GCSE

Business and Communication Systems

July 2009

Contents

Contents

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change to the previous printed version. Changes can be found on pages 8, 12, 15, 20, 21, 22 and 27.

1   About this Qualification

This booklet contains OCR's GCSE specification in Business and Communication Systems for teaching from September 2009.

A course based on this specification will:

- provide candidates with an introduction to communication systems and the business context within which they operate

- allow candidates to explore and suggest improvements to business communication systems, considering the impact on the business and its stakeholders

- develop the practical skills needed to maintain and use business communication systems based on standard office software

- develop a detailed understanding of business communication systems, including the main hardware and software components, and how these systems are operated

Candidates are assessed through a range of different methods and the specification focuses on the development of skills which are useful for further study and for the workplace.

This specification contains one Controlled Assessment unit for which evidence can be submitted electronically via the OCR Repository.

1.1   GCSE

From September 2009 the GCSE is made up of three mandatory units. Two units are externally assessed and one unit is internally assessed and externally moderated.

Unit A265   *Businesses and their communication systems*

- This unit is externally assessed.

Unit A266   *Developing business communication systems*

- This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated.

Unit A267   *ICT skills for business communication systems*

- This unit is externally assessed.

1.2   Qualification Title and Levels

This qualification is shown on a certificate as:

- OCR GCSE in Business and Communication Systems.

This qualification is approved by the regulatory authorities (QCA, DCELLS and CCEA) as part of the National Qualifications Framework.

Candidates who gain Grades D to G will have achieved an award at Foundation Level 1 (Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework).

Candidates who gain Grades A* to C will have achieved an award at Intermediate Level 2 (Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework).

1.3   Aims and Learning Outcomes

GCSE specifications in business subjects should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and gain an insight into related sectors. They should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.

The aims of this specification are to enable learners to:

- engage actively in the study of business in order to develop as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds

- use an enquiring, critical approach to distinguish facts and opinions, to build arguments and make informed judgements

- develop and apply their knowledge, understanding and skills to contemporary issues in a range of contexts

- appreciate the range of perspectives of different stakeholders in relation to business and economic activities

- consider the extent to which business and economic activity can be ethical and sustainable.

1.4   Prior Learning/Attainment

Candidates entering this course should have achieved a general educational level equivalent to National Curriculum Level 3, or an Entry 3 at Entry Level within the National Qualifications Framework.

2 Summary of Content

2.1 GCSE Units

Unit A265: *Businesses and their communication systems*

- Business activity

- Competition

- Customers

- Ethics and social responsibility

- The legal framework

- Manual (paper) and computer-based systems

- Procedures for checking internal and external business communications

- Input devices

- Computing devices

- Output devices

- Storage devices

- Back-up systems

- Data security

- Systems to support e-commerce

Unit A266: *Developing business communication systems*

- Business communication systems

- Business communication

- The role of business communication systems in the success or failure of organisations

- The differing interests of stakeholders

- Communication devices

- Capabilities and limitations of ICT-based systems

- Changing business communication systems

- Documents to support a proposal for a new business communication system

Unit A267: *ICT skills for business communication systems*

- Word processing/desktop publishing/presentation software

- Spreadsheet software

- Database software

- Graphics software

- Software

3 Content

3.1 Unit A265: *Businesses and their communication systems*

In this unit candidates will be introduced to communication systems and the business context within which they operate.

This specification has been written to reflect the technologies which it is expected will be used by business organisations over the next few years. The technologies listed in the examples/guidance are not exhaustive however, and some may be superseded by those which emerge during the life of this qualification.

3.1.1 Business activity

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main reasons for starting a business

- Describe how a business is started

- Analyse the benefits and drawbacks of different types of business organisations

- Describe the main features of business organisations

- Evaluate why business organisations might succeed or fail in a given situation

- Assess the impact of uncertainty on business organisations

- Evaluate the role of business within society.

Examples/guidance

Types of business organisation:

- Sole trader

- Partnership

- Private limited company

- Public limited company

- Franchise

- Charity

- Public sector service provider, eg schools, hospitals.

Features include:

- Main functional areas and their key activities

- Hierarchical and flat organisation structures

Examples of uncertainty include the possible impact of:

- Change in the market

- Increased competition

- External influences.

The role of business in society includes:

- How business organisations may impact on society

- How society may impact on businesses.

3.1.2 Competition

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe how a business can monitor the effectiveness of its own competitive position

- Evaluate the actions a business can take in order to be more competitive than its rivals.

Examples/guidance

Monitoring includes:

- Market and sales data

- Market research/customer surveys.

Actions include:

- Pricing

- Promotion

- New product development

- Customer service.

3.1.3 Customers

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe why customers are important to the success of business organisations

- Evaluate the actions business organisations can take in order to ensure good customer relationships.

Examples/guidance

Actions include:

- Market research

- After-sales service, eg telephone help-lines and websites

- Secret shoppers.

3.1.4 Ethics and social responsibility

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe ways in which business organisations can act in an ethical and socially responsible manner

- Evaluate the impact on business organisations of acting (and not acting) in an ethical and socially responsible manner

- Evaluate ways in which business organisations can act in a sustainable manner.

Examples/guidance

The assessment of impact should cover both the actions taken by, and the effects on, the business (eg on costs and profit).

Examples of ways in which business organisations can act in a sustainable manner:

- Source of materials

- Efficiency

- Disposal of waste

- Packaging.

