

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Social Sciences

Qualification area

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

Economics Standard Grade

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	813
Pre appeal	801

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	588

General comments re entry numbers

The number of entries has fallen after rising slightly last year. This would appear to be part of a trend and is because of two main factors: the growth of Business Management and the decision of some schools and authorities to introduce National Qualifications in S3 and S4. The majority of candidates in the subject are at G/C level.

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

Knowledge and Understanding:

Grade 1 - 22;
Grade 2 - 15;
Grade 3 - 17;
Grade 4 - 13;
Grade 5 - 19;
Grade 6 - 13.

Enquiry Skills:

Grade 1 - 32;
Grade 2 - 23;
Grade 3 - 30;
Grade 4 - 21;
Grade 5 - 31;
Grade 6 - 23.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

The grade boundaries were on the whole similar to those of last year. At Foundation level, the boundary for grade 6 was higher than 2002. At Credit level, the boundaries were tightened a little in KU compared to 2002, but were comparable with the trend of previous years.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

In general candidates performed well in the examination. Most attempted all the questions and there were relatively few very bad papers. If anything, there were fewer very high quality candidates at Credit than last year, but there also seemed to be fewer candidates at Foundation level who performed very badly.

There also seemed to be a general improvement in those answers where analysis of information or description of trends was required, although this was not universal.

Some candidates still lose marks because they have not read the question or studied the stimuli carefully enough. An example is q 5 in the Credit paper, where some candidates interpreted the picture as relating to a car showroom rather than a factory, as was clearly indicated by the information given and the nature of the questions.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Credit

Economic Growth (q 4) and Comparative Advantage (q 6) were well done on the whole. The improvement in answers to comparative advantage was particularly pleasing. The market question (q 2) was also well done by many candidates. Candidates showed a better understanding of standard of living this year.

General

Responses to q 3 on employment were generally good. The question on demand and supply (q 6) was also quite well done, although many candidates still confuse a movement of the demand curve with a movement along it. Those questions requiring description of trends or analysis of information were in general well done. Question 4 on Government revenue and expenditure produced good answers from many candidates.

Foundation

Candidates showed a good understanding of division of labour (q 2). Questions 3 and 4 dealing with demand and supply were quite well tackled, aside from particular parts (see below).

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Credit

The question on allocation of resources in the private and public sectors (q 1c) was poorly done by many candidates, with few well-structured answers. Candidates also displayed an uncertain understanding of inflation and the relationship between economic indicators. (q 3). The quality of answers on economies of scale (q 5c) was also very variable. Responses to question 4d on Budget measures were disappointing.

General

Candidates showed a poor understanding of "real terms" (q 2c). The question on productivity (q 3c) was in general badly done. Candidates also showed a poor understanding of social security (q 4b), confusing it with security. Question 5 on costs of production provided many good answers, but was badly done by some centres.

Foundation

When asked for means of raising money for investment, candidates persist in giving cost reducing methods rather than answers relating to loans, issuing shares etc. They should be advised to steer clear of giving such answers in this type of context. Question 4b on supply was poorly done. Some candidates displayed a lack of knowledge in Question 5dii on inflation. Question 6e on benefits of trade to UK employees was badly done, many candidates seemingly misreading the question and not relating their answers to employees.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Many Centres seem to have taken on board previous comments and to have prepared candidates well for the type of question to be expected. However, teachers should continue to emphasise the importance to candidates of reading questions carefully and making sure that they answer the question asked and not something else. They should also study stimuli carefully and if asked to use evidence from a stimulus make sure that they do so or they will lose marks.