

Principal Assessor Report 2002

Assessment Panel:

Business Services

Qualification area

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

Administration — Standard Grade

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	
Pre appeal	8,771
Post appeal	8,796

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	14,444
Post appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

The substantial increase in numbers presented reflects the fact that Standard Grade Administration has now fully superseded Standard Grade OIS in all centres. However, Standard Grade entries in general are down.

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

CUT-OFFS APPLIED

Practical Abilities

Level	Grade	Mark	Grade	Mark	Grade	Mark	Maximum Mark
Credit	1	160	2	138	3	104	207
General	3	112	4	89	5	74	148
Foundation	5	70	6	50	-	-	100

Knowledge and Understanding

Level	Grade	Mark	Grade	Mark	Maximum mark
Credit	1	21	2	16	34
General	3	18	4	14	31
Foundation	5	22	6	16	29

Problem Solving

Level	Grade	Mark	Grade	Mark	Maximum mark
Credit	1	21	2	16	31
General	3	18	4	14	29
Foundation	5	16	6	13	26

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

The boundaries for Foundation Problem Solving reflect the fact that Foundation candidates had more difficulty with this element than with Knowledge and Understanding.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Overall, candidate performance was in line with expectations. See the detailed comments below.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Practical Abilities – All Levels

As in 2001, candidate performance in this element was very good with very few candidates failing to complete the element or apparently entered at too high a level. Comments from Markers' Reports indicate that some candidates may have been entered at a level lower than could have been successfully undertaken.

The position regarding the availability of ICT resources seems to have improved vastly in one year. Only a very small fraction of centres indicated that they did not have a specific required ICT resource and it seems that candidates have good overall abilities when using these ICT resources.

Knowledge and Understanding/Problem Solving

Foundation Level Paper

Questions 1, 2, 5, 7 and 9 were particularly well done.

General Level Paper

Questions 3 and 6 were particularly well done.

Credit Level Paper

Questions 1, 2 and 4 were particularly well done.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Practical Abilities – All Levels

Keyboarding accuracy was less good than might have been expected at all levels. This was the overwhelming view from Markers' Reports. This was particularly the case with tasks at General and Credit (especially so at the latter level) where candidates had to create their own text in order to complete tasks, eg in the e-mail or mail merge letter. In these tasks, the standard of English from General and Credit candidates was much commented on as being very poor with candidates frequently not approaching anything like "business" standard.

A significant number of candidates did not produce evidence of having done mail merging at Credit Level or had apparently mail merged with material other than the database provided.

In recall tasks, a significant number of candidates supplied completely different information from the original task – most notably in databases, but also in spreadsheets. Some tasks were incomplete with regard to printouts, notably no formula printouts for spreadsheets, no internet printouts for itinerary/internet tasks and no mail merge masters.

Knowledge and Understanding/Problem Solving – All Levels

Many comments have been made regarding the very poor quality of written English of many candidates, a fact which led to the loss of marks, particularly in questions where extended responses were required.

The following questions were poorly answered overall:

Foundation: 12, 14a and 18

General: 1b, 2, 4 and 11a.

Credit: 3 [especially 3b], 6, 7 [especially 7b] and 8b.

There is still a widespread tendency among many candidates to write “quick and easy” when explaining the benefits of ICT, a type of answer that yielded no marks.

Areas of common misunderstanding

Practical Abilities

At Credit level, Task 11, it was possible to interpret the requirement of the question in two ways – to provide a mail merge letter for all representatives or only for those two affected. This point was anticipated in advance of the markers meeting and was addressed in such a way that no candidate was disadvantaged.

Knowledge and Understanding

Foundation: None.

General: Many candidates were unaware of Sales Manager tasks [perhaps this may extend to managerial tasks as a whole]. The term “database record” was poorly answered, often being mistakenly interpreted as “database”. Line relationship [Question 5a] was often confused with lateral relationship. Often only one advantage of an electronic diary was known to candidates [Question 6b]. Despite the requirement for cells being clearly stated, many candidates confused cells with columns [Question 7b]. The term CCTV was often expanded, but not defined [Question 11b].

Credit: The term “file management system” was poorly known and answers were very vague. There was some indication that many candidates were not familiar with the term “checklist” [Question 8b].

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Practical Abilities

Candidate performance in this element was very good overall. A number of issues have emerged and centres are asked to take particular note of the following:

- 1 In many instances not all printout evidence was included. This was most often the case with internet printouts, formula printouts for spreadsheets, mail merge master documents and full database printouts where the same task also required the candidate to print out selected records. In such cases, candidates are likely to lose a significant number of marks.
- 2 In tasks where candidates are asked to recall documents and make changes [eg letters, databases and spreadsheets] many candidates have submitted completely different material. In these cases, also, candidates are likely to lose a significant number of marks.
- 3 Truncation was a consistent problem in spreadsheet and database work. Unless specifically stated in a task, it is not necessary for candidates to print out spreadsheet/database material on one page, so there should be no need for any material to be truncated. Centres should encourage candidates to submit work in a form that allows all data to be clearly and fully seen.

Knowledge and Understanding

The standard of written English of many candidates was very poor. Candidates' extended answers were often very limited, with many candidates not answering in sufficient detail and depth. One-word answers are unlikely to gain marks, especially at General and Credit levels. Too many candidates are still expecting marks for the answer "quick and easy" when referring to the advantages of ICT equipment. Such answers will gain no marks.

Problem Solving

Compared to the 2001 diet, candidates' responses were much improved. However candidates should be reminded that problem solving answers require more than a list of items used, but also **how** they would be used.