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# OFFICE ADMINISTRATION FOUNDATION LEVEL

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<p><b>Paper 5221</b> <b>Text Processing</b></p>
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## Overall comments

The candidates' overall performance was very varied. Some of the work submitted was of a high standard, with accurate work that was well presented. However, some candidates submitted scripts which were inaccurate and which showed little, if any, evidence of proofreading.

Some candidates did not succeed because they failed the Speed Test (**Task 1**). Candidates are required to key in all the text (to achieve the minimum speed of 25 wpm) within the error tolerance (six errors maximum are allowed) and within the time allowed (five minutes).

Some candidates were successful in the Speed Test but then incurred too many errors in **Tasks 2 – 5**.

Errors occurring in **Tasks 2, 3 and 4**:

- Abbreviations not expanded correctly (such as “ref” (“reference”) – 5221/A, **Task 2**).
- Words omitted or keyed in inaccurately.

## Comments on specific tasks

### **Task 1**

Although the majority of candidates completed the task within the error tolerance, there were some who did not complete the text within the five minutes allowed. There were a small number who did complete all the text but who incurred more than the maximum six errors allowed.

### **Task 2**

- Today's date was omitted.
- Abbreviations not expanded (such as “poss” to “possible” – 5221/A).

### **Task 3**

- A variety of typing errors, which ranged from omitted words to errors which the spellchecker would not have identified as incorrect, such as “form” instead of “from”.

### **Task 4**

- The words “Our ref” were omitted.
- Today's date was omitted.
- Abbreviations not expanded (such as “appt” (“appointment”) – 5221/A).
- The enclosure was not indicated.

### **Task 5**

- Many candidates produced excellent tasks that were accurate and well presented. However, some candidates did not make use of the many forms of emphasis available to them.

### **Further general comments**

Candidates are reminded that, at this Foundation Level, only the words that are circled on the draft contain errors to be corrected.

Many candidates seemed to rely on spellcheckers and grammar checkers as their only means of proofreading.

#### **Task 1**

Many of the candidates do not seem to understand that they are allowed to proofread and correct errors *within the five minutes allowed*. Candidates should be advised that they are required to type the text once only and to spend any time remaining proofreading and correcting their work before printing.

The candidates who passed **Task 1** (Speed Test) typed all the text within the five minutes allowed, thus achieving the required speed of 25 wpm, within the error tolerance – six errors maximum.

#### **Task 2**

Today's date is required, as is normal business practice. Omission of the date incurs three penalty errors.

The subject heading should be keyed in as displayed in the draft, for example Initial Capitals and Underlining or ALL CAPITALS. This assesses candidates' ability to use a variety of styles as presented in the draft (such as may be required by a company's house style).

Errors of agreement may be subject/verb or quantity/noun. These will include errors such as "they was" ("they were") and "16 vehicle" ("16 vehicles").

#### **Task 3**

Care should be taken to ensure that text is displayed consistently throughout the document. Some candidates produced text where the linespacing between paragraphs was inconsistent and some paragraphs had been indented, while others had been blocked.

A page number on a single-page document is not required.

#### **Task 4**

Letters must be produced on letterheaded paper – some candidates used plain A4 paper. The letterheading may be prepared as a template for the use of word processor operators, or may be pre-printed. Candidates must *not* key in the letterheading themselves. They are being assessed on their ability to produce letters in a realistic manner, as would be required in business.

Today's date is required – full style is preferred, e.g. "31 December 2005".

#### **Task 5**

This task was very accurately typed and excellently displayed by the majority of candidates. The methods of emphasis used were usually imaginative and very effective. Some candidates, however, did not use many of the forms of emphasis available to them.

**Paper 5222**

**Communication and Task Management**

**General comments**

It is pleasing to report that the scripts completed by candidates have again been of a better standard than in previous years. Most candidates demonstrated sound underpinning knowledge and/or relevant work experience but there were still a few candidates who produced answers which indicated insufficient knowledge, and no evidence of applying knowledge which would have been gained through work experience.

It must still be stressed that some Centres continue to focus on selected aspects of the syllabus resulting in gaps in candidate knowledge and thus questions were either unsatisfactorily answered or not attempted.

It appeared that questions which were not straight knowledge recall questions were received favourably by all levels of candidates who had covered the syllabus.

There are no comments for questions, or parts of a question, which were generally found to have been answered satisfactorily. Most of Papers B and C have not been used by Centres and therefore there will be no comments on those papers in this report.

Once again, most Centres have taken note of the comments made in the previous report concerning Foundation Level candidates and it was pleasing to see the improvement in both presentation and legibility of scripts. At all times candidates should be encouraged to keep in mind that the assessment is concerned with good business practices and this should be reflected in the presentation of their assessment submissions.

Centre administrators should ensure that candidates who sit both papers i.e. Communication/Task Management and Office Procedures in the same series have their documentation completed with the correct paper numbers – often these have been transposed e.g. 5242 instead of 5243 which could result in administration problems. An additional problem this year has been Centres who were entering candidates for the same level of paper but had used more than one paper at a sitting i.e. Paper A and Paper B. The indication on the front of the envelope showed scripts from only one paper. This caused confusion and required further checking of entry and attendance sheets.

It needs to be reiterated that comments made on examination techniques have been accepted by most Centres, although it is still a concern that some candidates are omitting to answer parts of questions or are not providing the requested number of points in their answers. This could be because of limited knowledge but it could also be as a result of not reading the question, poor proofreading skills or not ticking off a question as it has been answered.

