



General Certificate of Education

Applied Business 8611/8613

**BS05 Business Communication and
Information Systems**

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - January series

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General Comments

Candidates were able to cope with both the practical and written elements of the paper, although a significant minority appeared not to recognise command words such as “explain”, “analyse” and “discuss” which prevented them from achieving the higher marks. A minority of centres compromised candidates with incorrect entry of pre-release data. The majority of centres failed to submit centre copies of the spreadsheet, email and *HGP* report, which made it difficult to judge whether or not technical errors were a problem with the candidate’s submitted work. Instructions provided in the Materials List clearly state that a hard copy of the centre’s original file (Tutor’s copy) should be submitted.

Question One

- (a)(i)–(v) Generally candidates were able to update the spreadsheet and the majority could insert formulae. However, a significant minority could not replicate a formula or did not print out a copy showing the formulae, as required.
- (a)(vi) Most candidates could produce a line graph and also provide a title, a legend and axis labels. However, again, a significant minority could not put two lines on one graph.
- (b) Most candidates were able to create an email with relevant information. However, many did not use appropriate language and did not appear to understand the purpose of the email; defining expected and reported stock rather than addressing the issue of the 134 expected and the 110 reported items. In a large number of cases no appropriate action, eg check stock levels again, or provide an explanation for the discrepancy, was offered.
- (c) The majority of candidates were able to create a report on the progress of the *HGP* order and import the graph from (a)(vi) as required. Those who gained the higher marks explained the lack of progress in installing the computers, related this to the difficulty of completing the order by the end of February and reached the conclusion that the deadline would have to be renegotiated. Weaker answers were not addressed correctly, eg *HGP* instead of *InfoFix*, and did not include the graph. Many candidates included reference to the stock problems rather than the installation of computers, and, in many cases, the language was inappropriate for this type of communication.

Question Two

- (a) Most candidates were able to describe the layout of the quarterly report and many could explain the features of the report in terms of the layout and clarity of information. However, very few candidates linked these features to the requirements of Head Office, such as the need to input data correctly and quickly, and therefore did not achieve the highest marks.
- (b) The majority of candidates were unable to explain relevant security issues as a result of the Project Managers working from home, and this needs to be addressed. Too many answers related to the Data Protection Act or showed a lack of understanding about remote working. To gain higher marks, the candidates needed to describe the impact of viruses on the Head Office system and unauthorised viewing of confidential information contained in emails and fax print outputs.

- (c) Most candidates were able to state possible advantages of an online form, although the weakest answers concentrated on comparing this option with a paper-based system. Better responses used Item B to explain and analyse the possible advantages to *InfoFix* of the online form such as the creation of data validation rules. Very few candidates offered an evaluation of the relative importance of the possible features of the online form, and the recognition of command words such as “discuss” should be addressed.

Question Three

- (a) & (b) Most candidates were able to provide a logical order for the tasks and describe why they had chosen to put the tasks in their chosen priority for completion. However, there was less evidence of “justifying” the order in terms of analysing the relative importance of the tasks and making a judgement about why some tasks were more important than others. A significant number of candidates did not recognise the importance of business communication in the process of relocation (tasks 8, 4 & 3) and, as this is fundamental to the specification, it should be addressed by centres before the next series of examinations.
- (c) Most candidates were able to identify a suitable type of software, but very few explained why their chosen software would be suitable for the circumstances described, ie to communicate schedules and key information clearly and succinctly in a meeting environment.

Quality of Written Communication

This was assessed in questions 2(c) and 3(b). Most candidates provided responses in continuous prose, although very few achieved higher level AO4 marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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