

# OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STANDARD LEVEL

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**Paper 8972/5231**

**Text Processing**

The candidates' overall performance was varied; some of the work submitted was very good, with accurate and well-presented work. Some candidates, however, submitted work which was inaccurate and showed little 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 required speed of 35 wpm) within the error tolerance (maximum of 6 errors allowed) and within the time allowed (5 minutes).

A number of candidates were successful in the Speed Test but then incurred too many errors in Tasks 2 to 5.

Some candidates had inserted page numbers on all tasks, single-page documents as well as multi-page ones. Please note that only continuation sheets should be numbered.

Throughout the tasks, some candidates keyed in initial capitals in lower case, e.g. "kruger national park" instead of "Kruger National Park" (Task 3: 5231/A). There were also instances of keying in text with initial capitals that should have been lower case, e.g. "For Security Reasons" (Task 3: 5231/A).

## **ERRORS OCCURRING IN TASKS 2, 3 AND 4**

- Apostrophe errors were not identified and corrected (such as "Mr Kingstons' wife" not corrected to "Mr Kingston's wife" – 5231/A, Task 2).
- Abbreviations not expanded correctly (such as "org" ("organisation") – 5231/A, Task 2).

There was little evidence of proofreading – careful reading of each task, matched with the draft, is highly recommended. Total reliance on spellcheckers should be avoided.

## **COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC TASKS**

### **Task 1**

Some candidates completed the task within the error tolerance, but there were others who did not complete all the text within the 5 minutes allowed. Some candidates completed all the text but incurred more than the 6 errors maximum allowed.

### **Task 2**

- Today's date was omitted.
- The subject heading had not been keyed in as presented in the draft (such as "TRAVEL PACKS" not keyed in with all capitals – 5231/A).

**Task 3**

- The headings had not been transposed (such as “TRAVEL TIPS” and “SOUTH AFRICA” – 5231/A).
- Underlining of text not carried out as indicated in the draft (such as “speed limit of 25 mph” – 5231/A).
- The specified text had not been inset from the left margin by the exact measurement given (such as 50 mm – 5231/A).

**Task 4**

- The letter had not been produced with a letter heading.
- The words “Our ref” were omitted.
- Today’s date was omitted.
- Enclosures had not been indicated.
- Envelopes or labels not produced – some candidates simply used a sheet of A4 paper.

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

**Task 5**

- Many candidates produced excellent documents that were accurately typed and well displayed.

# OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STANDARD LEVEL

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**Paper 8972/5232**

**Communication and Task Management**

## General comments

The completion of examination papers has continued to improve once again with the majority of scripts achieving a very good standard. There were still a few answers which indicated insufficient knowledge, and gave no evidence of applying knowledge which would have been gained through work experience.

Some Centres are still focusing on selected aspects of the syllabus resulting in gaps in candidate knowledge and thus some questions were either unsatisfactorily answered or not attempted. Centres should note that efforts are made to ensure that all aspects of the syllabus are covered at least once in a three year period.

It appeared that questions which were not straight knowledge recall questions were received favourably by 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.

Centres have taken note of the comments made in previous reports and it was pleasing to see that presentation and legibility of scripts continues to improve.

Centre Administrators who took note of the administration difficulties which had been encountered in previous years made the problem of identifying papers easy. There have been no problems, this year, with transposition of the number of the paper that a candidate had completed and the incorrect paper number being entered on the front of the envelopes.

Good examination techniques are being practised 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.

The good results being achieved are probably due to more candidates being 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.

There is evidence to indicate that some Centres are still using rote learning for selected parts of the syllabus. Whilst this is sometimes useful, candidates often find it difficult to apply that knowledge to questions being asked especially when the task set is given a scenario in which the candidate needs to apply their knowledge.

**Comments on specific papers**

**Standard Level**

Paper 5232A

**Task 2**

Candidates were asked to list reasons why it is important that the administrator working on a team project completes their tasks by a set deadline. Some candidates did not read the question, or, this was an example of rote learning since the answers were answered generally and not applied to the given situation. Candidates should be given the opportunity to apply their learning in a practical way.

