

GCSE

Edexcel GCSE

Business & Communication
Studies (1504)

This Examiners' Report relates to Mark
Scheme Publication code: UG 017736

Summer 2006

Examiners' Report

Edexcel is one of the leading examining and awarding bodies in the UK and throughout the world. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers.

Through a network of UK and overseas offices, Edexcel's centres receive the support they need to help them deliver their education and training programmes to learners.

For further information please call our Customer Services on 0870 240 9800, or visit our website at www.edexcel.org.uk.

Summer 2006

Publications Code UG 017736

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Edexcel Ltd 2006

Contents

1504/01 & 02 - Practical Examinations (Foundation and Higher)	3
1504/03 & 04 -Written Examination (Foundation and Higher)	5
1504/05 Coursework.....	9
Statistics	11

1504/01 & 02 - Practical Examinations (Foundation and Higher)

General Comments

Candidates performed well in both the Foundation and Higher papers, many demonstrating good ICT skills and the ability to organise themselves competently under examination conditions. However, candidates need to be reminded that instructions are a crucial element of both papers and need to be followed very carefully throughout if they are to gain all the available marks. There was no evidence that candidates ran out of time overall and in most cases they appear to have allocated an appropriate amount of time to each task to allow completion.

Centres are requested to encourage candidates to check that all their printouts show the question number, centre number and candidate's name and number as directed in each of the questions. Printouts should be placed alongside the relevant task and ideally attached with treasury tags. In some cases, printouts were not secured at all.

It was very pleasing to note that very few Centres failed to send a copy of the pre-prepared file with the examination scripts.

Centres are reminded that it is the intention of the Principal Examiner to continue to fully utilise all areas of the specification and to continue the reduction in the number of centre-prepared files.

Foundation Paper - 1504/01

Question 1

Many candidates produced well-executed answers to this question, but where they failed to follow specific instructions valuable marks were lost. The most common errors were failing to change the phrases they were given into full sentences and boxing the advertisement - frequently placing a box around the full page when the advertisement only took up half the page. It was also evident that numerous candidates had failed to check their work for spelling and capitalisation errors.

Question 2

a) Nearly all candidates succeeded in producing an accurate graph and many managed correct labelling of both axes. However, there was an almost universal inability to give the graph a correct title, usually failing to include the date.

b) This was in the main quite well undertaken, with many candidates gaining full marks, clearly demonstrating their understanding of an invoice and their ability to use formulae correctly. However, other candidates experienced difficulties because they were not sufficiently familiar with the layout of an invoice and did not know that a discount is deducted and VAT is added.

Question 3

Most candidates managed to create a database and key-in the information, though many failed to gain the marks available for accurate data entry and correct capitalisation - again showing failure to check work adequately. The amendment and ascending sort were generally correctly done. However, many had problems undertaking the required search correctly or failed to attempt this part of the question at all.

Higher paper - 1504/02

Question 1

This question was very well answered at this level, with many candidates demonstrating sound ability to produce and utilise a database to gain full marks. Where errors did occur, they generally related to spelling or accuracy of data entry.

Question 2

This question caused problems for numerous candidates, with many inserting the data into the wrong columns and/or not completing the totals. Where totals were completed, many were incorrect - suggesting candidates were not using the spreadsheet facilities - and gaining marks only on 'own figure rule' calculations. Disappointingly many candidates failed to follow the instructions regarding the title and justification. The second part of the question was better answered generally, with most candidates making the required amendments successfully.

Question 3

Many candidates submitted good work which demonstrated their ability to follow multiple instructions and produce a document which was pleasing in appearance and easy to understand. Where problems were encountered, it was mainly in failing to put the required items into full sentences and the incorrect use of capitalisation.

1504/03 & 04 -Written Examination (Foundation and Higher)

General Comments

Once again candidates performed well on both the Foundation and Higher papers. The context did not seem to pose any problems and some excellent scripts were seen - some scoring full marks.

However there are still candidates who fail to read questions carefully enough. They do not actually look at and think about their answers and whether these answers are related to the context.

