

Principal Assessor Report 2003

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 2002	
Pre appeal	14,444

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	15,085

General comments re entry numbers

It is good to see the numbers increasing, if only slightly.

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

Practical Abilities	Credit	General	Foundation
	1 — 153	3 — 108	5 — 69
	2 — 131	4 — 85	6 — 50
	3 — 97	5 — 70	
Knowledge and Understanding	Credit	General	Foundation
	1 — 21	3 — 19	5 — 20
	2 — 16	4 — 15	6 — 16
Problem Solving	Credit	General	Foundation
	1 — 24	3 — 18	5 — 16
	2 — 18	4 — 14	6 — 13

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

2003 is the first year for which element totals have been fixed and these totals differ for those of the two previous years. Comparison with future cut-offs will be possible directly in terms of absolute marks as well as percentages of all candidates.

The pre-appeal and finalisation figures indicate an improvement in the number and the percentage of candidates gaining a Grade 1 award at Credit in KU has increased by over 2%.

Performance in this subject is consistently best in the Practical Abilities element.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Practical Abilities

Foundation — Candidates' performance in this element was very good.

General — Candidates also achieved well in this element.

Credit — Candidates achieved well in this element.

Knowledge and Understanding/Problem Solving

Foundation — Candidates achieved well in these elements, with most markers who commented stating that performance was better in PS and KU.

General — Candidates also achieved well in these elements, with most markers who commented stating that performance was better in KU than PS.

Credit — Candidates also achieved well in these elements, with most markers who commented once again stating that performance was better in PS than KU.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

In Practical Abilities, the use of functions in most aspects of ICT was very good. However, some centres did not appear to have provided electronic diary facilities for candidates who completed such tasks on spreadsheets. Some candidates in some centres completed electronic diary tasks on a spreadsheet. This is not acceptable — an electronic diary facility must be used.

The majority view among markers was that performance in PS was better than KU, though this was less stressed at Foundation level. In particular it seems that the majority of centres have ensured that candidates know how to answer PS questions.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

An overall concern was the extremely poor standard of candidates' English. Spelling was heavily criticised by markers. This comment applied to KU/PS in particular, but was very noticeable and particularly lamentable in those PA tasks where candidates had to create their own text. In PA, there was evidence of poor mail merge skills among a significant minority of Credit candidates.

In KU/PS, too many candidates are continuing to state that using ICT facilities will yield "quick and easy" benefits, an answer which will gain no marks if unsupported by a clear description of how this happens.

Although reference has been previously made to the importance of not simply listing items — eg of equipment — when answering PS questions, there are still a large number of candidates who do not answer PS questions appropriately.

An important aspect of the Credit KU/PS paper is the requirement to justify steps taken, the use of equipment etc. Markers have consistently reported how poorly this is done by a high proportion of all candidates.

Particular areas of the syllabus that were poorly answered when tested in this year's diet are listed below.

- ◆ Principles of the Data Protection Act (often confused with the Health and Safety at Work Act).
- ◆ Tasks which are **specific** to particular posts, especially promoted posts.
- ◆ The use and benefit of good file management.
- ◆ Methods of presentation at meetings (eg use of data projectors/software, eg Powerpoint).
- ◆ Knowledge of terms (eg carrel, date stamp, lateral relationship).
- ◆ Basic filing procedures.
- ◆ Inability to distinguish between software and hardware.
- ◆ Paper-based sources of information.
- ◆ Basic procedures in handling mail (incoming and outgoing).

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

The following points emerged from the 2003 Diet —

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