

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Business Education

Qualification area

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

Economics — Standard Grade

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	592
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Number of entries in 2004	358
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General comments re entry numbers

There has been a downward trend over the last few years. This has been caused by pupils moving to Business Management with schools having to drop a subject due to staffing and timetabling difficulties. The majority of candidates are presented at G/C level.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

At cut-off stage, the percentages of candidates achieving each grade is as follows:

Overall

Grade 1 — 24.0%

Grade 2 — 28.5%

Grade 3 — 18.1%

Grade 4 — 15.4%

Grade 5 — 8.7%

Grade 6 — 4.2%

Grade 7 — 1.1%

No Award — 0.0%

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Award distributions have not differed from previous years — where any difference exists, it is usually less than 1 percentage point.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Standard Grade Assessable Element — Knowledge and Understanding

Grade	Maximum Mark	Minimum Mark for Grade	% Mark
1	32	25	78
2	24	20	62.5
3	31	17	54.8
4	16	13	41.9
5	31	20	64.5
6	19	14	45.2

Standard Grade Assessable Element — Enquiry Skills

Grade	Maximum Mark	Minimum Mark for Grade	% Mark
1	44	35	79.5
2	34	27	61.4
3	45	32	71.1
4	31	24	53.3
5	48	31	64.6
6	30	18	37.5

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Grade boundaries consistent with previous year, except General KU Grade 4 was raised to account for an easing of the paper at this level. Similarly, at Foundation ES, the Grade 5 boundary was raised to 31. It is interesting to note that boundary grades generally reflected teachers' estimates.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Most candidates answered the papers well but there were very few outstanding papers. Most candidates attempted all of the questions although the Foundation/General level candidates, despite doing well at Foundation level, appeared to have difficulty with the General paper where there were some poor scripts.

As in previous years, candidates are still losing marks because they are not reading the questions carefully enough. On occasion when the question asks for two reasons only one is given or where an answer should clearly cover two sides of an argument, only one is covered eg changes in trade with the candidates only giving imports or exports but not both.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Credit: Candidates appeared to have performed reasonably in line with previous years. Questions 2, 3, 5 and 6 were mostly well done.

General: Candidates performed well in most of the paper with Questions 1, 2 (d), 4 (b), 5 and 6 meriting special note with some exceptions as noted below.

Foundation: Candidates seemed to have a good knowledge of resources, needs and wants and methods of payment. In the main Questions 2, 5, 6 (d) and 7 were well done.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Credit: Candidates performed badly in Q1 where there was widespread misinterpretation of the diagram. They also failed to address “rate” in Question 2 (c). Question 4 raised the usual problems with trends and candidates failed to note the heading “Changes”. In Question 4 (b), candidates again misread the question and answered both parts as “Scotland”. Question 5 (a) (ii) was poorly answered. Candidates had difficulty in answering Question 6 (d) (ii) as they appeared to be lacking in knowledge of social benefits.

General: Although well answered, Question 1 (a) saw candidates having difficulty finding a third reason. Question 3 was very poorly answered. Many candidates were giving demand answers in (b) and their definitions of supply were also poor. In Question 4 (d), many candidates found it difficult to come up with a solution. Candidates have difficulty in defining “public sector” in Question 5 (a) (ii) and also struggled with (b). As in previous years, the identification of transfer payments was badly done.

Foundation: Opportunity Cost is still an area that causes difficulty despite being tested every year. The Balance of Trade presented problems in Question 3 as did 3 (d) (ii) where it appeared that many candidates had not read the question. Candidates appeared not to understand the concept of inflation — Question 4 (a) (ii). Question 5 (b) was not well answered but this may have been the fault of the picture. Question 6 (c) was also badly answered.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Candidates, on the whole, seemed well prepared for the papers. Candidates are, however, still failing to read the questions carefully and often answer what they think is asked rather than what is asked. Candidates should also pay careful attention to the bold type emphasising the number of reasons or actions needed or to be addressed. Careful note of the marks to be awarded for each question should help candidates especially at Credit level.