

Principal Assessor Report 2002

Assessment Panel:

Business Services

Qualification area

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

Administration - Intermediate 1

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	
Pre appeal	984
Post appeal	986

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	987
Post appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

No significant change in entry numbers.

General comments

It would appear from the distribution of awards this year (an increase of 5% in candidates achieving an A pass) that it is possible that some candidates could have coped with Intermediate 2 level.

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

ADMINISTRATION – INTERMEDIATE 1

MARK (lowest)

UPPER A

90

LOWER A

80

B

67

C

55

General commentary on grade boundaries

Notional percentage cut-offs for each grade

Question papers and their associated marking schemes are designed to be of the required standard and to meet the assessment specification for the subject/level concerned.

For National courses the examination paper(s) are set in order that a score of approximately 50% of the total marks for all components merits a grade C (based on the grade descriptions for that grade), and similarly a score of 70 % for a grade A. The lowest mark for a grade B is set by the computer software as half way between the C and A grade boundaries.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

UPPER A – 80% of marks can be achieved in practical tasks. Candidates would have to score at least 50% of possible knowledge and understanding marks to achieve an upper A.

C – Because of the potential for accumulating marks due to the process based nature of the question paper, candidates can reasonably be expected to score more than half marks to achieve a pass.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Wide range of marks. The majority of candidates coped very well with this paper. There was evidence of thorough preparation for the external assessment and it is possible that some candidates could have coped at Intermediate 2 level.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Task 1 (word processing) was carried out extremely well by most candidates. In particular, candidates completed the menu to a very high standard demonstrating excellent presentation skills.

Task 2 (spreadsheet and chart) was well done by most candidates. Although there were a lot of instructions for this task, candidates seemed to find the instructions easy to follow.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Task 2 (spreadsheet and chart). A significant number of candidates are still using the function SUM when the formula is not an addition (however candidates were not penalised for this). Some candidates did not print out the formulae used. Although most candidates demonstrated the ability to create a pie chart as requested, a significant number of candidates failed to use colour or shading to distinguish between segments.

Task 3a (Travel Booking Form). Extracting the correct information required from the given source posed difficulty for some candidates.

Task 3b (Expenses Claim Form). Candidates who extracted the correct information for task 3a generally completed this task well. However some candidates made errors in the simple calculation required for the Total Expenses Due figure.

Task 4 (Knowledge and Understanding). Overall this task was poorly done. Many candidates seemed to have difficulty interpreting questions correctly – especially questions 6, 7 and 8.

Areas of common misunderstanding

Task 3a (Travel Booking Form). The instruction to “sign and write in the date” on the printed form was ignored by a significant number of candidates who chose to key in this information.

Task 3b (Expenses Claim Form). The instruction to “leave the signature, date and approved by” sections blank was ignored by a significant number of candidates who chose either to write or key in information here.

Task 4 (Knowledge and Understanding). Question 6 asked for tasks to be carried out by the secretary on the day of a meeting, before the meeting starts. Many candidates simply stated general duties of the secretary before, during and after a meeting. Very few candidates seemed to be familiar with the purpose of a Personal Development Plan and could not identify possible needs to be identified in question 7. Many candidates listed points of information required when organising a business trip and made no reference to the “sources” of information requested in question 8.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Candidates need to be confident in the completion of common business forms. Candidates should be able to print out formulae used in spreadsheets as this is how their ability to use spreadsheet features is checked in the external assessment. The correct use of formulae and functions needs to be reinforced. Candidates also require to be able to differentiate segments in pie charts by means of appropriate shading or colour. More practice is needed in reading and interpreting questions covering the knowledge and understanding aspects of the course to help ensure that candidates answer the questions asked.

When creating files for candidate use some centres did not follow instructions to format cells B5 and C5 (the years) as text in the spreadsheet task. Information was missing from the business forms keyed in by the teacher/lecturer in tasks 3a and 3b in some cases. Some centres did not submit printouts of prepared files in each return envelope.