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the principles of the following types of legislation:

    – Health and safety
    – Data protection
    – Access to information
    – Electronic communication
    – Consumer protection
    – Copyright and computer misuse
    – Employment law
    – Environmental protection, eg the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) directive on electronic equipment
    – Any subsequent relevant legislation

- Analyse the actions required of business organisations in order to comply with the above legislation

- Evaluate the impact on business organisations of the need to comply with the above legislation.

Examples/guidance

- Candidates should have a general understanding of the main principles of this legislation.

- Candidates are not required to have a detailed knowledge of the main components of the legislation but should have an understanding of the main requirements of the legislation for business organisations, their employees and their customers.

- The assessment of impact should cover both compliance actions and the overall business impact (eg on costs and profit).

3.1.6 Manual (paper) and computer-based systems

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main features of manual and computer-based systems

- Evaluate the usefulness of paper and computer-based systems in particular contexts.

Examples/guidance

Systems will include paper versus computer-based filing, archiving and retrieval systems.

3.1.7 Procedures for checking internal and external business communications

Candidates must be able to:

- Check business documents for errors and correct them

- Assess the benefits and drawbacks of checking business communications for errors

- Assess the impact on business organisations of a failure in communication.

Examples/guidance

Errors to be checked will include spelling and punctuation.

3.1.8 Input devices

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main features of input devices

- Evaluate the usefulness of specified input devices in a given scenario.

Examples/guidance

Devices include:

- QWERTY and concept keyboards

- Touch-screen devices

- Mice

- Joysticks

- Scanners (including barcode readers and OCR devices)

- Digital cameras (including webcams)

- Voice recognition.

3.1.9 Computing devices	

Candidates must be able to:	**Examples/guidance**
• Describe the main features of computing devices • Evaluate the usefulness of computing devices in a given scenario.	Computing devices include: • Desktop computers (including network workstations) • Portable computers (including laptops/netbooks and handheld devices such as PDAs (Personal Digital Assistants) and smart phones) • EPOS (Electronic Point of Sale) devices.

3.1.10 Output devices	

Candidates must be able to:	**Examples/guidance**
• Describe the main features of output devices • Evaluate the usefulness of output devices in a given scenario.	Output devices include: • Monitors • Printers • Data projectors • Speakers.

3.1.11 Storage devices

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main features of storage devices

- Analyse the benefits and drawbacks of storage devices

- Evaluate the usefulness of storage devices in a given scenario.

Examples/guidance

Storage devices include:

- Hard disks (internal and external)

- CDs (ROM, R and RW)

- DVDs (ROM, R and RW)

- Portable flash drives (eg USB memory sticks and memory cards)

- Magnetic tape

- Remote storage (eg web-based file storage services).

3.1.12 Back-up systems

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe how and why computer data should be backed up

- Analyse the benefits and drawbacks of backing up computer data

- Evaluate the effectiveness of back-up methods and systems in a given context.

Examples/guidance

Relevant issues include:

- Frequency of making back-up copies of data

- The choice of back-up media

- The location of back-up storage media.

3.1.13 Data security

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main measures available to protect computer systems

- Evaluate the usefulness of protection measures in a given scenario.

Examples/guidance

Data security measures include:

Software:

- Firewalls

- Anti-virus

- Anti-spam

- Anti-spyware

- Encryption

Permissions:

- Usernames and passwords

- Access rights

Physical access:

- Locked rooms

- Alarm systems

3.1.14 Systems to support e-commerce

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the systems needed to create, distribute, view and interact with web pages

- Analyse the benefits and drawbacks to business organisations and customers of e-commerce

- Assess the impact of e-commerce on business organisations and their customers.

Examples/guidance

- The understanding of the systems requirements for e-commerce should include situations where the business hosts its own website, as well as the role of hosting services.

- Drawbacks should include data security issues and the measures needed to overcome them.

3.2 Unit A266: *Developing business communication systems*

In this unit candidates will explore and suggest improvements to business communication systems, considering the impact on the business and its stakeholders.

This specification has been written to reflect the technologies which it is expected will be used by business organisations over the next few years. The technologies listed in the examples/guidance are not exhaustive however, and some may be superseded by those which emerge during the life of the qualification.

3.2.1 Business communication systems

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main elements of common business communication systems

- Assess the usefulness of commonly used business communication systems and make suggestions for improvement.

Examples/guidance

Candidates should understand that systems consist of the following elements:

- Purpose, eg to communicate information

- Medium, eg paper, electronic

- Hardware, eg input, output devices

- Software, eg operating systems, applications software

- Data storage – electronic or paper.

Candidates are not expected to have a detailed knowledge of these components.

Candidates are expected to be able to describe a broad range of commonly used systems. These include those typically found in organisations such as schools and profit-seeking businesses, for example:

- Systems based on office computers and software, including portable computing devices

- Communication systems based on verbal, phone and video technology, eg meetings and conferences (including video-conferencing).

3.2.2 Business communication

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main purposes of business communication

- Describe the main methods of business communication

- Describe the features of the media used by business organisations to communicate information

- Assess the benefits and drawbacks of the media for business communications

- Select and justify appropriate methods and media for business communications.

Examples/guidance

- To transmit, receive and exchange information and ideas

- Verbal/written/visual, internal/external, private/public

- Internal: memos, emails, notice boards, company newsletters, reports, meetings, intranet.
  External: letters (including mail-merge), flyers, leaflets, brochures, Internet and email.

