

Principal Assessor Report 2002

Assessment Panel:

Computing

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
included in this report**

Computing Studies Standard Grade

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	21115
Pre appeal	
Post appeal	

Number of entries in 2002	22177
Pre appeal	
Post appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

A continued healthy rise in candidate uptake.

General comments

The papers at all three levels seemed, well received, no significant difficulties were encountered during setting or marking.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

Not Applicable

Cut-off Scores

Actual cut-off marks are as follows:	Credit Paper		General Paper		Foundation Paper	
Band:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledge and Understanding	23	14	18	13	21	16
Problem Solving	23	17	24	15	23	17

Band Cut-offs *as percentages* of the maximum marks for each element (36 for both KU and PS)

560 COMPUTING STUDIES

	Credit Paper		General Paper		Foundation Paper	
Band:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledge and Understanding	64	39	50	36	58	44
Problem Solving	64	47	67	42	64	47

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

The markers meeting at General level may have to adjust marking standards to be slightly more lenient in future years in order to restore cut-offs nearer the 50 and 70% marks.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Candidates performed reasonably well at all levels , but, as in previous years, there was considerable variation. A fewer number of candidates seemed to be entered for the wrong level. Fewer candidates failed to attempt specific questions than in previous years, particularly at Foundation level..

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Foundation

As in previous years candidates did well in the questions relating to GPP. Question 1 referring to Databases was well done as was Question 2 Spreadsheets. Most markers reported a very good response to Question 5 Automated Systems. Nearly all candidates were aware of electronic mail question 7d. It was noted that candidates performed significantly better when picking from options rather than writing open responses. This may have helped to contribute to the slightly better responses in PS as opposed to KU questions.

General

There was a good response from many candidates and centres. It was noted that many candidates had been well drilled in the facts.

As with Foundation it was noted that the GPP question, Questions 1a,b Word Processing and 2a-e Spreadsheets were well attempted. The section on Automated Systems Questions 5a-c was well answered also.

Credit

Question 1d Most candidates were well aware of the Data Protection Act.
Question 2c referred to printer drivers and was well attempted.
Question 3e was well answered most candidates were familiar with integrated packages.
Most were familiar with closed loops Question 4di.
Most candidates had been well drilled in what a standard letter was and how it was created, Question 5f

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Foundation

Question 2 Formulas in spreadsheets caused a number of problems in what was otherwise a well answered question.
Question 3c Several markers commented that the knowledge of WIMPs was disappointing.
Too few candidates knew what was contained on a bar code Question 6aii
Knowledge of networks was varied Question 6ci
Knowledge of integration was poor among many candidates Question 4b.

General

Question 3 Databases showed that many candidates still mix up Search and Sort.

Question 4 required a fair degree of reading but was felt to be straight forward. Many candidates found the application of CDP to this postal scenario difficult.

Question 5cii It was interesting to note that whilst many candidates knew closed loop control was needed here, they found it difficult to explain why.

Many candidates could not give two standard features of an Operating System Question 6f

Credit

Question 1b caused many problems as even at Credit level very few candidates realised that the Sort had been carried out on the Name field as well as the Height in order to obtain the given table.

Many found it difficult to decide if question 2bi was Validation or Verification.

Question 4fii Few candidates knew that a stylus was used with a palmtop computer. Many used the phrase 'light-pen' which was unacceptable.

Areas of common misunderstanding

Foundation

Many candidates were unaware that price is not held on a bar code and therefore failed to give correct responses to Question 6ii

General

Credit

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Foundation

At this level candidates appear to be making a better attempt than in previous years. There are fewer candidates failing to make a reasonable attempt at the paper.

Some candidates however still do not attempt all questions even picking questions are left completely blank in some cases.

Many candidates are not reading over their scripts and hence leaving silly mistakes and omissions on their scripts.

Some candidates still present scripts which are difficult to read. It is noticeable that the level of handwriting which is forwarded without a scribe's help varies dramatically from centre to centre.

General

Many candidates find it difficult to explain a situation. This is illustrated in Question 5cii. Whilst many candidates knew closed loop control was needed here, they found it difficult to explain why this was the case. Perhaps greater exposure to this kind of question may help.

Many candidates need more experience of database questions at this level. Several still drop marks because they mix up Search and Sort. These questions have followed a similar pattern over the years yet many find genuine difficulty here.

Credit

Question 4fii Few candidates knew that a stylus was used with a palmtop computer. Many used the phrase light pen which was unacceptable. Validation and Verification were mixed up by many.