

GCSE

Business and Communication Systems

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J230**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

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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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A265 Businesses and their communication systems

General Comments:

This was the penultimate session for this examination with the final examination taking place in June 2018.

It was pleasing to see that nearly all candidates attempted all questions. Failing to answer a question is poor examination technique as sometimes marks for relevant knowledge can be awarded for even a basic attempt at an answer.

The main issues this year echo those of previous years and include:

1. candidates providing advantages when disadvantages are asked for
2. responses that address the impact on stakeholders other than the one asked for in the question (e.g. parents not the school)
3. single word responses to questions worth two or more marks.
4. providing a list of unconnected points in response to the six mark questions; analysis is required to achieve more than two marks.

It was however pleasing to see many responses which did apply issues to the context of the questions.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1(a)

Nearly all responses correctly identified the five errors in the document.

Question 1(b)

Most responses identified a problem for the Academy but the development mark was often not awarded, particularly because responses consider the impact on pupils or parents and not the Academy.

Question 1(c)(i) and Question 1(c)(ii)

Most answered at least one relevant benefit and drawback of storing letters in a filing cabinet. Weaker responses instead discussed general issues related to the letters being printed on paper.

Question 1(d)

Most responses could describe how a scanner could be used. Responses describing how a photocopier could be used to obtain a second paper copy gained no marks.

Question 2(a)(i)

Most responses offered at least one relevant feature of a charity that does not also apply to a for-profit organisation. Good responses clearly understood the features specific to a charitable trust.

Question 2(a)(ii)

Most responses correctly answered this question.

Question 2(b)(i)

Most responses offered one or two valid features of copyright. These included the legal right of ownership it gives to the owner of an original piece of work as well as rights over how the work is used and by whom. Weaker responses incorrectly stated that copyright describes the act of failing to comply with copyright restrictions.

Question 2(b)(ii)

This question was answered well by most candidates.

Question 2(c)

Most responses offered a relevant legal protection though few could then offer an accurate explanation.

Question 2(d)

Most candidates gained marks for referring to the unauthorised access to a computer system with the intention of causing harm. However a large minority of responses confused the specific restrictions of the Computer Misuse Act with the more general restrictions placed on a user by an organisation's Acceptable Use policy.

Question 3(a)(i) and Question 3(a)(ii)

Nearly all candidates achieved full marks for these questions.

Question 3(a)(iii)

Most responses achieved full marks. Candidates failed to do so either when they provided items that are not contact information or when they repeated items (e.g. "phone number" followed by "mobile number").

Question 3(b)

Most responses included reference to a microphone and described how it would be used. Weaker responses failed to identify an input device.

Question 3(c)

Nearly all responses were correct. Incorrect responses failed to name an output device but instead offered a different type of hardware.

Question 3(d)

Nearly all candidates achieved at least a mark but relatively few offered valid analysis (to achieve 3 marks) and very few offered any analysis in context (to achieve 4 or more marks).

Question 4(a)(i)

The majority of responses offered three valid features. Weaker responses offered benefits or advice but no relevant features.

Question 4(a)(ii)

Most candidates recognised that the main purpose of a user-name is not to provide security (which is done by the password) but to provide the means by which a specific account can be identified. Good responses explained how a username enables a password to be assigned/recognised, files to be saved, use to be monitored or access rights to be assigned.

Question 4(b)

Most responses offered at least one valid way which was then developed. Weaker responses either referred in general terms to data not being used without permission or described the rights of data subjects.

Question 4(c)

Most responses correctly identified two types of security software. Most could offer some analysis of how they help to protect a computer network but very few could offer this in the specific context asked for in the question. These responses achieved 3/6 marks. Weaker responses either failed to identify any types of data security software or stated that they would deter hackers without specifying how.

Question 5(a)(i)

A surprisingly large proportion of responses scored zero for this question. Typically because the response referred to the small size of the DVD without specifying whether this referred to their physical size (a potential drawback as the DVDs could be lost or stolen) or their storage capacity (in the context of the question this would be a drawback).

Question 5(a)(ii)

This question was answered well by most candidates, especially those who recognised that the storage capacity of a DVD is considerably less than the amount requiring back-up.

Question 5(a)(iii)

Nearly all responses recognised the value in backing-up data though only a minority adequately discussed the value of carrying out data-back-up on a day when very little new data is being generated. A worryingly large number of responses thought that only backing-up once every seven days is a good idea.

Question 5(a)(iv)

Only a minority of responses dealt adequately with the fact that the back-up takes place only once-a-week on a day when the Academy is otherwise closed.

Question 5(b)

Most responses offered relevant points and so gained Level 1 marks. However, most responses then failed to offer valid analysis of either option. Many candidates appeared to base their responses on their own understanding and use of cloud data synchronisation services. These services are often free for personal users who store data within relatively small data limits. Such services are not the ones that a business organisation (even a charitable trust) would use to obtain data back-up services (especially as 20gb of data is being backed-up each week, exceeding the storage limits typically offered by 'free' services).

Question 6(a), Question 6(b)(i) and Question 6(b)(ii)

Nearly all responses achieved the full marks available.

Question 6(c)

A large number of responses failed to score any marks because they confused a web-browser with a search engine.

Question 6(d)

Most candidates had some idea of the purpose of a URL though relatively few offered an explanation.

Question 6(e)

Most candidates knew that https denotes the site is secure but relatively few could explain what benefit this gave the Academy. Weaker responses incorrectly stated that it indicated something about the supplier's business rather than its website.