3.2.3 The role of business communication systems in the success or failure of organisations

Candidates must be able to:

- Assess the impact on business organisations of effective or ineffective communication systems.

Examples/guidance

Candidates must be able to assess the impact on business organisations of both existing and proposed communication systems.

3.2.4 The differing interests of stakeholders

Candidates must be able to:

- Identify the main types of stakeholder

- Describe the main interests of selected stakeholders

- Analyse how the interests of selected stakeholders may conflict with each other and the business organisation

- Assess the impact of business activity on stakeholders.

Examples/guidance

Candidates must consider the impact on various stakeholders of an organisation's existing and proposed business communication systems.

Examples of stakeholders include:

- Owners/management

- Employees

- Customers

- Suppliers.

3.2.5 Communication devices

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main features of communication devices

- Evaluate the usefulness of communication devices in a given scenario.

Examples/guidance

Communication devices include:

- Mobile phones (including web-enabled phones and devices with phone and/or email capability, eg PDAs and 'blackberrys')

- Fax

- Video conferencing

- Satellite navigation systems (eg in-car)

- Radio-frequency identification (RFID) systems.

3.2.6 Capabilities and limitations of ICT-based systems

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe factors affecting the effectiveness of ICT-based systems

- Evaluate ICT-based systems from different perspectives.

Examples/guidance

Relevant factors include:

- Cost (start-up and operating)

- Ease of use

- Fitness for purpose

- Security

- Health and safety

- Environmental sustainability.

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the actions which need to be taken to develop and improve business communication systems
- Assess the impact on business organisations and employees of changes to business communication systems.

Examples/guidance

Actions include:

- Planning improvements (including setting objectives) and producing an action plan
- Implementing improvements (including testing and refining)
- Evaluation of impact.

Candidates should understand that this is a continuous cycle.

Impact includes:

- Cost
- Training implications
- Changing job roles, eg re-skilling, multi-tasking, responsible for own administration and document production
- Changing working practices, eg home-based working, working while travelling/away from office, videoconferencing
- Redundancies/new employment opportunities.

3.2.8 Documents to support a proposal for a new business communication system

Candidates must be able to:

- Produce a formal business report using ICT

- Produce a document for a group of stakeholders to secure their support for the business proposal.

Examples/guidance

Formal business report to include:

- Introduction

- Terms of reference

- Evidence

- Recommendations

- Conclusions.

Report to incorporate, as appropriate:

- Text

- Graphics

- Images

- Graphs

- Charts

- Tables.

Document types to include:

- Slide-show presentation

- Intranet web page(s)

- Letter

- Leaflet.

3.3   Unit A267: *ICT skills for business communication systems*

In this unit candidates will develop the knowledge, understanding and practical skills needed to maintain and use business communication systems based on standard office software.

This specification has been written to reflect the technologies which it is expected will be used by business organisations over the next few years. The technologies listed in the examples/guidance are not exhaustive however, and some may be superseded by those which emerge during the life of the qualification.

3.3.1 Word processing/desktop publishing/presentation software

Candidates must be able to:

- Recall files

- Enter, organise, create, refine and format information using fully blocked style and open punctuation

- Apply editing techniques, using templates, to create and print professional documents in a variety of formats including:

  - Business letter (including mail merge)

  - Memorandum

  - Notice of meeting and agenda

  - Training/conference programme

  - Flyer/leaflet

  - Business report

  - Slide-show presentation

- Incorporate text, tables, mail-merged fields, graphics and images (including charts and graphs) where appropriate.

3.3.2 Spreadsheet software

Candidates must be able to:

- Use an existing single worksheet in order to solve business problems

- Recall files, edit (including delete, insert data, cells, rows and columns) and print

- Insert, edit and replicate appropriate functions and formulae, including absolute and relative cell referencing

- Use appropriate formatting

- Create and develop appropriate charts and graphs, using suitable labels

- Use an existing spreadsheet as a datasource in a mailmerge

3.3.3 Database software

Candidates must be able to:

- Use an existing flat-file database in order to solve business problems

- Recall files, enter, organise, select, delete and edit records using field names and headings, data types and unique record identifier, when appropriate, and print

- Create queries to search for specified data using single and multiple criteria

- Sort records on one or more fields in ascending or descending order

- Create reports based upon the results of queries

- Use an existing database as a datasource in a mailmerge

3.3.4 Graphics software

Candidates must be able to:

- Recall files, select, size, crop and position images which are fit for purpose

- Insert edited images into final document and print.

3.3.5 Software

Candidates must be able to:

- Describe the main features of software

- Assess the benefits and drawbacks of specified software

- Evaluate the usefulness of software in a given scenario.

Examples/guidance

Software will include that used in Unit A266 and above, plus:

- Email systems

- Web-browsers

- Project-planning software

- Diary-management software

- Web 2.0 applications, eg wikis and blogs

- Web creation software

Evaluation to include:

- The choice of open source or proprietary software

- Location of software, eg stored on local server or accessed via the Internet

- Extent to which software supports collaboration and team working.