**Task 3**

Bullet points 2 and 3 in which candidates were asked to explain the use of an action plan, and, to give ways in which a team leader could monitor the work of the team were poorly answered. Some candidates did not seem to understand the question or these two parts were omitted.

# OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STANDARD LEVEL

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**Paper 8972/5233**

**Office Procedures**

## **General comments**

There has been a marked improvement in the standard of work in 2007. Congratulations to Centres and candidates.

The comments made in the Communication and Task Management Examinations also apply to the Office Procedures Examination in that there is evidence to indicate that only selected areas of the syllabus had been covered by a minority of Centres. Candidates need underpinning knowledge to ensure full coverage of the syllabus.

Owing to the majority of candidates achieving success when completing Paper A it has not been necessary to use Papers B and C in 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.

There is evidence of excellent work by some candidates, this would indicate guidance on how to read examination questions and how to ensure that every part of the question has been attempted. However, there were still several candidates who omitted whole or parts of questions, or, did not give the requested number of points.

All candidates should 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.

# BUSINESS STANDARD LEVEL AND OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STANDARD LEVEL

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Paper 8972/5166

Interpersonal Business Skills

## General comments

The majority of assignments submitted by Centres under this module title were well laid out and presented. Candidates had used business-like conventions throughout in composing their work and quality graphics enhanced their submissions.

Where candidates and teachers had completed an Assignment Cover Sheet this was most helpful in checking that all components had been demonstrated and found in the text and that the mandatory competence criteria had all been covered. The use of the Assignment Cover Sheets helped candidates to organise their assignments to achieve a pass grade. Some candidates were able to focus their work especially well to achieve merit or distinction.

## Specific Comments

Some candidates were not successful and demonstrated the following weaknesses:

- Student Assessment Record (SAR) forms must be completed by Centres and submitted with candidates' work. Failure to do this results in the assignments being returned to Centres.
- There needs to be a strong link between the criteria given in the syllabus and the work submitted by candidates. There should be evidence of all of the relevant competence criteria listed in the objectives.
- Candidates need to give clear evidence and understanding of all the criteria. Some candidates have not demonstrated the competence criteria fully in their assignments; this is an essential part of all modules and the detailed guidance, listed in the syllabus booklet under 'Criteria for Assessment', should be followed. It is important to link these objectives and the research undertaken in the assignment. All objectives must be evidenced in the text of the assignments.
- Better use could have been made of the Assignment Cover Sheets; if these had been fully completed then an instant check by the teacher, candidate and Examiner would reveal that all objectives had been demonstrated.

The Assignment Cover Sheets can be used:

By the teacher to alert candidates as to what should be included in their assignments.

By the teacher as a **checklist** of tasks and **competence criteria** which must be available in an assignment to meet the pass criteria.

By the candidate to identify what tasks they will need to undertake and how the assignment should be presented.

By the candidate to check that the work they are about to submit contains all the relevant tasks and competence criteria.

By both the candidate and the teacher to **identify gaps**, missing competence criteria or insufficient coverage of tasks before work is officially submitted i.e. to check that all the relevant module requirements are being met.

By both the candidate and the teacher to develop an **action plan** to remedy any problems which have been identified.

As a record to show coverage of the competence criteria within the assignment i.e. page numbers and comments.

As a final check before submission of the SAR.

As an aid to the Examiner when marking the assignments, through a clear indication of coverage and content.

There should be regular review sessions between teachers and candidates – the cover sheets can help with this process.

- Some assignments did not include page numbering or a contents page. In some assignments the page numbering and the list of contents did not match.
- Some reports were not submitted in a business-like format. It is essential that assignments are well presented and that reports follow basic, standard business conventions. Good introductions and conclusions are to be encouraged. Contents pages which list page numbers help the candidate, teacher and Examiner.
- Candidates did not always understand non-verbal communication.
- 'Assertiveness', while acknowledging that this may be a cultural issue, was sometimes omitted or not properly explained in the text of the assignment.
- The results of surveys were weak and not detailed under separate headings or paragraphs.
- Other weaknesses included lack of Reference Sources, lack of evidence of chairing meetings and self-evaluation.

