GCSE

Business and Communication Systems

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J230**

OCR Report to Centres June 2015

CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Business and Communication Systems (J230)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

Content	**Page**

A265 Businesses and their communication

General Comments:

It was pleasing to see that nearly all candidates attempted all or nearly all questions as this increases candidates' chances of achieving marks.

It is important that candidates are able to apply their answers to the context of the business (leisure centre).

The main issues this year echoed those of recent examination sessions. Responses to the extended answers questions (worth six marks) typically asserted that an action (such as more customers) would have an impact on profit (eg increased profit) without explaining the linkage via revenue. Very few candidates appeared to have an understanding that profits are determined by the difference between revenue and costs, and that a change in business activity is likely to have an impact on both revenue and costs and hence the impact on profit is uncertain; but predictable if certain consequences follow. For example an increase in customers may well result in an increase in revenue but it will also result in an increase in costs, hence the impact on profit will depend on the extent to which both increase.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question

1a   Most candidates gained full marks.

1b   Most candidates gained full marks - a few gave more than one tick for an item and hence only the first tick was marked.

1c   Most had some understanding that the main input is obtained by speaking into a microphone but few could explain the processes carried out to convert the speech into text or a recognisable command.

2a   Most gave a good explanation, usually of how she might have wished to be her own boss or due to a lack of alternatives.

2b   Most had some understanding of limited liability but few expanded their answer,, for example, to how this reduced the risks of owning a business compared with unlimited liability. Other good responses discussed how the ownership of shares could be more tightly controlled. Weaker responses incorrectly stated that she would be the only shareholder.

2c   Most gained at least some marks - usually for knowledge of human resources. Weaker responses failed to provide any valid actions carried out by these functional areas.

2d   Most candidates had a good understanding of how customer service helps to both retain and increase customer numbers. Few developed this by exploring the impact on sales revenue.

3a   Most candidates had at least some understanding of copyright. Weaker responses had a confused understanding - linking copyright to the act of unauthorised copying rather than the legal ownership itself.

3b   Very few candidates had a good understanding of the rights of data subjects. Most gave general lists of obligations/duties of data holders instead.

3c   Good responses gave and described two actions. Weaker responses either discussed actions that would affect gym users not employees or discussed health issues not safety issues.

3d   Most candidates recognised that impacts might be on the number of customers or on business costs however very few gave either specific examples of these or explained the impact of these on the leisure centre. Some candidates appeared to have no relevant knowledge of this part of the specification.

4a   Most candidates had relevant knowledge of USB memory devices and therefore gain full marks on part i. Few gained good marks on parts ii and iii.

4b   Most candidates gave responses focusing on the security implications but failed to gain marks as they did not discuss how these would be an issue during data transfer only. Weaker responses discussed cloud storage in general terms, thus not addressing the issue of remotely backing up business data..

4c   Most candidates gained marks for having relevant knowledge of external hard disk drives. Weaker responses assumed that external meant outside the business.

5a   Most candidates gained 2 or 3 marks. Marks were typically lost for confusing passwords with usernames, for assuming that passwords guarantee 100% secure systems, or for incorrectly stating that double-entry of a new password is an aid to help remember the password.

5b   Most candidates had limited understanding of access rights but recognised that they help to make data and systems more secure.

5c   Candidates who recognised the role of the encryption key in both coding and decoding data scored well.

5d   Most candidates gained 1 or 2 marks for recognising the security implications and the financial savings but very few analysed the impact in detail.

6ai   Most candidates gained full marks.

6aii   Most candidates recognised that the app would increase customers but few could explain why.

6b   Few candidates had sufficient understanding of the issues surrounding web-hosting to score well on this question. Most responses discussed how the website would be designed and built rather than how it would be maintained and operated.

6c   Most candidates had a general understanding of how the use of social media could affect a business but very few related this to the overall impact on the leisure centre.

A266 Developing Business and Communication Systems

General Comments:

This is the sixth assessment for this module and the marks awarded were as expected. The controlled assessment is aimed at candidates of 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 balanced this year and in some case candidates from the same Centre were seen to be split between the Tasks unlike previous years where whole Centres have chosen the same Task.

As has been frequently mentioned in the reports from previous years, this is a controlled assessment and Centres should bear in mind that only the work that was completed within the time limit should be submitted. Additional work that has been completed as part of the investigation, e.g. the completed questionnaires, is not required but needs to be used when writing the report itself. There is a recommended limit of 2000 on the number of words within the report, and Centres should refer to pages 28 and 29 of the specification. Centres should also note that work should not be attached as an appendixIn some cases, candidates had not even referenced the appendix from the main body of the report.

