

# **Business and Communication Systems**

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J230**

## **Examiners' Reports**

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**January 2011**

**J230/R/11J**

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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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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Annesley  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622  
Facsimile: 01223 552610  
E-mail: [publications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:publications@ocr.org.uk)

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#### EXAMINERS' REPORTS

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## **Chief Examiner's Report**

This was the third series that A267 has been sat by candidates and the results achieved were generally pleasing with some good quality ICT-based work produced by candidates. However, it was clear that some candidates struggled to complete all the tasks in the required time. Centres are reminded that speed and accuracy are part of what is being assessed and they should encourage candidates to focus on completing tasks speedily and accurately and not, for example, taking over-long considering layout and the positioning of objects. The administrative and technical requirements of this computer-based assessment presented no difficulties in most Centres. Most candidates provided their name on printouts, but a small minority of tasks could not be marked by assessors because it was not evident, at the time the document was sent to print, that the candidate's name was included on the document. Many candidates struggled to achieve high marks for the analysis/evaluation task but this is to be expected given that this task is designed, in part, to enable the more-able candidates to demonstrate their detailed understanding of the use of ICT in a business environment.

As ever OCR offers a wide range of support for centres including national and in-house training courses. Centres are advised to regularly check the OCR website for updates and further details of the support available.

## A267 ICT skills for business communication systems

The paper in general was deemed a success. In terms of the questions and level of difficulty it was seen as suitable; however, for a number of candidates there appeared to be insufficient time to complete all tasks or to complete all tasks to a high enough standard. This clearly differentiated the cohort as the higher ability candidates were able to quickly work through the paper attempting all questions and gaining high marks. There was a wide range of questions which were suitable for all candidates and they were able to fully stretch the more able. However, very few candidates were able to access the Level 3 marks on the written question; although many started well, the ability to evaluate the advantages against the disadvantages to the business was rarely seen. As for printing, the vast majority of candidates followed the very specific instructions to ensure that their name was part of the printed document. There were very few candidates who could not be awarded any marks. There were a few instances when the examining team could not successfully verify that it was the candidate's own work. Candidates generally showed a good ability in Task 1; however, the standard of professional business letter writing varied quite dramatically.

Many candidates showed very good skills in their use of databases. Most candidates were able to enter and edit data and in the vast majority of cases create queries and reports. Marks were often lost for not displaying all of the data.

There was a general good understanding of the use of email in business and the features of email were generally well understood. Many candidates struggled to fully evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of email to the business. The form was done well, and, if attempted, candidates generally produced a high quality document.

The Notice of Meeting and Agenda was not generally as well done as was anticipated. Many candidates were not able to produce a correct document.

### Task 1

**(a) (i)** Candidates were awarded a mark for adding two records to a database. This question was deemed accessible to the vast majority of candidates. However, some candidates lost marks as they failed to show the full contents of all cells: therefore, it was not always obvious if all details had been correctly transcribed.

**(a) (ii)** Candidates were awarded a mark for correctly deleting data. This part of the question was done well and the vast majority of candidates were able to delete data correctly.

**(a) (iii)** Candidates were awarded marks for editing incorrectly spelt details. This part of the question was mostly done well.

**(b) (i)** Candidates were awarded up to four marks for creating a query with specific information. Candidates were also asked to sort and name the query. Many candidates were able to create a query displaying the specified information. Some candidates, however, failed to name the query correctly and some used the incorrect criteria, thus displaying incorrect details.

**(b) (ii)** Candidates were awarded up to two marks for creating and suitably naming a report of the query they had created in the previous part of the question. Many candidates attempted this successfully.

**(c)** Candidates were asked to create a letter using the block style and open punctuation from a previously created query and letterhead. The quality of this document was variable. Many Centres had obviously done a lot of work on this aspect whilst other candidates struggled with creating a letter from a query and the general style of the letter. The majority of candidates used the letterhead provided, though there were many candidates who did not create the letter from the query provided.

## **Task 2**

**(a) (i)** Candidates were awarded up to six marks for describing how they would send the same overdue reminder to multiple members. Marks were awarded for stating a step which could be taken or a feature. Further marks were awarded for describing the step or feature in further detail or describing how it would impact on James or the business. Some candidates failed to attempt this part of the question. Candidates who attempted this part of the question demonstrated a good understanding of email and its features. The quality of answers, however, varied dramatically. Many candidates were able to describe the steps clearly and could state features of the software. Candidates who did this often went on to describe the step or feature in further detail.

**(a) (ii)** Candidates were asked to evaluate whether or not the advantages of using email were greater than the disadvantages to the business. Candidates were awarded up to four marks for stating the advantages and/or disadvantages of email. They were awarded between five and eight marks for analysing how those advantages and/or disadvantages impacted on the business. Candidates were awarded between nine and 12 marks for making an evaluative conclusion or recommendation. Again, some candidates failed to attempt this part of the question. Some candidates were able to easily state the advantages and/or disadvantages of email, whilst some candidates attempted to analyse how these advantages and/or disadvantages impacted on the business; however very few candidates showed an ability to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of email to the business and to offer an evaluative conclusion or to make a recommendation.

**(b) (i)** Candidates had to design a one page form using suitable software to collect members' email addresses. Some candidates again failed to attempt this part of the question. Most candidates who produced a document did it well and were able to gain quite a few marks. Many candidates were able to set up a professional looking form which was suitable for the collection of the specified data.

**(b) (ii)** Candidates could gain up to two marks for formatting. When attempted, this was generally well done and in a professional manner.

**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
**1 Hills Road**  
**Cambridge**  
**CB1 2EU**

**OCR Customer Contact Centre**

**14 – 19 Qualifications (General)**

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)**

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**Head office**  
**Telephone: 01223 552552**  
**Facsimile: 01223 552553**

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