4 Schemes of Assessment

4.1 GCSE Scheme of Assessment

GCSE Business and Communication Systems (J230)	
Unit A265: *Businesses and their communication systems*	
50% of the total GCSE marks 1 hr 30 minutes written paper 90 marks	Candidates answer **all** questions.
	This unit is externally assessed.
Unit A266: *Developing business communication systems*	
25% of the total GCSE marks Controlled Assessment 60 marks	Candidates choose **one scenario** from a choice of two scenarios. Candidates complete the set tasks and activities.
	It is recommended that up to ten hours are spent on research and up to five hours on writing up.
	For guidance on the suggested total length of each candidate's Controlled Assessment evidence see section 5.3.4.
	A new set of Controlled Assessment materials are issued each year.
	This unit is internally assessed and externally moderated.
Unit A267: *ICT skills for business communication systems*	
25% of the total GCSE marks 1 hr practical examination 60 marks	This examination has **two** tasks.
	Candidates complete **both** tasks.
	This unit is externally assessed.

4.2 Entry Options

GCSE candidates must be entered for all three units.

Candidates must be entered for certification to claim their overall GCSE qualification grade. All candidates should be entered under the following certification code:

OCR GCSE in Business and Communication Systems – J230.

4.3 Tiers

This scheme of assessment is untiered, covering all of the ability range grades from A* to G. Candidates achieving less than the minimum mark for Grade G will be ungraded.

4.4 Assessment Availability

There are two examination series each year, in January and June.

In 2010 and onwards, GCSE units will be assessed as follows:

	January 2010	June 2010	January 2011	June 2011	January 2012 etc	June 2012 etc
Unit A265: Businesses and their communication systems		✓		✓		✓
Unit A266: Developing business communication systems		✓		✓		✓
Unit A267: ICT skills for business communication systems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

GCSE certification is available for the first time in June 2011, and each June thereafter.

4.5 Assessment Objectives

Candidates are expected to demonstrate the following in the context of the content described:

AO1   Recall, select and communicate

- Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of concepts, issues and terminology

AO2   Apply skills, knowledge and understanding

- Apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks

AO3   Analyse and evaluate evidence

- Analyse and evaluate evidence, make reasoned judgements and present appropriate conclusions

AO weightings

The relationship between the units and the assessment objectives of the scheme of assessment is shown in the following grid.

Unit	% of GCSE			Total
	AO1	AO2	AO3	
Unit A265: *Businesses and their communication systems*	20	15	15	50%
Unit A266: *Developing business communication systems*	5	10	10	25%
Unit A267: *ICT skills for business communication systems*	10	10	5	25%
	35%	35%	30%	100%

4.6 Quality of Written Communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in units A265 and A266. It will be assessed qualitatively, as an integral part of the judgement on a question. Questions in which quality of written communication is to be assessed will be indicated on the question paper accordingly (*).

Candidates are expected to:

* Ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear

* Present information in a form which suits its purpose

* Use a suitable structure and style of writing.

5   Controlled Assessment

5.1   The Controlled Assessment Unit

Unit A266 has been designed to be internally assessed and externally moderated, applying the principles of Controlled Assessment. Controls are set within the assessment in order that validity and reliability are ensured and the assessors can confidently authenticate the candidates' work. These controls take a variety of forms in each of the stages of the assessment process: task setting, task taking and task marking. There are different levels of control within each of these three stages. This section sets out the overall OCR approach for this GCSE. Further clarification can be found in the specimen Controlled Assessment material for the unit.

Centres are reminded of the need to comply with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Instructions for Conducting Coursework.

5.2   Task Setting

5.2.1 The OCR approach

OCR will assume a high level of control for task setting. A new set of tasks will be available from OCR each year for the controlled assessment unit. The candidate will carry out necessary research in order to respond to the series of tasks. These tasks have been designed to meet the full assessment requirements of the unit. It is important that before candidates begin the assessment, they are equipped with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills, as given in the unit specification for Unit A266.

5.2.2 Using Controlled Assessment tasks

The candidate must select an appropriate business to study from the sector stated by OCR. OCR will state the stakeholder that must be investigated in the context of business communication systems of the business selected. The series of tasks which the candidates must complete are supplied by OCR. Candidates can change the business to allow them to use the local resources available to any centre. It should be noted that the sectors have been chosen to be as wide ranging as possible to suit all centre requirements.

The live Controlled Assessment material must NOT be used as practice Controlled Assessment material. Centres should use past Controlled Assessment tasks or devise their own practice material using the OCR specimen Controlled Assessment task as guidance.

5.3   Task Taking

5.3.1 The OCR approach

For GCSE in Business Communication Systems, OCR will assume a limited level of control for research and a high level of control for the writing up of findings. The task-taking parameters will be defined for several key controls and the remainder set by centres as outlined below.

5.3.2 Definitions of the controls

(a) **Authenticity control:** The candidate can complete the research individually or in a group without direct teacher supervision. The writing up of findings must be completed individually and under direct supervision. The teacher must be able to authenticate the work.

(b) **Feedback control:** Feedback to the candidate will be permissible but tightly defined. Within this specification, OCR expects teachers to equip candidates with the knowledge, understanding and skills before they begin the tasks. It should be remembered that candidates are required to reach their own judgements and conclusions without any guidance or assistance from others. When supervising tasks, teachers are expected to:

- Exercise continuing supervision of work in order to monitor progress and to prevent plagiarism

- Exercise continuing supervision of practical work to ensure essential compliance with Health and Safety requirements

- Ensure that the work is completed in accordance with the specification requirements and can be assessed in accordance with the specified marking criteria and procedures.

(c) **Time Control:** OCR recommends that the tasks should be completed within 15 hours (10 hours for research and 5 hours for writing up) and supervised and marked by the teacher. Some of the work, by its very nature, may be undertaken outside the centre, eg research work. The use and application of the research material will be undertaken under direct teacher supervision. With all internally assessed work, the teacher must be satisfied that the work submitted for assessment is the candidate's own work and be able to authenticate it using the specified procedure in section 5.4.4.