# BUSINESS STANDARD LEVEL AND OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STANDARD LEVEL

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Paper 8972/5168

Customer Care

## General comments

Some excellent assignments were submitted for this module. It was apparent that teachers and candidates had made a good effort and this was reflected in the quality of the assignments.

## Specific Comments

A number of weaknesses were identified. These and other comments are listed below.

- Reference sources and self-evaluation were omitted from the assignment.
- Some of the objectives, as listed in the module booklet, were not evidenced in the text of the assignment. It is mandatory for these to be included.
- Although the candidate may have conducted a survey the analysis of this activity was not detailed with any depth, and in some cases there was doubt that a survey had been carried out.
- Some reports could have had a better layout and were not business-like in their presentation. It is essential that assignments are well presented and that reports follow basic standard business conventions. Good introductions and conclusions are to be encouraged. Contents pages which list page numbers help the candidate, teacher and Examiner.
- Too much emphasis had been placed on the company profile as opposed to the candidate providing evidence of the objectives in the assignment.
- Some Centres failed to submit Student Assessment Record forms with candidates work resulting in assignments being returned to Centres.
- The use of the Assignment Cover Sheets is highly recommended as these provide evidence that the work is complete. This is very helpful to teachers, candidates and Examiners. The Assignment Cover Sheet for Candidates has been developed to help teachers and their candidates to review assignments *before* they are submitted for assessment by a CIE Examiner. Teachers and candidates should refer to the Assessment Guidelines before completing these forms or submitting assignments. A Student Assessment Record (SAR) should still be completed and submitted with the assignment.

There should be regular review sessions between teachers and candidates – the cover sheets can help with this process. The Assignment Cover Sheets can be used:

By the teacher to alert candidates as to what they should include in their assignments.

By the teacher as a **checklist** of tasks and **competence criteria** which must be available in an assignment to meet the pass criteria.

By the candidate to identify what tasks they will need to undertake and how the assignment should be presented.



By the candidate to check that the work they are about to submit contains all the relevant tasks and competence criteria.

By both the candidate and the teacher to **identify gaps**, missing competence criteria or insufficient coverage of tasks before work is officially submitted i.e. to check that all the relevant module requirements are being met.

By both the candidate and the teacher to develop an **action plan** to remedy any problems which have been identified.

As a record to show coverage of the competence criteria within the assignment i.e. page numbers and comments.

As a final check before submission of the SAR.

As an aid to the Examiner when marking the assignments, through a clear indication of coverage and content.

- Centres should only submit candidates' work if they feel it meets all of the requirements of the scheme and is complete. SAR sheets must be fully completed and signed by the teacher before submitting work to be examined. Care must be taken in completing the list of names of candidates being put forward together with their assignments.
- More discussion about the assignment content would have been appropriate instead of using bullet points throughout.
- Other weaknesses included different font styles used in one assignment, an old 1999 syllabus used, insufficient data analysis and weak conclusions.
- Centres should always refer to the syllabus for the year of examination when planning courses and helping candidates to prepare their assignments prior to submission. Centres are encouraged to use the most recent version of the syllabus since earlier editions may not include changes which have been made to the mode of assessment or content.

# **BUSINESS STANDARD LEVEL AND OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STANDARD LEVEL**

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**Paper 8972/5237**

**Organising Meetings and Events**

The overall performance of the candidates was very good. Some candidates were well prepared and correctly organised a meeting, as required. They produced reports detailing how they had organised their meetings and the documentation and methods of communication they had produced and used.

Centres are reminded that they should submit completed Student Assessment Records and completed Assignment Cover Sheets. These confirm that the Assignment is the candidate's own work and should indicate that work taken from another source is appropriately referenced and acknowledged. Assignment Cover Sheets have also been designed to enable candidates to check that their work is complete and has covered all the required competence criteria.

## **COMMENTS ON THE WORK OF CANDIDATES**

Most of the reports produced were legible and detailed. Copies of letters, emails, agenda, notice of meeting, minutes, chairperson's agenda and transcripts of telephone conversations were submitted.

