

Business and Communication Systems

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J230**

OCR Report to Centres

January 2012

J230/R/12J

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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Overview

Only unit A267 is available for assessment in the January examination series.

This was the fifth series in which A267 has been sat by candidates and the results achieved were generally very pleasing with some good quality ICT-based work produced by the candidates.

Most candidates were able to attempt all of the tasks in the time allowed, and they complied with the requirement to add their name and candidate number to all documents before printing. It is important that candidates provide evidence of formula printouts, when required, as it is not possible to award marks for elements which are not visible in the documents available to the examiner.

As referred to in the June 2011 Report, candidates will now be provided (where appropriate) with a pre-formatted document in the data-files in order to enable them to provide a more structured response to Task 2(b). In this series, the pre-formatted Word document was used by nearly all candidates and enabled examiners to separately assess responses to both 2(b)(i) and 2(b)(ii). However, it should be noted that where the pre-formatted document was not used, it was not possible to distinguish between the responses to parts (i) and (ii); for this minority of candidates their response could only be assessed against 2(b)(i).

A267 ICT skills for business communication systems

Most candidates performed well on Task 1 and many candidates were able to print all the required evidence for the Task. Most candidates printed their formulae and most formulae were fully displayed, allowing examiners to award marks. Most candidates were able to gain some marks for each part of this Task. Many candidates did not gain up to three marks for formatting their spreadsheet and many candidates did not improve its appearance. Many candidates were able to produce a mail merge document with all of the required information.

The ability to create a Notice of Meeting and Agenda document varied from centre to centre with many candidates lacking the skills or knowledge required to create this type of document. Candidates who lacked knowledge in this area were still able to gain some marks and, in the main, still attempted the document to some degree.

Many candidates had an understanding of the features of web design software. Candidates, however, were not always able to describe these features. Many candidates were able to state why web creation software would be useful for Italia Ltd but many were unable to evaluate the usefulness of web creation software for a business such as Italia Ltd.

The ability of candidates to complete all questions in the given time has improved, with more candidates attempting all Tasks.

Comments on individual questions

Task 1

- (a)(i) Nearly all candidates deleted the details correctly.
- (a)(ii) Nearly all candidates entered the data correctly. Some candidates used incorrect capitalisation and were not able to access all of the available marks.
- (b)(i) Many candidates gained a mark for entering the label 'Wage'. Some candidates did not gain this mark through the use of an incorrect capitalisation, ie 'wage'.
- (b)(ii) Many candidates were able to create the correct formula to calculate L Rosato's wage. Some candidates incorrectly added the cells, rather than multiplying them. Some candidates did not print in formula view and could not be awarded this mark.
- (b)(iii) Many candidates were able to replicate a formula. Candidates were not penalised for an incorrect formula in (b)(ii). Some candidates did not print in formula view and were unable to gain the mark for this question.
- (b)(iv) Many candidates gained a mark for entering the label 'Total Wages'. Some candidates did not gain this mark through the using incorrect capitalisation.
- (b)(v) Many candidates were able to create a correct formula to calculate 'Total Wages' for staff. Some candidates did not print in formula view and were unable to gain marks here. Some candidates did not show the full contents of the cell and were, thus, not awarded marks. Centres should ensure that candidates practice printing evidence for spreadsheets in preparation for this paper.
- (c)(i) Many candidates were able to format relevant cells to currency (two decimal places). Some candidates formatted too many cells. Some candidates did not print their 'normal' view and were unable to gain this mark.
- (c)(ii) Many candidates were able to gain one or two formatting marks. Many candidates were not able to gain the third formatting mark. Many candidates formatted their font twice, for example bold and underline, but were only awarded one mark for 'formatting fonts'. Centres should teach candidates to use obvious and appropriate formatting techniques.

- (c)(iii) Many candidates were able to produce a landscape print out of the spreadsheet's formulae. Some candidates did not produce this evidence and lost several marks.
- (c)(iv) Many candidates were able to sort their spreadsheet in ascending order. Some candidates did not protect the integrity of the table and were not awarded this mark.
- (c)(v) Many candidates were able to print the spreadsheet in the normal view. A few candidates did not produce this evidence and were not able to access several marks.
- (d) Many candidates were able to create the correct chart, including the correct data. Many candidates were able to use a suitable title but some did not include a title. Not all candidates followed the specific printing instructions of printing on a separate sheet.
- (e) Many candidates were able to merge the correct fields into the correct places in the document. Some candidates did not produce the merged document. Some candidates did not produce the unmerged document, losing several marks.

Task 2

- (a) The ability of candidates to produce a Notice of Meeting and Agenda document correctly varied from centre to centre. Many candidates were unable to produce a high standard document. Candidates were still able to gain some marks even for using an incorrect layout. Some candidates produced incorrect documents and it is clear that some centres need to review this aspect of the specification.
- (b)(i) Many candidates were able to state one or two features of web creation software. Some candidates were able to state a third feature. Typical features stated included templates, master pages and hyperlinks. Some candidates were then able to extend their answer to explain how these features were useful when creating a website. Few candidates were able to do this for all features stated. Some candidates incorrectly described the benefits of websites to business.
- (b)(ii) Some candidates were able to describe the usefulness of web creation software for a business. Some candidates were able to pick up on the fact that the business could have a website created to its own specification, that it would be possible to update it more easily, that the software and training may be expensive. Some candidates were able to gain a few marks on this part of the question. Nearly all candidates were unable to make evaluative comments about the impact which this could have on the business. Candidates often talked about the advantages of having a website in general and were, therefore, unable to gain marks.

Some candidates did not leave enough time to answer this part of the question fully. Centres need to develop candidates' ability to look at a piece of software and evaluate how its use can impact on a business as a whole.

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