(d) **Collaboration control:** Group work is permissible for the research phase of this unit. However, each candidate must write up all work individually. Candidates will write up the outcome of the group work on an individual basis before forming their own conclusions.

(e) **Resource control:** Access to resources will be limited to those appropriate to the tasks. Candidates will need to be provided with the most appropriate materials and equipment to allow them full access to the marking criteria but this must be closely monitored and supervised. During the writing up of findings, candidates should only have access to the notes which they have made during the research/data collection phase of task taking. It is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that these are only research notes and that they do not include a draft or final version of the task; the writing up of findings must be completed under supervised conditions.

The centre must ensure that candidates do not have access to email or the Internet, or any information which is not their research notes, when they are writing up their findings in the supervised conditions.

5.3.3 Quality assuring the controls

It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that the controls set out in the specification and this individual unit are imposed.

5.3.4 Completing the tasks

The candidate will be provided with sufficient time to complete all of the tasks (see sections 4.1 and 5.3.2). It is suggested that evidence is produced in a number of sessions, each focusing on a specific task/activity. Candidates should spend an appropriate length of time (up to ten hours) on the research phase for this assessment. There will be a direct correlation between the length of time spent on research and the availability of resources/information. Candidates should spend up

to five hours responding to the chosen Controlled Assessment tasks/activities. OCR recommends that each candidate's Controlled Assessment evidence be presented in approximately 2000 words.

Each candidate must produce individual and authentic evidence for each of the tasks/activities. It is particularly important that those candidates who conducted research as part of a group still produce individual evidence.

The teacher may give appropriate support and guidance to the candidate during the research phase of this unit but not during the writing-up phase. This support and guidance should focus on checking that candidates understand what is expected of them. It is not acceptable for the teacher to provide model responses or to work through answers in detail.

The research will then help the candidate to produce evidence which is clearly targeted to meeting the assessment requirements of each of the tasks.

The candidate must also be guided on the use of information to ensure that confidentiality and intellectual property rights are maintained at all times. It is essential that any material directly used from a source is appropriately referenced. The candidate will be required to include a bibliography which is submitted with the completed report at the point of internal assessment and external moderation.

5.3.5 Presentation of work

Candidates must observe certain procedures in the production of Controlled Assessments:

- Charts, graphs, images and tables may be produced using appropriate ICT. These should be inserted into the candidate's evidence at the appropriate place.

- Any copied material must be suitably acknowledged.

- Quotations must be clearly marked and a reference provided wherever possible.

- Work submitted for moderation or marking must be marked with the:

  – Centre number
  – Centre name
  – Candidate number
  – Candidate name
  – Unit code and title
  – Assignment title.

Work submitted on paper for moderation or marking must be secured by treasury tags. Work submitted in digital format must be in a suitable file structure with each file clearly named as outlined in Appendix B.

5.4   Task Marking

5.4.1 The OCR approach

For this GCSE, OCR will assume a medium level of control in relation to the marking of tasks. All Controlled Assessments will be marked by the centre assessor(s) using awarding-body marking criteria and guidance and moderated by the OCR appointed moderator. For this GCSE, Controlled Assessment can be submitted for postal moderation or uploaded to the OCR Repository.

5.4.2 Applying the assessment criteria

The marking criteria detail the skills, knowledge and understanding which the candidate is required to demonstrate.

5.4.3 Use of 'best fit' approach to marking criteria

The tasks/activities should be marked by the teacher according to the given marking criteria using a 'best fit' approach. For each task/activity, the assessor should select the descriptors, provided in the marking criteria, which most closely describe the quality of the work being marked.

Marking should be positive, rewarding achievement rather than penalising failure or omissions. The award of marks **must be** directly related to the marking criteria.

Teachers use their professional judgement in selecting the descriptor which best describes the work of the candidate.

To select the most appropriate mark within this descriptor, teachers should use the following guidance:

- Where the candidate's work *convincingly* meets the descriptor, the higher marks in the mark range should be awarded.

- Where the candidate's work *adequately* meets the descriptor, the most appropriate mark in the middle range should be awarded.

- Where the candidate's work *just* meets the descriptor, the lower marks in the mark range should be awarded.

The final mark for the candidate for this unit is out of a total of 60 and is found by totalling the marks for each of the tasks/activities.

5.4.4 Authentication

Teachers/course tutors must be confident that the work they mark is the candidate's own. This does not mean that a candidate must be supervised throughout all of the research phase but the teacher must exercise sufficient supervision, or introduce sufficient checks, to be in a position to judge the authenticity of the candidate's work.

The candidate must not plagiarise. Plagiarism is the submission of another's work as one's own and/or failure to acknowledge the source correctly. Plagiarism is considered to be malpractice and could lead to the candidate being disqualified. Plagiarism sometimes occurs innocently when the candidate is unaware of the need to reference or acknowledge their sources. It is therefore important that centres ensure that candidates understand that the work they submit must be their own and that they understand the meaning of plagiarism and what penalties may be applied. Candidates may refer to research, quotations or evidence but they must list their sources. The potential risks of failing to acknowledge such material should be emphasised to candidates. Each candidate must sign a declaration to this effect. Centres should reinforce this message to ensure candidates understand what is expected of them.

Please note: Centres must confirm to OCR that the evidence produced by the candidate is authentic. It is a requirement of the QCA Common Criteria for all Qualifications that proof of authentication is received.

