



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Administration
Level	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the Examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

No adverse comments on the examination papers were received from centres, and reports from markers indicated that papers were considered to be well-balanced and fair.

Responses from some candidates, however, seemed to indicate that they had not read questions/tasks carefully enough to ensure they understood what was being asked and, consequently, often failed to gain the marks available. This is a perennial problem which prevents candidates from reaching their full potential, particularly at Credit level.

Knowledge and Understanding

Performance was disappointing at General and Credit levels. Candidates appeared to lack breadth and depth of knowledge, particularly at Credit level, suggesting that Course notes were not being studied to the standard required. In contrast, this was the stronger element for Foundation candidates.

Problem Solving

In the written paper at General and Credit levels, problem solving was the more consistent of the two elements as candidates have learned that solving a problem requires a course of **action**. In addition, the nature of problem solving is that of a developed skill rather than the result of concentrated study. At Credit level, however, where justification was required, candidates did not score well.

Practical Abilities

Performance in the use of functions continued to improve. There were few incomplete projects and candidates appeared to have attempted the level appropriate to their ability.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Knowledge and Understanding/Problem Solving

Numbers shown in brackets refer to specific questions. At Foundation level, candidates performed well in questions which required short responses. Specifically, good responses were made in relation to department functions, although there was often confusion between Purchases and Sales (Question 1), use of equipment (2b and 5), health and safety (4 and 14), sources of information including the Internet (8 and 9), reception (11), organisation chart (12) and completion of an itinerary (16).

At General level, candidates responded well to questions on communication (1), database construction (4a), completion of a travel and accommodation order form (5a), health and safety (7a), electronic filing (9a), reception (11), presentations (12) and house styles (14a). Question 2, which dealt with open plan office areas, was done well by most, but not all.

As at General level, the questions at Credit level which produced the best responses were often those involving the solution of problems. Specifically, good answers were given to questions on security (1), restructuring of the organisation (3b and c), mail merge (5b),

health and safety (7a and b), use of itineraries (7c), benefits of using hot desks (8a) and Autoreply (8b). Questions on presentation of statistical information (2) and flexitime and homeworking (6) were successfully attempted by many candidates, but some appeared to lack detailed knowledge.

Practical Abilities

At all levels, candidates largely performed well with regard to software functions. This was particularly clear in:

- ◆ the construction and manipulation of databases, which also tended to be keyed in accurately
- ◆ use of absolute cell references or named cells in spreadsheets, which enabled replication of formulae
- ◆ printing of formulae
- ◆ creation of charts from spreadsheet data with appropriate labelling
- ◆ use of the internet
- ◆ consistent formatting of bullets
- ◆ at Credit level, creation of separate fields for names in a database and the completion of a mail merge

It was pleasing to note that some markers reported an improvement in keyboarding.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Knowledge and Understanding/Problem Solving

Knowledge of basic administrative terms was lacking — invoice, credit note, internal and external mail, search engine, hyperlink, delegate, and types of management structure. Candidates found difficulty with questions relating to:

- ◆ the use of mailroom equipment
- ◆ distinction between sales and purchases
- ◆ functions of individual departments
- ◆ open-plan work areas
- ◆ line and lateral relationships
- ◆ field formatting
- ◆ querying a database
- ◆ benefits of an electronic diary
- ◆ advantages of storing information electronically
- ◆ equipment required when homeworking
- ◆ employee responsibilities with regard to health and safety
- ◆ Hazard/Fault Report Form
- ◆ factors affecting selection of appropriate methods of travel
- ◆ advantages and disadvantages to the employer of videoconferencing
- ◆ display of statistical information graphically with specific reference to sales
- ◆ advantages and disadvantages of centralised filing

There were numerous examples of candidates failing to read questions carefully, thus misinterpreting what was required. This was most obvious at Credit level in Question 8 (a), where candidates described hot desks rather than stating the benefits of using them, and similarly, in Question 12, a description of centralised filing was given rather than the advantages and disadvantages of the system.

Practical Abilities

Candidates experienced difficulty in the following areas:

- ◆ composing text
- ◆ maintaining consistency in the display of paragraphs and headings
- ◆ formatting of shoulder headings
- ◆ distinguishing between hyphens and dashes
- ◆ layout of letter/memo/e-mail/itinerary
- ◆ creation of footers as specified
- ◆ sorting data in a database, particularly on more than one field
- ◆ completion of spreadsheet calculations using only specified fields
- ◆ insertion of rows in a spreadsheet
- ◆ printing spreadsheets with/without gridlines and row and column headings

Many candidates failed to gain marks in the itinerary task because they did not provide sufficient internet evidence of the travel and accommodation selected and used customer rating rather than the official star rating for hotels.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2010	6,573
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	5,890
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	10.7%
Grade 2	25.9%
Grade 3	19.4%
Grade 4	20.5%
Grade 5	13.6%
Grade 6	6.8%
Grade 7	1.1%
No award	1.8%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
KU	32	19	14	30	17	13	28	22	17
PS	33	23	16	30	20	15	27	17	12
PA	200	145	120	150	110	91	100	68	46