

Business and Communication Systems

General Certificate of Secondary Education J230

OCR Report to Centres

January 2013

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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

Due to changes to terminal assessment rules this session was the final occasion on which this unit will be assessed in January. From summer 2013 onwards this unit will only be available once each year.

It was pleasing to see that most of the candidates were able to complete all of the tasks with many giving detailed responses to Task 2(b). The Principal Examiner's report provides useful information concerning those tasks which were completed less well and centres should note these comments, particularly where they relate to the requirements for the document production tasks.

Support materials for each unit, including exemplar assessment material, are available on the OCR Professional Development website (www.ocronlinetraining.org.uk) and centres are encouraged to make good use of these materials when preparing their candidates for future examination series.

A267 ICT skills for business communication systems

General comment

Many candidates performed well on this question paper. There seemed to be fewer issues with candidates running out of time in this series compared to previous series. Candidates, on the whole, did seem well prepared for the paper. There were, however, differences in the candidates' ability to complete certain tasks such as memos and letters.

The majority of the candidates performed well on Task 1. Many candidates were able to print all the required evidence for the task. Most candidates displayed all the necessary information in their print outs thereby allowing the examiners to award marks.

The ability to write a letter in a business style varied among the candidates. Most candidates knew the basic structure, but some of them were still not always able to recall details such as the correct date or to correctly use open punctuation. The ability to set up a mail merge again varied and the required evidence was not always printed. It was pleasing to see that most candidates did not use the address block but entered the data manually as specified in the June 2012 Principal Examiner's report.

The ability to create a Notice of Meeting and Agenda document varied between the candidates with many of them still lacking the skills or knowledge to create this type of document. Candidates who lacked knowledge on this were, however, still able to obtain some marks and most attempted the document to some degree.

Many of the candidates had an understanding of the features of Desk Top Publishing software. However, the candidates were not always able to describe these features. Many candidates were unable to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of such software.

Comments on individual questions

Task 1

(a) (i) Nearly all of the candidates were able to delete a record.

(a) (ii) Nearly all of the candidates were able to enter the new records. The misuse of capital letters and typographical errors occasionally lost candidates marks.

(a) (iii) Nearly all of the candidates were able to edit details.

(a) (iv) Many of the candidates did not change the title of Miss U Yuan to Mrs, thus not accessing the mark available for this part of the question.

(a) (v) Most of the candidates were able to change the field name.

(a) (vi) Many of the candidates were able to sort by date, although, occasionally, this was in descending rather than ascending order. Candidates need to be reminded to take care when reading each question.

(b) Many of the candidates were able to create a query. Common errors included not sorting the query or not naming it correctly.

(c) In general the candidates did perform better on the letter in comparison with the June 2012 series. Many candidates used the letter template provided, and only a few of them did not use the blocked style and open punctuation. However, many candidates did not include the date.

Many candidates did not address the letter correctly and seemed to struggle to set up the mail merge and produce the required evidence. Only a few of the candidates did not use the correct complimentary close. Most candidates were able to achieve marks by transcribing the information in the letter. It was clear that some candidates need to review this aspect of the specification.

Task 2

The candidates' ability to produce a Notice of Meeting and Agenda document correctly varied considerably. Many of the candidates were unable to produce a high standard document. Such candidates, however, were still able to obtain some marks even when using an incorrect layout. Some produced incorrect documents and it was clear that some candidates still need to review this aspect of the specification.

(i) Many of the candidates were able to state one or two features of Desk Top Publishing software and some of them were also able to state a third feature. Typical features stated included templates, fonts and colour schemes. Some candidates were then able to extend their answer to describe these features. Few candidates, however, were able to do this for all of the features stated. Some candidates incorrectly described the benefits of Desk Top Publishing software.

(b) (ii) Some of the candidates were able to describe the benefits and drawbacks of Desk Top Publishing software. Answers included the cost of the software, the user friendliness of the software and the ability to create professional standard documents. Some candidates were able to gain a few marks in this way. Very few candidates were able to make evaluative comments about the benefits and drawbacks of the software and how this would help 'the business'. Many candidates again wrote about the features of the software rather than the benefits and drawbacks to the business of using the software.

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