5.4.5 Internal standardisation

It is important that all internal assessors, working in the same subject area, work to common standards. Centres must ensure that the internal standardisation of marks across assessors and teaching groups takes place using an appropriate procedure.

This can be done in a number of ways. In the first year, reference material will provide a basis for centres' own standardisation. In subsequent years, this, or centres' own archive material, may be used. Centres are advised to hold preliminary meetings of staff involved to compare standards through cross-marking a small sample of work. After most marking has been completed, a further meeting at which work is exchanged and discussed will enable final adjustments to be made.

5.4.6 Moderation

All work is marked by the teacher and internally standardised by the centre. Marks are then submitted to OCR, after which, moderation takes place in accordance with OCR procedures: refer to the OCR website for submission dates of the marks to OCR. The purpose of moderation is to ensure that the standard of the award of marks for work is the same for each centre and that each teacher has applied the standards appropriately across the range of candidates within the centre.

The sample of work which is presented to the Moderator for moderation must show how the marks have been awarded in relation to the marking criteria.

5.5   Minimum Requirements for Controlled Assessment

There should be clear evidence that work has been attempted and some work produced.

If a candidate submits no work for an internally assessed component, then the candidate should be indicated as being absent from that component on the mark sheets submitted to OCR. If a candidate completes any work at all for an internally assessed component, then the work should be assessed according to the internal assessment objectives and marking instructions and the appropriate mark awarded, which may be zero.

6 Technical Information

6.1 Making Unit Entries

Please note that centres must be registered with OCR in order to make any entries, including estimated entries. It is recommended that centres apply to OCR to become a registered centre well in advance of making their first entries. Centres must have made an entry for a unit in order for OCR to supply the appropriate forms and/or moderator details for controlled assessments.

It is essential that unit entry codes are quoted in all correspondence with OCR.

For Unit A266 candidates must be entered for either component 01 or 02. Centres must enter all of their candidates for ONE of these components. It is not possible for centres to offer both components within the same series.

Unit entry code	Component code	Submission method	Unit titles
A265	-	-	*Businesses and their communication systems*
A266	/01	*OCR Repository*	*Developing business communication systems*
	/02	*Postal moderation*	
A267	-	-	*ICT skills for business communication systems*

6.2 Terminal Rules

Candidates must take at least 40% of the assessment in the same series they enter for the full course qualification certification.

Units can be taken in any order as long as the terminal rules are satisfied.

6.3   Unit and Qualification Re-sits

Candidates may re-sit each unit once before entering for certification for a GCSE.

Candidates may enter for the qualifications an unlimited number of times.

6.4   Making Qualification Entries

Candidates must enter for qualification certification separately from unit assessment(s). If a certification entry is **not** made, no overall grade can be awarded.

Candidates may enter for:

- GCSE certification (entry code J230).

A candidate who has completed all the units required for the qualification must enter for certification in the same examination series in which the terminal rules are satisfied.

GCSE certification is available for the first time in June 2011, and each June thereafter.

6.5   Grading

GCSE results are awarded on the scale A* to G. Units are awarded a* to g. Grades are indicated on certificates. However, results for candidates who fail to achieve the minimum grade (G or g) will be recorded as *unclassified* (U or u) and this is **not** certificated.

In unitised schemes, candidates can take units across several different series provided the terminal rules are satisfied. They can also re-sit units. When working out candidates' overall grades, OCR needs to be able to compare performance on the same unit in different series when different grade boundaries have been set, and between different units. OCR uses uniform marks to enable this to be done.

A candidate's uniform mark is calculated from the candidate's raw marks. The raw mark boundary marks are converted to the equivalent uniform mark boundary. Marks between grade boundaries are converted on a pro rata basis.

When unit results are issued, the candidate's unit grade and uniform mark are given. The uniform mark is shown out of the maximum uniform mark for the unit, eg 41/60.

The specification is graded on a Uniform Mark Scale. The uniform mark thresholds for each of the assessments are shown below:

(GCSE) Unit weighting	Maximum unit uniform mark	Unit grade								u
		a*	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	
25%	60	54	48	42	36	30	24	18	12	0
50%	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24	0

Candidate's uniform marks for each unit are aggregated and grades for the specification are generated on the following scale:

Qualification	Maximum uniform mark	Qualification grade									
		A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
GCSE	240	216	192	168	144	120	96	72	48	0

Awarding grades

The external assessments will have a total weighting of 75% and Controlled Assessment a weighting of 25%.

A candidate's uniform mark for each paper will be combined with the uniform mark for the Controlled Assessment to give a total uniform mark for the specification. The candidate's grade will be determined by the total uniform mark.

6.6 Enquiries about Results

Under certain circumstances, a centre may wish to query the result issued to one or more candidates. Enquiries about results for GCSE units must be made immediately following the series in which the relevant unit was taken (by the Enquiries about Results deadline).

Please refer to the *JCQ Post-Results Services* booklet and the *OCR Admin Guide* for further guidance about action on the release of results. Copies of the latest versions of these documents can be obtained from the OCR website.

6.7 Shelf-Life of Units

Individual unit results, prior to certification of the qualification, have a shelf-life limited only by that of the qualification.

6.8 Guided Learning Hours

GCSE Business and Communication Systems requires 120 to 140 guided learning hours in total.

6.9 Code of Practice/Subject Criteria/Common Criteria Requirements

This specification complies in all respects with the current *GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice* as available from the QCA website, *The Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications 2004* and the subject criteria for GCSE business subjects.