Throughout both papers candidates are advised to note the buzz words in questions - for example explain, analyse, discuss, why suggest and compare. Apart from give, identify, list, name and state, it is expected candidates will produce expanded answers otherwise they are unable to reach higher levels of marks.

Foundation Paper

Question 1

a)-(b) All of these questions were well answered with no particular question posing a problem.

(c)(i)-(ii) was reasonably well answered where candidates did not do so well it was because there was confusion with a spreadsheet. A common response was 'a programme that holds information'. (ii) Quite a few candidates did not understand the purpose of a database, its relevance to EPP and the advantages therefore not many sound judgements were made.

Question 2

a)(i)-(ii) Those candidates who knew about a shift system were able to gain 2 marks for (i). The rest of the question seemed to be uncharted territory for many candidates who failed to show any understanding of shift work or its value to EPP which is surprising as the context clearly mentioned a shift-system though the topic did not seem to have been addressed in some candidates' preparation for the exam. There was also confusion with part-time work and job rotation.

(iii)-(iv) Neither posed any real problems for most candidates though some candidates did not realise they were supposed to do this calculation. Where candidates did know what a shift system was they could do (ii) otherwise some struggled because they did not realise that people were sometimes paid extra for working shifts, unsocial hours etc.

(b)(i)-(ii) These questions evoked some very confused and muddled responses however many candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the acts and generally knew how they protected employees with some excellent answers seen on the effects of non compliance demonstrating clear thinking.

Higher Paper

Question 3 (foundation)/ Question 1 (higher)

a)(i)-(ii) Generally very well answered with many candidates gaining full marks for these two questions and some good evaluation demonstrated. This topic is clearly well understood by candidates at both Foundation and Higher levels.

(b) Unfortunately many candidates failed to relate their answers to EPP and gave a long list of the advantages of emails with no reference at all to EPP which gained them only the demonstrate knowledge marks. Candidates should now have so much experience of using IT but few mentioned booking online via hyperlinks with too many basic answers in the form of cheaper than mail and faster. Many candidates therefore did not score very highly on this answer even though they had written a lot because their answers lacked analysis and application to EPP.

(c) A number of candidates did not know what an electronic public messaging system was and why EPP would use it. Basic answers consisted of 'easier to see'. However many candidates answered well comparing this system to noticeboards and appreciating the advantages of an electronic system.

Question 2 (higher)

a)(i)-(ii) Some candidates confused debit cards and credit cards. Some thought that the customer's bill was settled monthly and the balance did not have to be cleared. Those candidates that answered well were able to identify details were held on a magnetic strip and that the money went from the customer's account straight into EPP's.

b) Many, many candidates confused a pay slip with a paying-in slip and that a payslip could be cashed at a bank.

c) This question was answered really well in many cases with candidates showing a clear understanding of the advantages to the employer and employee of using BACS and the fact that this was a safer way and instantaneous rather than waiting for cheques to clear. This was answered so much better than the last time a BACS question was asked.

Question 3

a) A disappointing range of answers seen because there was the fundamental lack of understanding of the shift system and added to that many candidates did not read the question carefully enough and failed to justify EPP's reasons and answered from the point of view of the employee discussing at great length motivation and not getting too tired. Many candidates confused a shift system with job rotation and thought that workers could choose their own shifts. Some candidates could identify what a shift system was but could not extend their answer to say what the advantages were for EPP with regard to continuity and flexibility. There were however some good answers which demonstrated a good understanding of a cinema's need for a shift system and produced level 4 answers.

b) Many candidates understood the legislation involved and gave good descriptions of it but did not always think about the influences and particularly the consequences beyond mentioning courts and suing in response to each act. Quite a lot of candidates did not score higher than level 2 consequently the question proved to be a good discriminator. Those who did reach level 4 extended their answers and gave the consequences of non-compliance and public reaction to adverse publicity re discrimination.

1504/05 Coursework

This year seemed a good year for the quality of work submitted for moderation which on the whole was to a high standard.

