

# **Examiner's Report**

**December 2017 Session**

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**Paper 2**

**Business Communication and  
Organization and Management**

## **General Comments**

This question paper focuses on three competency levels: awareness, knowledge, and application. Every component of the syllabus is assigned a level of competence to help candidates allocate their time and effort in studying each of them. Candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding of the essential communication skills and knowledge of the basic concepts of organisation and management expected of accounting technicians.

The overall performance was a bit disappointing as compared with the previous examination sessions. The main reason for failure was candidates' poor performance in the compulsory questions in Section B and the essay-type questions in Section C which required the application of the relevant knowledge to a business scenario.

### **Section A – 15 Multiple-choice Questions**

Candidates generally performed well in this section although some failed poorly. The questions were set to test the understanding of the basic concepts of Business Communication (BC) and Organization & Management (O&M). This seems to reflect that some candidates still failed to cover the whole syllabus adequately.

### **Section B – 3 Compulsory Questions**

There were three compulsory short questions which tested candidates' comprehension of various BC and O&M subjects. Candidates were required to show their understanding of the relevant key concepts and their ability to describe and discriminate the components of the concepts and their interrelationships. They were also expected to give short and precise answers to these questions.

The overall performance was not satisfactory. Many seemed to have difficulty in answering questions which required knowledge of day-to-day business communication. This reflects candidates were not well-prepared for this examination. Candidates are strongly advised to study in detail all the topics of the syllabus.

#### **Question B1**

Part (a) tested candidates' ability to write a short paragraph using eight given words/phrases. Although these words/phrases are frequently used in business communication, some failed to use them to write some grammatically correct and coherent sentences. Many misused the words: "reassert", "linkage" and "core competences". Part (b) of this question, which asked candidates to identify the characteristics of verbal communication, was generally performed satisfactorily.

#### **Question B2**

Candidates generally answered poorly in this question. The question tested candidates' understanding of various types of reports, and the meanings of abbreviation, acronym and contraction. Although these areas had been tested previously, quite a number failed to distinguish the differences and give examples. This shows that candidates had difficulty in explaining the key concepts in business communication.

#### **Question B3**

Candidates' performance in this question was unsatisfactory. The question asked candidates to explain the strategies for organisations entering the international markets and the types of plans classified in terms of breadth. Most candidates failed to read the question carefully and gave irrelevant answers such as the importance of conducting business internationally, thus resulting in low marks.

## **Section C – 3 Optional Questions**

In this section, candidates were required to answer two out of the three optional essay-type questions. These questions tested candidates' ability to apply their knowledge, within the context of a given problem or real world situation, to the requirements of the questions. Candidates were expected to understand and analyse the information given and organise their answers in accordance with the specific requirements of each question.

Each essay-type question in this section incorporated both BC and O&M subjects. The overall performance varied greatly amongst candidates. Candidates who answered just one question in this section could hardly pass the examination.

### **Question C1**

Very few candidates attempted this question and the performance was average. Part (a) of the question examined candidates' knowledge of new product development. Despite this subject area has been well discussed in the study text, many were unable to answer according to the requirement of the question. Parts (b) and (c) asked candidates to state the advantages and disadvantages of using visual elements and the reasons for citing the sources of information in writing. Candidates generally performed better in these parts.

### **Question C2**

This question was divided into two parts. Part (a) required candidates, in their role as the general manager of a company, to write a recommendation letter in reply to the prospective employer of her personal assistant who was looking for another job. Part (b) asked candidates to name and explain the selection tools commonly used in recruitment.

For part (a), not many candidates managed to produce a reasoned and objective recommendation letter. While most failed to accentuate the writer's capacity and relationship with the applicant and provide contact information for future enquiries, many had difficulty even in writing comprehensible sentences and adopting a tone appropriate to the circumstances. Their major problems were:

- poor grammar / choice of expressions with many major spelling errors;
- poor organisation of content; and
- inappropriate letter layout.

For part (b), again quite a number of candidates failed to read the question carefully and stated recruitment sources which were inappropriate. Candidates' performance was generally unsatisfactory.

### **Question C3**

This question consisted of two parts. Part (a) asked candidates, in their role as an executive trainee of a manufacturing company having many plants in China, to write a memo report for the investigation on the high turnover problem at Dongguan plant and propose a solution. Part (b) examined candidates' ability to explain the types of product lines under BCG approach and analyse the respective market situations.

Only few candidates did well in part (a) and most scored average marks. Although many managed to state the causes of the high turnover and propose a solution, additional details relating to productivity loss and the benefits of taking prompt action were generally neglected. The majority further failed to state humbly the preparedness to further explain and supplement details as the role of executive trainee. Other common reasons for loss of marks included:

- blatant copying of sentences word for word from the narrative without including original ideas or additional supporting details/examples;
- poor grammar with many major spelling mistakes; and
- unpleasant tone and inappropriate memo layout.

Candidates generally performed satisfactorily in part (b).

### **Summary**

Candidates are strongly advised to study through **ALL** subject areas covered in the syllabus, particularly the O&M ones, failing which they could fail in the examination. In general, there is much room for improvement in their language skills. They should make efforts to practise well for the writing tasks in the examination.

**[ END OF EXAMINER'S REPORT ]**