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RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

GCSE

Business and Communication Systems

Report on the Units

January 2010

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

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REPORT ON THE UNITS

Chief Examiner Report

Centres are strongly advised to read this report in conjunction with the examination paper and mark scheme, together with the support material available on the OCR website.

This was the first awarding opportunity for this qualification and so this report is based on relatively few candidates. However, it is possible to generalise from the specific and this report includes comments of which Centres are advised to take note for future sessions.

This was the first opportunity to assess A267 and, although the number of Centres entering candidates was relatively small, the evidence suggests that Centres had made effective preparations for this new computer-based examination. There were relatively few instances where marks could not be awarded because candidates had not included their name on a document when submitting it to the printer.

Centres are reminded that details of the technical and administrative requirements for the examination are contained in the "Unit A267 - Instructions for teachers" document available from the OCR website.

A267 ICT skills for business communication systems

General Comments

The paper, in general, was deemed a success. In terms of the questions and level of difficulty it was seen as suitable. There was a range of questions that were suitable for all candidates and which were able to fully stretch the more able. In terms of timing it was felt that candidates were given sufficient time to complete all tasks to a high standard, as long as they did not get bogged down with unnecessary formatting. Many candidates showed a good ability to move on quickly if faced with a problem. As for printing, the vast majority of candidates followed the very specific instructions to ensure their name was part of the printed document. There were very few candidates who could not be awarded any marks as examiners could not successfully verify that it was the candidate's own work. However, unfortunately there were some such candidates.

Many candidates showed good skills with the use of spreadsheets. Most candidates were able to enter and edit data and, in most cases, create graphs and simple formulas. Candidates generally showed good formatting skills and were generally able to follow the instructions on the paper. An area of concern was the lack of ability by many candidates to print their work in the formula view. This meant that various marks were not awarded as examiners could not be sure if the correct formula had been entered.

There was a general good understanding of the use of blogs in business. Most candidates were able to access some marks but many struggled to develop their answers and some talked about blogs from the perspective of the customer not the business. Candidates on the whole did not get focus too much on formatting and the inclusion lots of unnecessary information.

The Notice of Meeting and Agenda was not generally done as well as expected. Many candidates were not able to produce the correct document.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Task 1

(a) (i) Candidates were awarded one mark for correctly entering a new figure in a specified cell. This part of the question was done well.

(a) (ii) Candidates were awarded one mark for correctly deleting data. This part of the question was done well.

(a) (iii) Candidates were awarded up to seven marks for correctly entering data. This part of the question was generally done well. Occasionally candidates entered incorrect data and put Jennifer Mason's name in a different format to the other people in the spreadsheet.

(b) (i) Candidates were awarded up to three marks for correctly entering three labels into specified cells. This part of the question was generally done well. Some candidates misspelled 'commission' and lost one mark.

b (ii) Candidates were awarded one mark for entering a correct formula. A variety of formulas were accepted. Candidates who did print their formulas generally entered a correct formula. Many candidates failed to achieve this mark because they did not print

their work in the formula view in a later task. This was the only way examiners were able to award this mark.

b (iii) Candidates were awarded one mark for evidence of replicating the formula from Question 1(b)(ii). Marks were awarded for incorrect formulas as long as there was evidence of replication. A variety of formulas were accepted. Candidates who did print their formulas generally entered a correct formula. Many candidates failed to achieve this mark because they did not print their work in the formula view in a later task. This was the only way examiners were able to award this mark.

b (iv) Candidates were awarded one mark for entering a correct formula. Many candidates failed to achieve this mark because they did not print their work in the formula view in a later task. Candidates who did print their formulas generally entered a correct formula. This was the only way examiners were able to award this mark.

b (v) Candidates were awarded one mark for entering a correct formula to calculate commission. Some candidates did not attempt this formula. A variety of formulas were accepted. This was a more difficult formula aimed at the higher end. There was evidence that this type of formula had been taught by Centres.

b (vi) Candidates were awarded one mark for evidence of replicating the formula from question b (v). Marks were awarded for incorrect formulas as long as there was evidence of replication. A variety of formulas were accepted. Some candidates did not attempt this formula or failed to print their formulas. This was a more difficult formula aimed at the higher end. There was evidence that this type of formula had been taught by Centres.

