

Principal Assessor Report 2002

Assessment Panel:

Computing and Information Systems

Qualification area

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

Information Systems Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	
Pre appeal	2935
Post appeal	3530

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	3187
Post appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

Approximately 9% on pre appeal figures 2001.

General comments

Initial feedback from markers and teachers supports the view that the paper was well balanced. The two mark questions in Section 1 were more testing than last year, providing candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate greater depth of knowledge of the core topics.

The quality of candidates appeared to have declined since last year (according to the impressions of most markers), but analysis of the results shows that this impression was caused by a lack of very good candidates. The bulk of candidates performed in line with their teacher's expectations.

Very few candidates mistakenly attempted all the optional sections but there was a significant number who attempted two optional sections.

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

Grade A: 71
Grade B: 61
Grade C: 51

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

The grade boundaries are slightly lower than last year in recognition of the somewhat more testing nature of Section 1. In previous years candidates usually gained over 50% of their exam marks from Section 1 but they now score better in their Optional Section.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Notable lack of very good candidates and a worryingly large number of very poor candidates. In general responses were good and answers given in reasonable English sentences.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

The Internet Optional Section was again the best answered. In particular, Q22 and Q23 saw many candidates gaining full marks.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

The Applications of IT in Society section was poorly answered. This may be because it requires more extended responses.

Certain questions caused problems for candidates, most notably Q11 – very few knew what robust software entailed.

Q24 was poorly answered, possibly because the scenario was outwith the candidates' personal experience.

In the Multimedia Optional Section there was a lack of precision in many answers, particularly in Q19 where the quality of graphics card was important to distinguish a multimedia PC from any other type.

Other problem questions were: 2, 6, 15, 16[c], 17[c], 18[b], 19[a,b]

Areas of common misunderstanding

As in previous years, candidates failed to realise that single word answers are insufficient when the question asks them to describe something.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Most candidates seem well prepared for the exam.

Many candidates continue to lose marks by using proprietary names instead of generic ones i.e. they write about Microsoft Excel or Word instead of spreadsheets and wordprocessors. This most marked where they use Explorer instead of writing browser. Candidates should be taught that only generic terms are acceptable.

Some candidates still attempt more than one of the optional sections, which causes problems for the markers.

Candidates should be encouraged to start the optional section on a new page.

Candidates should be made aware that when a question asks them to describe something then a single word answer is insufficient.