For scenario 1, many candidates used different local car showrooms and/or garages as their resource, including larger car manufacture dealerships; for example "Ford". Candidates still found some difficulty in analysing in detail and justifying their recommendations but there has been a vast improvement in this area over the past sessions. This has meant that more candidates were able to obtain marks into Band 2 with a larger proportion gaining marks in Band 3. The letter (document) was generally well laid out and in many cases only needed a few minor improvements, thus gaining marks in Band 3. However candidates still tend to list the recommendations and do not make sufficient attempt to try and sell these recommendations to the stakeholders in order to gain marks into Band 3 for the content part of task 2.

For scenario 2, many candidates were able to use a local bridal wear shop as their resource. As for task 1, candidates still found some difficulty in analysing in detail and justifying their recommendations but again there is an improvement over the past sessions. This has meant that more candidates obtained marks into Band 2 with a larger proportion gaining 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. As mentioned in the report from last year Centres have again misinterpreted the term leaflet and produced posters and single sheet flyers. Marks can only be awarded in the lower Band for this type of document.

This session there was a higher proportion of centres with arithmetic and clerical errors on the controlled assessment cover sheets (CCS309) and Centres must ensure that these sheets are checked carefully for errors prior to submission so that candidates are not penalised. It is always useful to see where Centres have awarded marks on each of the individual pieces of coursework and many Centres have adopted the approach of annotating the scripts or including a document that shows were the marks have been awarded; it is hoped that this approach will continue to be adopted by all Centres for the future.

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 awarded 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.

For the document, in both scenarios one and two, Centres are reminded that in order to obtain the highest mark, the letter or leaflet should be of a near professional quality. It should be virtually error free and be very convincing in communicating the recommendations and not just list these with no obvious attempt at persuading the stakeholders to accept their changes.

A267 ICT skills for business communication

General Comments:

Many candidates performed well on the vast majority of this paper. Issues such as candidates running out of time or forgetting to add their name to their work were much less prevalent.

On the whole candidates seemed well prepared and were able to produce the required evidence, especially for the spreadsheet task. However, there were still a few issues with some candidates not printing formulas thus losing marks.

Candidates did well with editing a conference brochure, however, the production of a memo was disappointing. Despite this, candidates were able to pick up marks for the task by communicating some of the information.

The understanding of Project Planning software varied greatly from centre to centre. Some candidates were able to gain some marks, despite clearly confusing the software with other types of software. The standard of candidate responses were again considered quite weak for these tasks.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question

Task 1

(a) (i) Most candidates gained full marks.
(ii) Most candidates were able to add the correct details to the spreadsheet.

(b) (i) Most were able to add the label 'Total'.
(ii) Nearly all candidates were able to calculate the total money raised by H Stuart, although some added rather than multiplied and some failed to print their formulas. Some candidates used the Sum function to multiply, this is not necessary but as it still worked, marks were awarded.
(iii) Nearly all candidates were able to replicate their formula from the previous task.
(iv) Most candidates were able to add the label 'Total raised' in the correct cell.
(v) most candidates were able to create a formula to calculate the total raised by all the pupils who took part. However, some candidates failed to print their formulas.
(vi) Most candidates were able to add the label 'Average' in the correct cell.
(vii) Most candidates were able to perform a formula to work out the average; however some candidates failed to print their formulas, so missed out on these marks.

(c) (i) Most candidates gained full marks and could convert the correct cells into currency.
(ii) Most candidates gained full marks by formatting their spreadsheets.
(iii) Nearly all candidates were able to print a landscape copy of their spreadsheet on one page.
(iv) Most candidates were able to print their spreadsheet in formula view on one sheet.

(d) Most candidates were able to create the correct chart including the correct data. Most were able to add suitable axis labels and a title. Most candidates were not able to print their chart on a separate sheet.

(e)   Few candidates were able to attempt this task. Those who did could create the correct formula and were able to replicate the formula to relevant cells.

(f)   Few candidates were able to attempt this task.

Task 2

(a)   (i) Most candidates successfully inserted the logo into a suitable location.
(ii) Most candidates correctly edited the programme as instructed.
(iii) Most candidates were able to add the new information in a suitable format.

(b)   Few candidates gained full marks on this task. Most did not know how to lay out a memo but were able to gain marks for including the correct information.

(c)   (i) Most candidates were able to state and explain features of Project Management software. A few candidates got confused with a variety of other software while a few candidates spoke about the advantages of the software rather than the features.

(c)   (ii) Most candidates were able to gain marks here by stating the advantages and disadvantages of Project Management Software. Few were able to analyse or evaluate the extent to which the software would be more useful than paper. Most candidates attempted this, but statements such as "it is professional" did not warrant marks as it did not relate to how being professional could help with planning an event.

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