b (vii) Candidates were awarded one mark for formatting all relevant cells into currency and two decimal places. These marks were awarded when the candidate was asked to print in the normal view in Question 1(c). Marks were also awarded when it was clear that the candidate had formatted to accountancy as well. This was generally done well with the majority of candidates gaining this mark.

b (viii) Candidates were awarded one mark for evidence of putting their work into landscape. This was done well with the majority of candidates able to do this. Another mark was given for printing in formula view. Candidates also had to make sure they could see the contents of each cell. As mentioned previously, this was not done well and meant a candidate could not gain several marks.

c Candidates were asked to sort the spreadsheet into ascending order by staff name. Evidence of this was taken from either print out. This was generally done well, although some candidates failed to include all data and just sorted the names.

d (i) Candidates were asked to create a column chart to gain up to four marks. Marks were awarded for including the correct data, labelling the axis correctly and adding a suitable title. Most candidates were able to create a column chart, some candidates clearly were not able to include the correct data. Graphs were mostly well labelled.

d (ii) Candidates were asked to print their chart on a separate sheet. Marks were awarded even if the chart included wrong data. Marks were awarded if it was clear that the chart was not printed as part of the spreadsheet. This was generally done well.

Task 2

a (i) Candidates were awarded up to two marks for stating features of a blog. This could be a simple word such as 'posts' or a brief explanation, as long as it was clear that

candidates were talking about blogs.   Many candidates were able to state one or two features.

Up to a further two marks could be awarded for development of the specified feature mentioned. Marks were awarded for a description of the feature. This was generally not done well and candidates started to describe advantages of the feature.

a (ii)   Candidates were awarded up to two marks for stating advantages of a blog to the business. It had to be clear that the candidates were talking about blogs and not the Internet in general. Many candidates were able to come up with at least one advantage.

Up to a further two marks could be awarded for development of the specified advantage mentioned, such as how the advantages could make it better for the business. Some candidates were able to develop their answers.

a (iii)   Candidates were awarded up to two marks for stating disadvantages of a blog to the business. It had to be clear that the candidates were talking about blogs and not the Internet in general. Many candidates were able to come up with at least one disadvantage. Some answers were a little vague and some candidates were clearly not talking about disadvantages to the business**.**

Up to a further two marks could be awarded for development of the specified disadvantage mentioned, such as how the disadvantages could affect the business. Some candidates were able to develop their answers.

a (iv)   Candidates could be awarded up to six marks for making a recommendation to the business to help it decide if it should or should not have a blog. No marks were awarded for the decision but purely for the justification. This part of the question was marked using a level of response. For Level 1 (1 to 3 marks) candidates basically stated why the business should or should not have a blog and for access to Level 2 (4 to 6 marks) candidates had to justify the possible impact on the business. To access the Level 2 marks it had to be quite clear that the candidate was looking at it from a business perspective. Most candidates gained a few marks here with only the better candidates reaching the Level 2 marks.

a (v)   Candidates were awarded up to four marks for formatting, this included one mark for effective use of speaker's notes. Many candidates were not able to print their speaker's notes and lost this mark.

a (vi)   Candidates were awarded a mark for printing on one page showing their speaker's notes. Many candidates were not able to print their speaker's notes and lost this mark.

b (i)   Candidates had to produce a Notice of Meeting and Agenda to include both fixed and specified non-fixed items. Most candidates included the Notice of Meeting information and gained marks here. Many candidates were able to recall a few fixed items from the Agenda. Most candidates included the non-fixed items specified. Most candidates laid the document out correctly; however, some produced a memo. Only some candidates were able to recall all items and display them in the correct order.

b (ii)   Candidates could gain up to two marks for formatting. This was generally done well in a professional manner.

Grade Thresholds

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Business and Communication Systems (J230)
January 2010 Examination Series

Unit Threshold Marks

Unit	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A267	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12
Percentage in Grade	60	0.4	0.9	4.5	12.5	17.9	24.5	17.4	17.4
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	60	0.4	1.3	5.8	18.3	36.2	60.7	78.1	95.5

The total entry for the examination was 224.

Statistics are correct at the time of publication.

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