

## CPC CHIEF EXAMINERS REPORT

<b>Subject:</b>	Certificate of Professional Competence – Road Haulage Unit R2
<b>Stage/Scheme:</b>	05689
<b>Series and/or year of examination:</b>	September 2012

Whilst competent candidates seemed to find this paper reasonably straightforward, many candidates lost significant marks, and this is reflected in the percentage achieving a pass. The paper was felt to be just slightly harder than originally expected; the pass mark was adjusted to 29 to reflect this, and guidance is given below to help centres and candidates in future examinations.

Candidates most commonly lost marks in two ways: by not answering the question exactly as asked, or by simply setting down a long series of facts, often directly from their notes. Centres have reported that the demand on candidates in the two hour allowance (set by the legislation) is significant. We acknowledge that this is the case and this is reflected in the setting of the pass mark. However, candidates should remember that time spent carefully reading questions is time well spent; we also hope that candidates will manage their time efficiently by using their notes only for quick reference purposes. The new-specification questions seek to test candidates' ability to apply their knowledge and candidates who spend time reciting straightforward facts often lose vital marks.

OCR will be running an event for centres in December, in which we intend to give guidance on the types of questions we ask and the best way for candidates to tackle them. Invitations to this event are going out as we speak, and whilst places are limited, we will subsequently publish a video summary and written guidance reflecting matters arising and addressed at the event.

### Question 1.

Candidates who lost marks for writing an illegal schedule may find the following information useful:

- A working time break was required after unloading at Swansea as the driver had started at 05:30. Many candidates had the driver drive all the way to Fishguard, a total of 5 hours and 15 minutes driving, without taking any breaks at all, or for less than 45 minutes.
- Many candidates took two breaks (of 30 minutes followed by 15) but because they were the wrong way around the schedule became illegal.
- A number of candidates took a 45 minute break after unloading at Swansea. This resulted in the candidate losing three marks (assuming that the rest of the schedule was accurate) for (1) failing to realise that only a working-time break was required at that point, for (2) failing to split the drivers' hours break required (15/30 minutes) and for (3) failing to split the driving period from Swansea to Fishguard (90/45 minutes).

- A number of candidates translated 135 minutes into 1 hour and 35 minutes instead of the correct figure of 2 hours and 15 minutes. The scenario deliberately did not give all the times in a common format as that is not what will come across the desk of a transport manager in the real world.
- The schedule could only be carried out legally if the driver took a split daily rest. The final period of 9 hours from 20:30 – 05:30 could not be used as a reduced daily rest as only three such reductions are allowed per week and the scenario stated that a reduced daily rest was already scheduled for Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. However, candidates were not penalised for failing to use the word “split”; they obtained full marks as long as they identified the periods from 15:00 – 18:30 (at least 3 hours) and 20:30 – 05:30 as “rest”.
- Candidates should remember not to use “break” and “rest” as though they were the same thing; candidates who identify a break period as a rest and vice versa lost marks.

### **Question 2.**

Part (a) was well answered by most candidates. Candidates who lost marks should remember to deduct the cost of the original tyres and the residual value from the purchase price before depreciating the vehicle. Most candidates obtained some marks in (b), but few scored the full nine; the most common reasons for this were:

- using the wrong distance
- dividing by 365 days instead of the 260/245 given in the scenario
- giving totals for periods other than a week as requested.

Candidates also used valuable time calculating the depreciation of the trailer when this had been given in the stem.

Candidates are under pressure in an examination environment, but should remember time is usefully spent carefully reading the question to find out exactly what is required, both in terms of extracting information from the case study and answering the question.

### **Question 3.**

Many candidates did not score well on question 3. Answers given by many candidates seemed to suggest that they had taken items to be included in a maintenance system directly from their notes. On this occasion, some general answers were accepted, in addition to those specifically relating to the minimisation and monitoring of the current issues, as requested by the question. However, candidates should remember that this allowance will not always be appropriate to a question, and they may lose marks if they don't specifically relate their answers to the case study when they are directed to do so.