6.10 Classification Codes

Every specification is assigned to a national classification code indicating the subject area to which it belongs. The classification code for this specification is 7460.

Centres should be aware that candidates who enter for more than one GCSE qualification with the same classification code will have only one grade (the highest) counted for the purpose of the School and College Performance Tables.

Centres may wish to advise candidates that, if they take two specifications with the same classification code, schools and colleges are very likely to take the view that they have achieved only one of the two GCSEs. The same view may be taken if candidates take two GCSE specifications that have different classification codes but have significant overlap of content. Candidates who have any doubts about their subject combinations should seek advice, for example from their centre or the institution to which they wish to progress.

6.11 Disability Discrimination Act Information Relating to this Specification

GCSEs often require assessment of a broad range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher-level courses.

The revised GCSE qualifications and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this was the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments and to demonstrate what they know and can do. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to the assessment. Information on reasonable adjustments is found in *Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations* produced by the Joint Council www.jcq.org.uk.

Candidates who are unable to access part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

The access arrangements permissible for use in this specification are in line with QCA's GCSE subject criteria equalities review and are as follows:

	Yes/No	Type of assessment
Readers	Y	All written examinations
Scribes	Y	All written examinations
Practical assistants	Y	All written examinations
Word processors	Y	All written examinations
Transcripts	Y	All written examinations
BSL signers	Y	All written examinations
Live speaker	Y	All written examinations
MQ papers	Y	All written examinations
Extra time	Y	All written examinations

6.12 Arrangements for Candidates with Particular Requirements

Candidates who are not disabled under the terms of the DDA may be eligible for access arrangements to enable them to demonstrate what they know and can do. Candidates who have been fully prepared for the assessment but who are ill at the time of the examination, or are too ill to take part of the assessment, may be eligible for special consideration. Centres should consult the *Regulations and Guidance Relating to Candidates who are Eligible for Adjustments in Examinations* produced by the Joint Council.

6.13 OCR Repository

The OCR Repository allows centres to submit moderation samples in electronic format.

The OCR GCSE Business and Communication Systems unit A266 can be submitted electronically to the OCR Repository via Interchange: please check section 6.1 for unit entry codes for the OCR Repository.

More information on the OCR Repository can be found in Appendix B: Guidance for the Production of Electronic Controlled Assessment. Instructions for how to upload files to OCR using the OCR Repository can be found on OCR Interchange.

6.14 Unit A267 – The Practical Examination

This is a computer-based practical examination.

Prior to each examination series, OCR will issue the question paper and related data files to centres. The minimum software requirement for your centre to be able to run this examination is Office 2003, which must include Access, Excel, PowerPoint and Word. It is the responsibility of your centre to ensure that the software is available to all candidates on the day of the timetabled examination.

Further guidance on how to administer this examination is found in the teacher support materials which can be downloaded from OCR's website (www.ocr.org.uk)

7   Other Specification Issues

7.1   Overlap with other Qualifications

There is a small amount of overlap between the content of this specification and the content of other business and business-related subject specifications.

7.2   Progression from these Qualifications

GCSE qualifications are general qualifications which enable candidates either to progress directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Progression to further study from GCSE will depend upon the number and nature of the grades achieved. Broadly, candidates who are awarded mainly Grades D to G at GCSE could either strengthen their base through further study of qualifications at Level 1 within the National Qualifications Framework or could proceed to Level 2. Candidates who are awarded mainly Grades A* to C at GCSE would be well prepared for study at Level 3 within the National Qualifications Framework.

7.3 Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social, Legislative, Economic and Cultural Issues

This specification offers opportunities which can contribute to an understanding of these issues in the following units:

	Unit A265	Unit A266	Unit A267
Spiritual			
Moral	✔		
Ethical	✔		
Social	✔	✔	✔
Legislative	✔	✔	✔
Economic	✔	✔	✔
Cultural		✔	

There are no spiritual issues covered in this specification.

7.4 Sustainable Development, Health and Safety Considerations and European Developments, consistent with International Agreements

This specification supports these issues, consistent with current EU agreements, in the following topics:

Unit A265: The legal framework; manual (paper) and computer-based systems

Unit A266: Capabilities and limitations of ICT-based systems.

7.5 Avoidance of Bias

OCR has taken great care in preparation of this specification and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind.

7.6   Language

This specification and associated assessment materials are in English only.

7.7   Key Skills

This specification provides opportunities for the development of the Key Skills of *Communication*, *Application of Number*, *Information Technology*, *Working with Others*, *Improving Own Learning and Performance* and *Problem Solving* at Levels 1 and/or 2. However, the extent to which this evidence fulfils the Key Skills criteria at these levels will be totally dependent on the style of teaching and learning adopted for each unit.

The following table indicates where opportunities may exist for at least some coverage of the various Key Skills criteria at Levels 1 and/or 2 for each unit.

Unit	C		AoN		IT		WwO		IoLP		PS	
	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
A265					✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
A266	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A267	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓

Detailed opportunities for generating Key Skills evidence through this specification are posted on the OCR website (www.ocr.org.uk). A summary document for Key Skills Coordinators showing ways in which opportunities for Key Skills arise within GCSE courses has been published.

7.8   ICT

In order to play a full part in modern society, candidates need to be confident and effective users of ICT. Where appropriate, candidates should be given opportunities to use ICT in order to further their study of Business and Communication Systems.

