



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Business and Communication
Systems 3126**

Foundation Tier 3126/2F

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - June series

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Foundation Tier – Controlled Test (3126/2F)

General

Almost all candidates attempted all five tasks, though not necessarily all the parts of each task. Some candidates completed the flyer but did not attempt the note. Possibly they either thought that question 5(c) was too demanding or found they had run out of time. Some candidates, particularly in the higher tier, might have gained more marks by tackling this question and spending less time on the flyer itself.

As usual, candidates displayed a high level of technical competence but found it harder to comment on and discuss their own and other's use of ICT. The mark scheme for any question (or series of questions) usually has either an implicit or explicit gradient of difficulty. Answers that are explained in detail and/or justified by reference to the paper or question scenarios will almost always receive additional marks.

It is essential that the process of printing out and collating the answers is managed effectively. Occasionally, an otherwise successful candidate would fail to include a printout and therefore lost marks. This often happened with the printout of the spreadsheet showing formulae. Though this was most likely to be a candidate error, it would be very sad if any candidates were to be disadvantaged just because they had forgotten to include a printout in their folder.

Centres are also reminded that candidates should present their work in **task order** in the official stationery folder. Every printout should include the centre number and candidate name and number. There is no need to use tags, staples or paper clips to secure the printouts – just folding the flap over the work is all that is necessary. It is very frustrating to remove these if work is in the wrong order or when the printout is in landscape format.

Task One

Many candidates made capitalisation errors when entering the sales data. Often no attempt was made to sort the records into descending order of "Sales value". Sometimes the "Number of sales" field was sorted instead.

The search in part d(i) was not always carried out – some candidates chose to sort the whole database on the "Supplier" field starting with the local suppliers. Others printed selected fields, such as "Group" and "Supplier", which did identify the correct records but lost the mark for printing all the fields. However, this mark was awarded, where relevant, for the answer to either question 1(c) or 1(d).

Task Two

It was very disappointing to see so many letters with an incorrect layout again. Candidates commonly gained only three or four of the ten marks. The date was often missing or incorrectly positioned, eg after the address, or on the right hand side, or was presented incorrectly, eg in all figure format or with the word "Date" or the day of the week in front of it.

Emma Field was rarely given a title and when she was, it was usually 'Mrs' or 'Miss'. The address was usually correct but the salutation was often 'Dear Emma Field' or just 'To Emma'. The complimentary close was frequently wrong or spelt incorrectly and the signatory was often either just 'Paul' or the candidate's name.

Candidates often did not get the marks for open punctuation, correct line spacing and fully blocked style because they put a comma after the salutation, did not leave a clear line space after it, and indented the first line of the letter.

Many of the marks for the content of the letter would have been gained just by using the wording of the question. This was rarely done well in response to question 2(b) where candidates were meant to comment on Paul's desire to both stock more local products and to attend the meeting. However, question 2(c) produced some good answers with references to local products and their delivery.

Most candidates closed the letter by thanking Emma for her help but the spelling and grammar were often incorrect.

Task Three

The vast majority of candidates were able to create a table with five columns. However, the title was often missing or incorrect – some reference should have been made to local producers or farms, which the more able candidates recognised and included. The headings of the columns were usually sensible and the data inserted correctly, although the produce was sometimes given as 'Apples' rather than 'Apple juice'. 'Cindy Hoove' and 'Marsh Farm' were nearly always included but not always with correct spelling and capitalisation. The number of lines for data was often just fourteen rather than fifteen, as candidates had created the table with the correct number of rows but then did not realise that the headings would take up one of them. The gridlines were nearly always shown.

Most candidates only scored two marks on the memo headings – they often stated that it was from 'Cindy Hoove' or 'Emma Field' rather than themselves and the subject was usually incorrect, eg "Fresh Fare". Question 3(d)(ii) was usually well answered – suggestions for pieces of information to add to the product table included address, telephone number, e-mail address and price. Some explanations of why these would help Paul were inadequate but the better candidates did well.

The advantages of database software were often poorly explained. Comments often implied that the candidates were confusing databases and spreadsheets, with few references to searching and sorting. The specific disadvantages of database software were often lost amongst such comments as 'the computer could get a virus, or crash and lose all your data'. The quality of communication rarely received all three marks.

Task Four

Candidates from some centres exhibited a high level of spreadsheet skills often gaining full marks for this task.

The first printout was usually completed correctly. A few candidates added the "Rate per hour" to the "Hours worked" rather than multiplying them. However, they could still get two marks for filling the formula down the column as well as the remaining marks as the 'own figure rule' applied. Formatting the figures correctly was a problem for some who either formatted them all as currency or none of them. The "Rate per hour" column was often incorrectly formatted. The formulae printout was missing in some cases but when present it was usually correct.

Nearly all candidates created a **pie** chart, but occasionally it had numerous segments rather than just the two required. The title could be incomplete with the words "Weekly wages" or "Total wages" rather than "Total weekly wage". When the segments were labelled correctly the default legend was often not removed. Alternatively, the segments were not labelled and a key was included instead. The chart was usually printed on a separate sheet.

Task Five

Most candidates created an impressive flyer demonstrating the effective use of a variety of tools, but then failed to obtain marks for the explanation of how those tools would meet the targets. It was obvious that some candidates had spent a long time creating the flyer and possibly penalising themselves by not having enough time to do the 'Note' or to have time to think properly about their answer to it.

Many candidates gained all eight marks for the tools used but some lost out by using Word Art for every piece of text. It should be noted that neither a colour printer nor Clip Art were necessary in order to gain all these marks as credit was given for choice of different font types and sizes, underscore, shading, bold, italics, centring, line spacing, bullet points and tabs, as well as any graphics included. The name and address of the business, the fruits and their prices were often correct, although some candidates did not realise that the address of the business was on the letter heading in task two, and made up an address.

Most candidates only gained two of the three marks for question 5(c)(i), as they did not use the correct term for the tool used, eg 'big writing', or their explanations were poor. Few gained any marks for question 5(c)(ii) as they did not refer to their **use of tools** at all but talked about the words or slogans they had used to encourage people to buy the tropical fruit.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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