



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Business and Communication Systems 413008

(Specification 4134)

Unit 8: ICT Systems in Business

Report on the Examination

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General

Responses were in line with expectations and questions enabled access to students across the ability range.

The most successful students used the information in the item well, however, the less successful students were unable to apply their answer in context. Whilst some students demonstrated good knowledge, they failed to relate this to the business context in the Items. Information is given in the Items preceding the questions and needs to be used to gain development marks. Students must spend time reading the Items before answering the questions. Some students did not read the rubric carefully and consequently did not answer the question that was set but wrote on the topic generally.

When using tick boxes, students must ensure that they cross out any mistakes so that it is clear to the examiner which response is intended.

Question 1

- (a) A few students did not follow the instructions and ticked more than two boxes for each task. Students must follow instructions carefully. However, many scored full marks on this question.
- (b) The majority of students scored full marks on this question. A few ticked both options on a row which lost them marks.
- (c) Most students were able to identify a task that the administration staff would carry out. However, although some were able to develop their answer, a minority of students repeated their explanation of how sales staff are supported; each point must have a new or different reason.
- (d) The most successful students supported their judgement with a consideration of how Paul would plan the meeting to persuade staff to agree with his proposal. They explained how the agenda, and one other aspect of planning a meeting, would contribute towards this. When answering open questions students must consider more than one issue to help justification/evaluation. Students need to identify the key words in these questions, eg planning the meeting. Students did not consider anything else such as timing which is where context was missed in that the sales staff were often out of the office and a meeting would be difficult to arrange.

Many students failed to use any information from the Item and their answers were generic. Some students generalised about the issue rather than concentrating on the planning, ie discussed advantages and disadvantages of hot desking and how it would affect the staff rather than having it as part of the agenda etc. The topic of meetings and agendas has been inadequately covered by some centres as some students answers focused on explaining job roles and making the meeting interesting for the two teams.

Question 2

- (a) A small minority of students failed to read the question. The question asked for details, other than name and address, that appear on application form and some students simply indicated parts of the address. At times answers were too vague, for example simply stating a skill, students must specify what skills.
- (b) Most students were able to identify a responsibility of the administration manager. Developments of answers were not always an explanation of the identified responsibility. A small minority were unable to extract information from the Item.
- (c) Some students repeated the question before making a valid point. Many students were unable to develop one point to fully utilise the marks available. Students must ensure that unless a question asks to explain two reasons they must develop a full line of argument for one reason.
- (d) The best responses were able to link working experience to the job description and person specification and explain how this would benefit the company to justify their choice. They also made a comparison with why one candidate was less suitable. Some students identified the fact that the applicants had essential skills but failed to recognise why this made them more suitable. Many simply repeated the details from the applicants CVs without giving any reasons why these skills or experience were needed.

Question 3

- (a) Overall there was a lack of understanding about encryption. Students had a general idea that encryption keeps documents secure, but many were unable to explain how it does this. Surprisingly few students recognised that a code, key or extra passwords were needed to access files. A few students simply stated that it kept documents safe without any explanation.
- (b) The majority of students were able to identify a reason for communication, but the explanation was often too short or went on to another point. A continuous line of argument must be given to achieve maximum marks.
- (c) Many students failed to read the question accurately and recognise that the answer required oral communication and not written. This meant that e-mail was not appropriate. Very few were able to put their answers in context. Centres should encourage their students to recognise that if the question mentions sales staff they must consider how the barrier affects them completing their work, with application. Overall there was a general lack of knowledge about barriers to communication. Many students were repeating reasons, for example, two barriers with mobiles phones but giving the same explanation that the sales staff cannot hear the message.
- (d) Very few students were able to apply the information from the Item and failed to identify that the sales staff were travelling or had already been issued with mobile phones. There were a few responses that were able to give justification but limited their marks as they were unable to apply to the issue of what they would be discussing or building team ethics. Many were confused between teleconferencing and video conferencing and some thought face-to-face was video conferencing. The most successful responses recognised that the meetings were only monthly. Face-to-face would allow the sales staff to bond as a team and they would allow the use of PowerPoint or handouts to analyse sales figures.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.