

Examiner's report

MA1 Management Information

For CBE and Paper exams covering July to December 2017

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General Comments

The examination paper consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions, each worth 2 marks.

The three questions below, covering different aspects of the syllabus, are examples of questions that candidates found difficult. This report explains, for each sample question, the basis for the correct answer and for each of the incorrect options selected by candidates.

Sample Questions for Discussion

Example 1

Which of the following is an essential feature of useful management information?

- A** Completely accurate
- B** Appropriate for any purpose
- C** Cost effective
- D** Distributed regularly

The majority of candidates incorrectly selected option A, that useful management information has to be completely accurate. Although accuracy would be preferred, it is not essential.

Management information needs to be useful for the purpose it was requested for. It should be communicated in the style, format, detail and complexity which address the needs of users of the information. It does not have to be appropriate for any purpose as per option B.

Management information does not need to be distributed regularly as in option D, but communicated in time so that receiver of the information has enough time to decide appropriate actions based on the information received.

Only a few chose the correct answer of C that an essential feature of useful management information is that it must be cost effective. Information needs to be analysed for its benefits against the cost of obtaining it.

Example 2

Data relating to five direct workers in a production cost centre are listed in worker reference order on the spreadsheet below:

	A	B	C
1	Direct worker	Average output	
2	(reference)	(units per hour)	
3	DW06	24.6	
4	DW15	26.2	
5	DW17	22.9	
6	DW21	23.3	
7	DW22	22.4	
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Which of the following will result in the data being sorted by average output per hour with the most productive direct worker listed first?

- A Select the range A3:B7 and sort by column B descending
- B Select the range B3:B7 and sort by column B ascending
- C Select the range B3:B7 and sort by column B descending
- D Select the range A3:B7 and sort by column B ascending

The correct answer is A, to select the whole range of data excluding the description headings in rows 1 and 2. The data is connected as each average output level relates to an individual direct worker code so for example, DW06 produced an average output of 24.6 units per hour.

Then once the correct range of A3:B7 is selected, the data needs to be sorted by column B as descending (largest to smallest). Thus listing the most productive worker at the top as DW15 producing an average output of 26.2 units per hour.

	A	B
1	Direct worker	Average output
2	(reference)	(units per hour)
3	DW15	26.2
4	DW06	24.6
5	DW21	23.3
6	DW17	22.9
7	DW22	22.4

Most candidates selected D which would have selected the correct data but sorted from smallest to largest

Others chose C which selects the average output column but by sorting this column it organised it descending but incorrectly. Starting with 24.6 incorrectly but this isn't the highest.

Example 3

Which of the following statements, regarding the printing of spreadsheets on multiple pages, is/are correct?

- (1) The page break feature enables the contents of a page to be changed by dragging the automatic page break to a different location
- (2) The scaling feature, on the page layout tab, can be used to reduce text size to fit spreadsheet contents onto a specified number of pages.

- A** Both 1 and 2
- B** 1 only
- C** 2 only
- D** Neither 1 nor 2

The majority of candidates selected C by mistake only choosing statement 2 as being correct. The correct answer was in fact A in this question, that both statements were correct.

Summary

The three multiple-choice questions illustrated in this report reveal a number of misunderstandings, confusion or a lack of knowledge amongst candidates regarding the particular topics being examined.

In many cases this may be symptomatic of a more widespread problem which can only be overcome by a rigorous study program and by practicing objective test questions.

Candidates preparing for future examinations should try to ensure that they develop a clear understanding of the different areas of the syllabus, read questions carefully and think logically when answering them.