

Moderation Feedback - Central

Assessment Panel:

Computing and Information Systems

Qualification area

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

**Intermediate 1 Computing Studies
Intermediate 2, Higher and Advanced Higher
Computing**

Central Moderation

General comments on central moderation activity

In addition to the Senior Moderator, ten moderators were appointed to cover 131 centres, an average of 13.1 centres per moderator. The team worked two three-hour sessions on day 1, three three-hour sessions on day 2 and two three-hour sessions on day 3. Two moderators were unable to work the evening session on day 2 and another was unable to work on day 3.

At the start of the procedures the team was reminded of the agreements that had been reached at the earlier training day and the tolerances which they should apply were clarified. The need for detailed feedback to centres was emphasised, particularly in cases where the sample was 'Not Accepted'. Moderators were asked to word process all reports to centres using the four stand-alone computer systems available within the room. These IT facilities were an improvement over the previous year's provision but would have benefited from printing facilities to allow the Senior Moderator to proof read and amend the reports as necessary.

Specific issues identified

Some centres continued to misinterpret the instructions for substituting evidence in place of candidates who had withdrawn. Where possible moderators attempted to work around these issues but centres must be aware that, in such circumstances, they could have been 'Not Accepted'. Arithmetical errors were also a problem with one centre unable to convert the AH total out of 100 into a percentage mark! The marks submitted should be carefully checked.

Intermediate 1 Computing Studies

37 centres were moderated for Intermediate 1 Computing Studies and all were accepted. As last year, moderators were working to a tolerance of ± 4 out of a total of 50 marks. One centre had not realised that candidates had to complete a project and had submitted NAB materials. The centre was notified immediately, gathered the candidates together and submitted the projects by the final day of moderation, hence avoiding a 'Not Accepted' situation. Overall moderators were of the same opinion as last year that candidates undertaking the current Intermediate 1 Computing Studies do not have the same demands placed on them as those sitting Standard Grade Computing Studies. