AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

Applied Business 8611/8613

BS05   Business Communication and Information Systems

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - January series

General Comments

This was the third assessment of this unit and the format remained predominately the same as in previous sittings. The challenge of the assessment was for candidates to demonstrate:

- a competency at using Information Technology to produce and process data
- an ability to use Information Technology to communicate in a recognised way to meet the needs of both sender and recipient
- an ability to analyse business communications in context
- analysis and judgement when planning and prioritising administrative tasks.

Question One

(a)(i–vi)   The majority of candidates demonstrated the ability to add, delete and edit data within a spreadsheet. However, a significant number were unable to use formulae correctly or to print with formulae showing.

(vii)   The majority of candidates were able to produce an appropriate graph with titles and labels. However, many did not follow the conventions of communication, eg failing to use capital letters in the titles and using over long labels for the axis.

(b)(i–iii)   Most candidates were able to produce the memo and achieved full marks. However, it should be noted for the future that candidates need to be aware of the correct layout for internal and external business communications and the need to use language appropriate for this form of communication.

(c)(i–iii)   The majority of candidates failed to achieve the higher levels on this question. Many candidates failed to lay out the document as a form, and a number failed to include the information requested. Candidates should be aware of the need to use formal business language when producing documents. They also need to be able to construct questions in an appropriate manner, allowing data to be collected in a useable format, rather than relying on open ended questions that could illicit any number of responses.

(iv)   The majority of candidates were able to identify the Data Protection Act and the Computer Misuse Act as potential legal constraints. However, a significant number of candidates failed to explain how this would be a constraint in the context of the Item and this restricted candidates' marks to the lower levels on this question.

Question Two

(a)   Candidates answered this question reasonably well in terms of identifying and explaining the positive and negative features of the leaflet. However, many candidates failed to develop their answers by analysing and evaluating the content of the leaflet. For example, too many candidates tended to make statements such as 'there is too much white space' 'the use of Word Art makes the title unclear' without analysing the effect this would have on the target audience. It is important that candidates analyse documents in the context of their intended audience and justify suggested improvements if they are to access the higher mark bands, (particularly with questions where there are 10 marks allocated).

(b)(i)   Generally, candidates were able to identify suitable information to be included within the database. On this occasion, credit was given for identifying this, eg 'which activities the children are going to be involved in'. In reality an appropriate title would have been 'Activities' and this should be taken into account for the future.

(ii)   This question was answered very poorly with few candidates accessing Level 2 or Level 3. The main reason for this was that candidates did not address the use of a database to:
- **process** data and **produce** information
- assist the management at *Farnhurst Sports Centre*.

The majority of candidates were content to identify different features of a database without demonstrating how this could assist the *Farnhurst Sports Centre*.

Question Three

(a)   The vast majority of candidates answered this question well and were able to explain the advantages of using both the electronic diary and the colour-coded system.

(b)(i)   The format of the prioritising task had changed for this series. However, a significant minority of candidates completed the question as if tasks should be ordered from 1–9. On this occasion, credit was given but candidates should be aware that the format of the questions is likely to change from series to series and they need to read each question carefully and respond appropriately. The specification states that candidates should be able to plan and prioritise administration tasks to meet deadlines and this area of the specification will be assessed in a variety of formats.

(ii)   As with question 2(b)(ii) candidates found it difficult to access the higher marks for this question. In this instance it was because candidates tended to reproduce the list in order but failed to fully explain why tasks had been prioritised or analyse **why** some tasks were more important than others.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the **Results statistics** page of the AQA Website.