The majority of candidates completed the Communication topic with a few doing Security or Money Transactions. Candidates generally showed good knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic with less use of copied textbook passages, notes or downloaded material from the internet. Where moderation was difficult or where candidates performed less well it was either down to:

- the task or topic selected which prevented candidates accessing AO4 specifically and higher level criteria generally
- a lack of information gathered on which to base their evaluative comments or indeed make and justify any recommendations which was usually due to a lack of 'balanced' research across the four types of information for which 3.7 was sometimes awarded with no evidence to support this award
- lack of understanding of assessment criteria.

Most of the work seen was well presented although candidate numbers and centre numbers were sometimes not included on individual pieces of work. In addition it is not necessary for candidates to include every copy of their questionnaire or to insert each piece of paper into a plastic wallet.

The standard of internal standardisation seemed to be improved with most centres understanding the specification and assessment objectives well. Some centres though are not carrying out internal standardisation which is seen through the disparity of marks in some cases.

Some administration problems still remain. A few centres had not annotated the work whilst others annotate at the top and bottom of the page and not at the point of award. Putting a whole list of AOs together means it is not easy to see why they have been awarded. Also some marks appear on the work which are not recorded on record sheets and vice versa which mismatch makes moderation more difficult. The top and bottom candidates were not always included in the sample.

Some candidates failed to complete the authenticity statement on the record sheet, indeed so did some teachers which meant more E6s seemed to be sent out requesting signatures from candidates which sometimes proved difficult due to the fact that the candidates had left.

The following are comments specifically related to the AOs and come from the reports of Assistant Moderators which some centres might find useful.

Use of a questionnaire makes it easier to gain 2.2, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 4.4. Where a questionnaire has not been used some of these marks were not easily awarded.

The 'consider' AOs were sometimes generously awarded where candidates had made brief statements - 1.9, 2.9, 3.6, 3.7 and 4.8 - with 4.8 and 1.9 probably the most difficult AOs to gain but which were awarded based on very weak evidence.

1.2 Candidates need only to list their sources of knowledge which at its simplest can be a list containing at least two separate sources:

Ms A N Other my BCS teacher (*people*)

GCSE Business Studies by Alpin, Cooper, O Hara and Petrucke (*text*)

Boots plc (*organisation*)

www.bized (*electronic*)

For the award of 3.7 there must be clear evidence of the system that the candidate has used to gather from a wide range of sources. A list like that above is not sufficient for this award unlike most criteria 3.7 cannot be awarded without 1.2 having awarded as well.

1.9 where this award is made for *make comparisons* then there must be actual comparisons and not just a description of two pieces of knowledge.

2.9 candidates need to submit an action plan which sets out the tasks they have to complete, where they will get their knowledge from, deadlines and explanations of how they will monitor such a plan and justifications for deviations from their original intentions.

3.4 is still under-awarded by many centres.

4.7 can only be awarded if there is **both** evaluation and possible improvements indicated - note the plural.

4.8 requires candidates to do three separate things - (i) produce a detailed evaluation which must contain (ii) suggestions for improvements with (iii) such suggestions having been justified.

Centres are reminded that there is a full programme of training arranged for 2006-2007 with details in Centres or on the Edexcel website.

Statistics

Practical paper 1 - Foundation Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	45	31	26	21	17	13

Practical paper 2 - Higher Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D
Raw boundary mark	45	42	37	32	27	22

Theoretical paper 3 - Foundation Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	63	27	22	18	14	10

Theoretical paper 4 - Higher Tier

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D
Raw boundary mark	63	47	40	33	26	19

Coursework paper 5

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	76	69	59	49	39	31	23	16	9

Notes

Maximum Mark (Raw): the mark corresponding to the sum total of the marks shown on the mark scheme.

Boundary mark: the minimum mark required by a candidate to qualify for a given grade.

Further copies of this publication are available from
Edexcel Publications, Adamsway, Mansfield, Notts, NG18 4FN

Telephone 01623 467467
Fax 01623 450481

Email publications@linneydirect.com

Order Code UA 017736 Summer 2006

For more information on Edexcel qualifications, please visit www.edexcel.org.uk/qualifications
Alternatively, you can contact Customer Services at www.edexcel.org.uk/ask or on 0870 240 9800

Edexcel Limited. Registered in England and Wales no.4496750
Registered Office: One90 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7BH