External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Administration
Level(s)	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

No adverse comments on the examination papers were received from centres, and reports from markers indicated that papers were considered to be well-balanced and fair.

Practical Abilities

Performance in the use of functions continued to improve. There were few instances of incomplete projects, and most candidates appeared to have attempted the level appropriate to their ability. However, many markers commented on poor accuracy of keyboarding.

Knowledge and Understanding

At Foundation level, most candidates performed well in this element. This was not the case at General/Credit level where candidates appeared to lack the breadth and depth of knowledge required to answer questions. It appeared that many candidates were not learning Course notes and were unable to answer questions on topics which have been examined in the past.

Problem Solving

At General/Credit level it is now evident that candidates are using advice previously given in External Assessment Reports and taking an **action** to solve a problem. However, at Credit level, many candidates do not achieve maximum marks due to not justifying the course of action to be taken.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Practical Abilities

At all levels, candidates largely performed well in the use of software functions. This was particularly clear in the following areas:

- the construction and manipulation of databases
- use of absolute cell references or named cells in spreadsheets
- printing of formulae
- creation of charts
- use of the internet

At Credit level, many markers commented on the effective production of mail-merged documents, and the improved layout and standard of the letters that were composed by candidates.

Knowledge and Understanding/Problem Solving

At Foundation level candidates performed well in the following areas: Organisation Charts, Health and Safety, completion of Hazard/Fault Report Form, Office Layout, Reprographics.

At General level candidates performed well in the following areas: Health and Safety, completion of Expenses Claim Form, Reception, Office Layout.

At Credit level candidates performed well in the following areas: Health and Safety, Reprographics, Travel, Working Environment/Practices, Reception.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Practical Abilities

Candidates experienced difficulty in the following areas: composing e-mail/e-diary text; inserting headings in Application Form/spreadsheet; distinguishing between hyphens and dashes; creation of footers as specified; spacing between paragraphs, capitalisation; keyboarding accuracy and in particular proof-reading all work. Many candidates lost marks in the Internet task as they did not show connection information for the journey. Many did not highlight relevant information.

Knowledge and Understanding/Problem Solving

At Foundation level candidates experienced difficulty in the following areas: spreadsheet formulae; the term ‘cell reference’; manual filing; tasks and duties undertaken by a Manager.

At General level candidates experienced difficulty in the following areas: Reprographics — difficulty explaining **how** equipment would be used in production; tasks and duties undertaken by specific job titles; paper-based sources; benefits of using spreadsheets; dealing with an Expenses Claim Form.

At Credit level candidates experienced difficulty in the following areas: tasks and duties undertaken by specific job titles; restructuring; manual filing; centralised filing system; Data Protection Act.

There were examples of candidates failing to read questions carefully and, therefore, misinterpreting what is asked. Candidates often experienced difficulty distinguishing between advantages/disadvantages and employer/employee.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Teachers are advised to study previous exam papers, solutions and marking schemes provided on the official SQA website. These provide the greatest insight into what is required of candidates in the external examinations.

Candidates should be trained to read each task/question carefully so that they understand what is being asked. This applies to all three elements of the course.

Practical Abilities

Candidates must be encouraged to proof-read all work carefully and to develop an appreciation of good practice, eg consistency of format within a task, limited use of varied fonts/formats etc. Any change in font and/or font size should be clearly identifiable. Candidates should also know when the use of capital letters, dashes/hyphens etc, is appropriate.

Candidates should also know the layout of a letter, essential information and good use of space in a notice. Any form created for manual completion should have a heading and appropriate spacing for the information to be entered. When constructing a database candidates must know of the need for a text field for telephone numbers.

All candidates must have e-mail access and be able to print — **for themselves** — messages which they have sent. They must also have access to an electronic diary and indicate clearly the duration of any appointments inserted.

When a search of the internet is required to find out details of a journey, all details for that journey must be included — this includes connection details. The relevant details must be highlighted so that the chosen journey is clearly indicated.

If using screenshots, candidates must ensure that they are clear enough for markers to check.

Knowledge and Understanding

Teachers may benefit from reviewing the information provided in previous External Assessment Reports. There is no substitute, however, for candidates learning their Course notes, and this should be encouraged by every means possible.

Problem Solving

Candidates should be instructed to state the **action** required to solve a problem. In addition, candidates at Credit level must be able to explain or justify why they have chosen a particular course of action.

Statistical information: update on Courses

STANDARD GRADE

Number of resulted entries in 2011	5890

Number of resulted entries in 2012	5319

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	12.1%
Grade 2	26.0%
Grade 3	18.4%
Grade 4	22.2%
Grade 5	13.1%
Grade 6	5.7%
Grade 7	0.8%
No award	1.7%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
KU	32	19	14	30	17	13	28	21	16
PS	33	24	18	30	20	15	27	17	12
PA	200	145	120	150	110	91	100	68	46