The most common first answer was “introduce daily walkround checks”; however, the scenario stated that company policy already required drivers to spend 15 minutes doing just this at the beginning of every day. A few examples of common correct answers given are: for (a), making sure that the schedulers were including sufficient time for the checks to be done; training the drivers to carry out basic repairs such as changing bulbs and fuses and instructing drivers to be that any faults found should be referred to a fitter before leaving the yard if at base or to telephone for instructions if on the road; for (b), monitoring the trend in, say, faults found at PMI or number of PG forms issued to vehicles by VOSA, and seeing if they reduce or monitoring of all forms used in the maintenance process to ensure that defects are being rectified/that they are being signed by the right people so that a chain of responsibility can be followed if issues arise.

#### **Question 4.**

In part (a), the correct answer was neither licence would cover future operations because OCR's licence was in a different traffic area and that the sole trader's licence "retires" with him (non-transferable). About half of candidates said that the existing licences would cover the future operation and that all that was required was a "major change" to one or the other.

In part (b), many candidates scored a reasonable number of marks, but did so by virtue of examiners picking out correct answers from a great deal of facts; many candidates simply wrote all that they knew about the criteria for Operator Licensing without addressing the question. In retrospect, the phrasing of the question allowed candidates to gain marks from this technique; a better future question (one that would have rewarded only those who clearly demonstrated competence) would have limited the number of answers candidates could give (for example, 'for each of the following criteria, give TWO explanations...).

With this in mind, candidates should be aware that, in questions where a specific number is given, only that number of answers are marked. Therefore, giving long lists can sometimes mean that candidates prevent themselves from being awarded marks for later, correct answers. Especially now candidates have access to materials, they should be reminded to specifically relate their answers to the question as asked in order to achieve maximum marks.

Examinations put candidates under pressure, and this allowed for during marking and considered when setting pass marks. However, candidates must remember that carefully reading the question to find out what is being asked, and locating the right information in the case study, are useful uses of their time which prevent them losing marks answering a question that has not been asked.

The question asked **what** OCR will need to demonstrate to the TC, and the highest scoring candidates concentrated on answering that question, saying, for example (financial standing) **that** OCR needed to demonstrate it has enough readily available financial reserves to keep the vehicles in a fit and serviceable condition.

#### **Question 5.**

Many candidates lost marks in part (a) because they gave answers which did not answer the question, which asked for actions, by loaders, before loading began. Many gave actions loaders hadn't taken, actions by drivers or answers which dealt with the loading itself. A few examples of answers given by candidates who gained good marks were that operatives should prepare a loading plan, refer to the safe loading guide, and ensure that the loading platform is clean and undamaged.

Part (b) asked for additional actions by the driver and this part was well answered; right answers given by candidates included that (as it is the driver who is ultimately responsible) (s)he should check, after travelling a short distance, that the load has not moved/restraints have not become loose, or that after any partial unloading (s)he should check that the remaining load is properly re-secured as the unloading process may have included the loosening or removal of restraints necessary for the remaining load.

### **Question 6.**

Many candidates scored well on question six, giving relevant costs. However, the question required an explanation of how such costs could arise and so many lost marks by giving only a simple identification without any explanation. By way of examples, many candidates simply wrote the single word "tolls". To obtain the mark the candidate needed to explain how this could mean higher costs; this could be achieved by saying, for example, that as many of the main routes on the continent are subject to tolls, costs will be significantly higher than in the UK only the M6 relief road attracts a toll. Also, a lot of candidates simply wrote "higher specification vehicles". A number of marks were potentially available for the explanation of this issue. Reference could have been made to the fact that as drivers spend a considerable amount of time in their cabs when on long international journeys that they can justifiably expect them to be better equipped. Or reference could have been made to the fact that many European cities only allow vehicles with Euro 5/6 specification vehicles to deliver.

Other acceptable items included the need to recruit multi-lingual (and therefore better-paid) office staff/drivers or higher breakdown/recovery costs due to distances involved etc.

Candidates achieving pass mark: 32%