Candidates who started their schedules at 1745 could not meet the noon deadline and marking stopped.
- The majority of candidates correctly calculated the three hour drive to Dover and also scheduled 30 minutes driving time for embarkation.
- On the ferry, some candidates incorrectly identified the break period as "rest" and did not earn the available mark. Those who chose POA as the activity on board only earned the mark if they treated the first 45 minutes as a break, either by saying so or by driving a full 4.5 hours after the crossing, including disembarkation.
- Although most candidates correctly scheduled 30 minutes driving time for disembarkation, many scheduled a further driving period of 4.5 hours. This illegal schedule of 5 hours' continuous driving meant that marking stopped at this point.
- A small minority scheduled a reduced daily rest period at Calais or en route thereafter. Depending on the time chosen, this could allow the vehicle to arrive at Nantes at the correct time, but did not satisfy OCR's requirement for drivers to take rest and breaks as late as legally possible. The result of taking rest or breaks too early is to produce two incorrect lines (the break itself and the next line) and reduce the total available marks to ten.
- A reduced daily rest was required at 2230, after 10 hours' driving. Those who took this rest at 2130 could not reach Nantes by noon and did not earn the subsequent marks available. Those who scheduled driving beyond this time had produced an illegal schedule, with the same result.
- Most candidates remembered to schedule the walkaround check on Wednesday morning and correctly calculated the time to drive to Nantes.

Q.2

Candidates in previous examinations have often struggled with costing questions. For this paper, we tried to assist by splitting out the running costs rate calculation in part a) and providing a table for guidance in part b). A significant minority did not attempt part b), or only answered it in part, and we will consider the usefulness of this format when setting future costing questions. The awarding committee took this potential for additional challenge into account when deciding the overall pass mark.

Part a) was answered by most candidates although the requirement to give an answer in Pounds Sterling was frequently missed; on this occasion, examiners gave marks for correct answers expressed in pence but there is no guarantee that this

allowance will be made in future papers. Answers that did not meet the requirement to give costs per kilometre earned no marks.

A correct answer, on four lines was:

Tyres (6 tyres x £175 / 35,000 km) =	£0.03
Maintenance (copy from case study)	£0.05
Fuel (copy from case study)	<u>£0.34</u>
Total running costs per km	<u>£0.42</u>

Candidates who produced a full page of calculations still earned the two marks available, if their answers contained the above correct figures, but would have used unnecessary time.

Most candidates obtained some marks in b), but few scored the full eight; the most common reasons for this were:

- using the wrong distance, with some doubling or halving the distances
- multiplying driver and other standing costs by three days on the St Malo route, where only two driver and vehicle days were allocated (page 4 in the case study)
- incorrectly calculating the driver's overnight allowance, where a mark was available for correctly calculating a daily rate on the St Malo route of £33.20 and a further mark for identifying £66.40 and £20.00 as the two totals.
- not providing totals, for which there was a mark available for each route.

Part c) was very well answered with sensible advantages of the St Malo route clearly identified. Only a very few candidates gave financial advantages, which did not earn marks, and even fewer gave advantages of the Calais route. In this case, most candidates were rewarded for taking the time to read the case study and question carefully and to answer appropriately.

Q.3

Most candidates did not score well on question 3, although most earned at least some marks. Almost all identified that OCR currently hold a Restricted Operator Licence and need to apply for a Standard Licence for international operations. However, the following issues were common:

- The case study identifies the Managing Director's requirement for the return load operation to start in less than eight weeks. There were therefore no marks for stating that the application must be submitted at least nine weeks before.
- Lengthy paragraphs describing unnecessary newspaper advertisements, maintenance arrangements, legal undertakings and details of the operating centre earned no marks and would have taken candidates considerable time that they may have needed elsewhere.
- Answers that referred to CMR, TIR and other unrelated topics, often at length, also earned no marks.
- Simple lists, often apparently copied from manuals and often omitting verbs, earned no marks. This is because the question required candidates to **describe** the **steps** that **OCR** must take; answers which were just lists of items of evidence did not fulfil either the requirement to **describe** or to give **steps**; similarly, lists of generic operator licensing rules did not meet the requirement to answer in relation to **OCR**.

Examiners often picked out correct answers from significant pieces of writing where most of the content did not answer the question. If, as elsewhere, we had asked candidates to give **twelve** steps required of OCR, then examiners would only have marked the first twelve answers and the marks achieved would have been significantly reduced; candidates should therefore be advised to focus their time on answers which specifically tackle the question as asked. There were 17 correct items available for marks, centred on the information required on the GV80A form, the document to be submitted to request an interim direction and the information that OCR should submit to satisfy the professional competence and financial standing criteria.

Q.4

This question was well answered by most candidates with almost all correctly stating that the journey home should begin immediately. It was surprising that a small number of candidates suggested that John Smith should deliver to Nantes before returning to the UK!

Most of the information to earn marks in b) was available in reference books and candidates did a much better job of relating their answers to the information provided than was the case in question 3. However, many answers contained actions that were not applicable to John Smith in particular, and time was unnecessarily spent by candidates listing general points about digital tachographs.

Some answers related to tachograph charts; however, the case study noted that the oldest vehicle in the fleet was purchased new in 2009.

Again, we did not limit answers to a specific number, allowing candidates to earn marks even when they included other, incorrect answers.

Q.5

The organisation chart question was generally well answered, with most candidates producing a credible and well-set out chart and earning marks.

The most common error was to produce a whole-company chart, when the question specified that it should only include the transport manager and the staff reporting to that post; there was one mark available for having the correct eight staff included and no others. The point of this question was partly to test candidates' knowledge of the areas for which a transport manager should be responsible, with various real-world reporting structures rewarded with marks.

Some candidates omitted the workshop staff from their answer. Regulation EC 1071/2009 identifies vehicle maintenance arrangements as a key part of a transport manager's role and OCR had no credible alternative manager for that department named in the list of staff.

Q.6

Question 6 was likely to be the last one attempted by most candidates, partly because of its positioning and partly because many centres advise answering drivers' hours and costing questions first. Understanding this, and appreciating that candidates may be tiring, this question tested practical knowledge of drivers'

responsibilities with regard to checking vehicle lights as part of their walkaround check.

Correct answers included, but were not limited to, **checks** that lights were present, illuminated, clean, of the correct colour and undamaged. Further marks were available for identifying the need for a spare bulb kit to be carried and for defects to be reported in writing.

Candidates who simply repeated the list of lights from the question and stated that drivers must check that they worked earned only one mark. Those who recited general lighting requirements for vehicles earned few marks, if any. Some candidates described how drivers might check their lights but failed to state what the drivers should be looking for. For example, no marks were gained for stating that a driver should get help to check brake lights when the answer did not make clear that the driver should check that the light was intact, red, facing squarely to the rear or working.

As with questions 3 and 4, we chose not to limit marking to the first seven responses and, again, lower scores would have been achieved had we done so.

Our intention was to set a clear paper that allowed candidates to demonstrate application of relevant knowledge. We were pleased that the overall standard of presentation was better than in past papers and that a greater proportion of candidates were able to address the questions as asked.