Candidates assessed the planning, organising and monitoring methods they used. They then described whether or not these methods were successful and what they would do differently when they organise their next meeting.

Many candidates included lengthy descriptions of the secretarial and chairpersons' roles and procedures and lists of meeting terminology. These are not required, but candidates were not penalised for including them in their assignments.

# BUSINESS STANDARD LEVEL, ICT STANDARD LEVEL AND OFFICE ADMINISTRATION STANDARD LEVEL

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**Paper 5191**

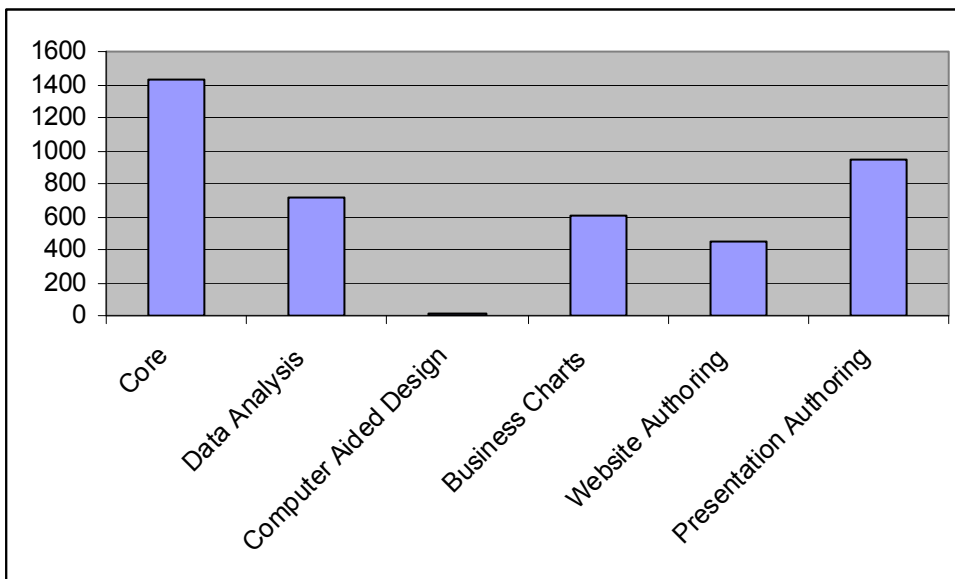
**Communication, Document Production, Data Manipulation, Integration**

## General

The scheme has had 7509 English entries and 355 in Spanish. The total numbers of entries at each level in English were 1875 entries at Foundation Level, 4147 were at Standard Level and 1487 at Advanced Level. This indicates a 28% increase in Foundation entries, 4% increase in standard level entries and 36% increase in advanced entries. Spanish entries declined significantly from the previous year.

## Standard Level

This level comprised a Core module and five enhancement modules.



The overall pass rate for these modules was in line with last year with candidates showing a good understanding of the subject knowledge and practical skills.

## **5191 Standard Core**

The general standard of entries for this module was high, although there were a number of errors which included:

- Errors in searching, either by trying to search using the results of a previous search rather than all the data, through errors in the search criteria, or in the selection of the data for the database extract.
- Some candidates could not correctly align text, especially when asked to fully justify the body text of a document.
- Errors in sorting the data as specified in the question paper, particularly by sorting only the specified field and therefore failing to maintain the integrity of the data. Candidates who made this error were usually using a spreadsheet package rather than a database. Some candidates confused ascending and descending sorts.

- The failure to understand the generic terms serif, and sans-serif. Many candidates tried to locate these as font styles rather than understanding that fonts such as Times New Roman contain short strokes or serifs on each letter, and that sans-serif fonts are without these.
- When the page break has been removed in the second version of the document the line spacing was not maintained.
- Errors in page layout with the failure to set margins or column widths as specified.
- The failure to include a calculated control in the data manipulation report, or where a calculated control was included it was not the one specified on the question paper.
- Errors in page layout with the failure to set margins or column widths as specified.
- The failure to resize the imported graphic or to text wrap around this graphic.