Question 6(f)

Most responses offered valid benefits or drawbacks of ordering products online but few discussed the specific scenario in the question. Relatively few responses offered valid analysis and even fewer did so successfully in the context of the Academy.

A266 Developing business and communication systems

General Comments:

This is the eighth assessment for this unit and the marks awarded are about what would be expected. The controlled assessment is aimed at candidates at all levels and the breadth of marks awarded suggests that it was accessible to all candidates.

The number of candidates who chose each of the set tasks was again balanced this year and in addition it was seen that centres had again allowed candidates to choose which tasks they completed and Centres were seen to be split between both of the Tasks.

As has been mentioned in the previous reports since this is a controlled assessment, Centres should bear in mind that only the work that was completed within the time limit should be submitted, additional work that was completed as part of the investigation for example the completed questionnaires, is not required but needs to be used when writing the report itself. In addition Centres need to remember that there is a recommended limit on the number of words within the report, 2000 words, please refer to pages 28 and 29 of the specification. Centres should also note that any work attached as appendices by the candidates should actually be within the body of the report in the required section, or as a summary if necessary and not attached as an appendix, many of which were not even referenced by the candidate in the main body of their report.

For scenario 1, many candidates used local heritage sites as their resource, many choosing museums, National Trust sites and houses. Candidates still found some difficulty in analysing in detail and justifying their recommendations but there has been a continual improvement in this from year on year. This has meant that more candidates obtained marks at the top of Band 2 with a larger proportion gaining the higher marks in Band 3. The letter (document) was generally well laid out but candidates still on occasions spent time listing the changes instead of actually trying to sell them to the stakeholders and thus limited the marks available. In addition many candidates produced a mail merge letter that was then not actually addressed to a potential visitor to the heritage site.

For scenario 2, many candidates were able to use local restaurants and/or fast food outlets for their resource but there was still a number who chose to use the larger chains, for example McDonalds, for their resource. As for task 1, candidates still found some difficulty in analysing in detail and justifying their recommendations but again there was an improvement over the previous sessions. This has meant that more candidates obtained marks at the top of Band 2 with a larger proportion gaining the higher marks in Band 3. The leaflets tended to be bright, colourful and well laid out but again did not always sell the recommendations to the stakeholders. There is also still a tendency, though smaller this year, for candidates to create posters for this task instead of leaflets which will then limit the marks that are available to them.

Centres completed all of the paperwork accurately and the required samples were generally dispatched quickly. This session showed a vast reduction in the number of centres that had arithmetic and clerical errors on the controlled assessment cover sheets (CCS309); it is good to see that comments on last year's report have been noted. It is always useful to see where Centres have awarded marks on each of the individual piece of work and many Centres have adopted the helpful approach of annotating the work or including a document that shows where the marks have been awarded.

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For both scenarios, the application of the assessment criteria by individual Centres was generally good. Some Centres however did err on the lenient side and award marks into Band 3 when actually the mark should have been Band 2. Centres should bear in mind that to obtain the highest marks the candidate must analyse, assess in detail and justify comprehensively.

Comments on Individual Questions:

No individual questions.

A267 ICT skills for business communication systems

General Comments:

Many candidates performed well on the vast majority of this paper. There were very few issues of candidates running out of time, and on the whole, candidates completed all tasks. The quality of essays for Task B, particularly **2(b)(ii)** was slightly lower for many candidates, and this question was a clear differentiator for the higher achieving candidates.

On the whole candidates seemed well prepared for most of the paper. Candidates were able to produce the required evidence, especially for the spreadsheet task.

The production of a letter was generally of a high standard with most candidates gaining good marks.

The understanding of web design software varied greatly from centre to centre. Some candidates were able to gain some marks by successfully stating and often describing features of the software. When it came to assessing the benefits and drawbacks of the software, candidates in general were able to do this, but not always develop points well and moved onto new points too swiftly.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No.

Task 1

- (a), (b) and (c) (i) – (iv)** Most candidates gained full marks for all parts of these questions.
- (d) (i)** Many candidates were able to create the formula. Some candidates did not print in formula view and thus were not awarded the mark.
- (d) (ii)** Most candidates gained full marks.
- (d) (iii)** Few candidates were awarded full marks for creating a correct formula. Few gained 1 or 2 marks for getting part of the formula correct.
- (e) (i)** Most candidates gained 2 or 3 marks for formatting.
- (e) (ii)** Many candidates were able to print in the landscape on one sheet in the formula view.
- (e) (iii)** Many candidates were able to print in normal view a landscape copy of the spreadsheet.
- (f)** Most candidates were able to create a chart using the correct data that was suitably labelled, however, many created the wrong chart type.

Task 2

- (a)** Most candidates successfully produced a letter using the correct information. Many created the letter in the blocked style using open punctuation, although a number omitted the date. A small number of candidates incorrectly used the salutation 'Dear Customer', rather than 'Dear Sir/Madam'. Most signed the letter off correctly with the correct complimentary close and from Nino Angeli. Few gained 2 marks for using an appropriate tone and style, a starting and closing sentence would have been appropriate.
- (b) (i)** Many candidates were able to state and explain features of web creation software, although there were some who gave the advantages of the software rather than the features.
- (b) (ii)** Most candidates were able to gain marks here by stating the advantages and disadvantages of web creation software. Few candidates were able to analyse or evaluate the software in terms of the usefulness for the business and used statements such as 'it will make it look professional' too often without developing the impact of this on the business.

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