The assessment of this course requires candidates to:

- Explore and suggest improvements to business communication systems, considering the impact on the business and its stakeholders

- Develop the practical skills needed to maintain and use business communication systems based on standard office software

- Develop a detailed understanding of business communication systems, including the main hardware and software components, and how these systems are operated

- Gain a detailed understanding of these systems and develop their practical skills to become effective users of them.

7.9   Citizenship

Since September 2002, the National Curriculum for England at Key Stage 4 has included a mandatory programme of study for Citizenship. Parts of this Programme of Study may be delivered through an appropriate treatment of other subjects.

This section identifies where this specification might complement the programme of study for Citizenship.

1.2 Rights and responsibilities	
a	Exploring different kinds of rights and obligations and how these affect individuals and communities
b	Understanding that individuals, organisations and governments have responsibilities to ensure that rights are balanced, supported and protected
c	Investigating ways in which rights can compete and conflict, and understanding that hard decisions have to be made to try and balance these
2.1 Critical thinking and enquiry	
b	Research, plan and undertake enquiries into issues or problems, using a range of information, sources and methods

2.2	Advocacy and representation
c	Present a convincing argument that takes account of, and represents, different viewpoints, to try to persuade others to think again, change or support them
2.3	Taking informed and responsible action
a	Explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes
d	Assess critically the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future, and make recommendations for future action
3	Range and content
a	The study of citizenship should include political, legal and human rights and freedoms in a range of contexts from local to global
k	The study of citizenship should include the rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees
4	Curriculum opportunities
c	Opportunity for candidates to work individually or in groups, taking on different roles and responsibilities
h	Opportunity for candidates to take into account a range of contexts, such as school, neighbourhood, local, regional, national, European, international and global, as relevant to different topics
i	Opportunity for candidates to use and interpret different media and ICT both as sources of information and as a means of communicating ideas

Appendix A: Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the assessment may be balanced by better performance in others.

These business and business-related subject grade descriptors have been produced by the regulatory authorities in collaboration with the awarding bodies.

Grade F

Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of some basic aspects of concepts, theories, issues and current practice in business. They communicate their ideas using everyday language. They use some basic business terminology.

They carry out straightforward investigations and tasks using a limited range of skills. They apply some knowledge and understanding to select and organise basic information from a limited range of sources to investigate business organisations.

They identify some evidence to analyse problems and issues and make judgements. They present simple conclusions that are sometimes supported by evidence.

Grade C

Candidates recall, select and communicate sound knowledge and understanding of concepts, theories, issues and current practice in business. They use business terminology appropriately.

They plan and carry out investigations and tasks using a range of skills appropriately. They apply their knowledge and understanding to select and organise relevant information from a variety of sources to investigate business organisations in different contexts.

They use and evaluate evidence to analyse problems and issues with some accuracy, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions that are supported by evidence.

Grade A

Candidates recall, select and communicate detailed knowledge and thorough understanding of concepts, theories, issues and current practice in business. They understand and use business terminology accurately and appropriately.

They plan and carry out effectively a range of investigations and tasks using a wide range of skills competently. They apply their knowledge and critical understanding effectively to select and organise information from a wide range of sources, and to investigate business organisations in a variety of contexts.

They use and evaluate quantitative and qualitative evidence effectively with a high degree of accuracy to analyse problems and issues, and make informed and reasoned judgements to present reasoned and substantiated conclusions.

Appendix B: Guidance for the Production of Electronic Controlled Assessment

The Controlled Assessment in Unit A266 comprises two tasks. For each candidate, each task/activity together forms a Controlled Assessment portfolio, stored electronically.

Structure for evidence

A Controlled Assessment portfolio is a collection of folders and files containing the candidate's evidence. Folders should be organised in a structured way in order that the evidence can be accessed easily by a teacher or moderator. This structure is commonly known as a folder tree. It would be helpful if the location of particular evidence is made clear by naming each file and folder appropriately and by use of an index, called 'Home Page'.

There should be a top level folder detailing the candidate's centre number, candidate number, surname and forename, together with the Unit code A266, so that the portfolio is clearly identified as the work of one candidate.

Each candidate's Controlled Assessment portfolio should be stored in a secure area on the centre network.

Data formats for evidence

In order to minimise software and hardware compatibility issues, it will be necessary to save candidates' work using an appropriate file format.

Candidates must use formats appropriate to the evidence that they are providing and appropriate to viewing for assessment and moderation. Open file formats or proprietary formats for which a downloadable reader or player is available are acceptable. Where this is not available, the file format is not acceptable.

Electronic Controlled Assessment is designed to give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do using current technology. Candidates do not gain marks for using more sophisticated formats or for using a range of formats. A candidate who chooses to use only word documents will not be disadvantaged by that choice.

Evidence submitted is likely to be in the form of word-processed documents, PowerPoint presentations and digital photos.

To ensure compatibility, all files submitted must be in the formats listed below. Where new formats become available that might be acceptable, OCR will provide further guidance. OCR advises against changing the file format that the document was originally created in. It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the electronic portfolios submitted for moderation are accessible to the moderator and fully represent the evidence available for each candidate.

Accepted File Formats
Structured markup formats
XML (*xml)
Microsoft Office suite
PowerPoint (.ppt)
Word (.doc)
Excel (.xls)
Visio (.vsd)
Project (.mpp)
Text formats
Comma Separated Values (.csv)
PDF (.pdf)
Rich text format (.rtf)
Text document (.txt)