

Principal Assessor Report 2002

Assessment Panel:

Computing

Qualification area

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

**Computer Studies
Intermediate 1**

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	834
Pre appeal	
Post appeal	

Number of entries in 2002	957
Pre appeal	
Post appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

15% increase on last year.

General comments

The candidature was similar to last year with the majority of questions being well answered. The paper was set slightly harder than the previous years.

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

C – 53
B – 63
A – 73

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

Grade boundaries slightly decreased from last year to take into account slightly more difficult .
The question paper requires further adjustment to make the grade boundaries closer to the a priori values (50,60,70).

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The majority of students made a good attempt at the paper, attempting to answer most questions. There seemed to be a better response to application questions rather than systems questions.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Q5 – on differences between high and low level languages.
Q6 – differences between a laptop and a desktop computer.
Q7 – applications and respective hardware required.
Internet section.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Q1 and Q2 on basic knowledge of systems was answered badly in many cases.
Many students still do not know how text and graphics are stored.
File formats are still not understood by many students.

Areas of common misunderstanding

Q1(c) – many candidates did not answer the question of Why but gave an instrument of backing store.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

In the main, candidates are answering problem solving questions relating to applications very well. Most students still need to improve their communication skills in answering this type of question and ensure that all steps and processes are clearly stated.

Many candidates seem to have poor basic knowledge of computer systems e.g. the need for backing store, different file types, block diagram of a system. They also find it difficult to differentiate between generic types and specific names. e.g MS Word rather than a text/word processor and keyboard rather than input device. Candidates still require to read the questions carefully as many questions seem to be rushed and answers forced into questions that were out of context.