It is important that candidates be given the opportunity to use past assessment papers and to sit mock examinations under timed conditions. This not only assists candidates in their examination preparation but provides them with feedback and to know their individual weaknesses in parts of the syllabus.

Some Centres are still using rote learning for selected parts of the syllabus and, whilst this is sometimes useful, candidates often find it difficult to apply that knowledge to the questions being asked.

**Further general comments**

Most candidates who completed this level were successful. However, once again candidates from several Centres had rote learned chunks of theory and were unable to apply that learning to the questions asked and therefore achieved minimum marks.

Unsuccessful candidates do not appear to understand the questions asked and gave irrelevant answers.

It also needs to be repeated that some candidates who were entered for Standard and Advanced Level would have benefited from having completed Foundation Level initially. It is an introduction to the question types and wording used throughout the three levels as well as developing underpinning knowledge for topics that are part of the syllabus for all levels.

### **Comments on specific papers**

#### ***Paper 5222A***

##### **Task 3**

Question asked for four interruptions that would stop work being completed. Some answers were very vague and simply said wasting time.

##### **Task 4**

This question required candidates to design a telephone message form. Few gained full marks since they omitted obvious and important parts of such a form.

<p><b>Paper 5223</b> <b>Office Procedures</b></p>
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### **General comments**

The general standard of work in 2005 has continued to improve with many candidates obtaining distinctions.

Similar comments apply as with the Communication and Task Management examinations in that there is evidence to indicate that only selected areas of the syllabus had been covered by some Centres. Candidates must have underpinning knowledge and/or work experience to ensure full coverage of the syllabus.

Owing to the greater numbers of candidates achieving success when completing Paper A it has not been necessary to use Papers B and C in some of the levels and therefore there will be no comments on those papers in this report. No comments have been made for questions, or parts of a question, which were generally found to have been answered satisfactorily.

It needs to be reiterated that although there is evidence of good work some candidates would benefit from guidance on how to read examination questions and how to ensure that every part of the question has been attempted. Several candidates omitted whole or parts of questions, or, did not give the requested number of points.

Once again it is endorsed that candidates must also be given the opportunity to use past assessment papers and to complete mock examinations under timed conditions. This not only assists candidates in their examination preparation but provides them with feedback and to know their individual weaknesses in parts of the syllabus.

### **Further general comments**

Most candidates who completed the examination at this level achieved success.

However, some scripts showed evidence of poor application to questions and quoted chunks of information taken directly from text books. It should be noted that some Centres who entered candidates for Standard and even Advanced Levels would probably have benefited from having completed Foundation Level initially. It is an introduction to the question types and wording used throughout the levels and is helpful in identifying weak areas of the syllabus which are common to all three levels.

### **Comments on specific papers**

#### ***Paper 5223A***

##### **Task 1**

Candidates were given pictures of filing equipment and asked to identify the equipment. Most candidates were able to name the basic equipment. However, answers such as 'chest of drawers' and 'filing cabinet' were received.

##### **Task 3**

The question asked for information required when taking details of a customer's complaint. Weaker candidates did not understand what was required and gave irrelevant answers such as 'be a good listener'.

The second part of the question required the candidates to state how it could be ensured that the customer's order was delivered immediately and this was poorly attempted, if at all.

##### **Task 4**

Candidates were asked for the procedures to be followed when a photocopier breaks down. Some candidates, who had obviously used a photocopier in their work experience, gave examples of how a photocopier could break down and detailed instructions on how to repair it.

<p><b>Paper 5225</b> <b>Customer Care</b></p>
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### **General comments**

Generally speaking the quality of the assignments submitted during the past twelve months has been much better than previous years. The majority of candidates have worked hard, and with excellent teacher guidance and advice, have produced some excellent work. Assignments have been professionally produced and very business like in their lay out and presentation to the Examiner.

The use of the Assignment Cover Sheets is strongly recommended and has great benefits for the candidate, teacher and Examiner. It is a proper record and a check as to what should be found in the pages of the attached assignment. It helps to simplify a number of tasks and acts as a constant reminder to candidates as to what they need to include in their work. However, page references on these sheets must match the actual pages of the assignment submitted.

Centres are strongly advised to use the latest versions of the module booklets and not rely on older booklets. The latest versions contain the assignment cover sheets mentioned above.

The requirement for all candidates to demonstrate and evidence all the objectives mentioned in the booklets under 'Criteria for Assessment', is very important. Many have not been successful because some objectives were omitted.

All Centres are reminded that they must constantly refer to the 'Assignment Guidelines' found in each module booklet as these give general advice about how candidates should go about their research, analysis, composing assignments, making presentations and other important matters.

Not all SARs had been fully completed by the teacher; please note that this is a requirement of the scheme.

Some self evaluations were weak and could have been extended to reflect more on how the candidate performed completing the assignment and a presentation. A focus on these two points is very important.

The three observations are an integral part of this module and must be carried out with details written up in the report; some candidates failed to do this.

The assignment cover sheets should be fully completed by the candidate and attached to the assignment before forwarding for marking.

Some check lists could have been more comprehensive rather than a list of abbreviations.

Other weaknesses included no reference sources used, contents pages brief and conclusions that needed extending.

**Paper 5181**

**Information and Communications Technology**

The overall standard of entries for this module was excellent. The most common errors found this year included:

- The failure to produce formulae printouts from the spreadsheet. The most common package used was Excel and many candidates did not know how to use Tools, Options and tick the Formulas box prior to printing.
- The loss of data integrity during sorts. Many candidates failed to highlight all the data prior to sorting by a specified field which meant that the data became irrelevant to the task in hand.
- The failure to correct the spelling errors introduced into the source file for this purpose.

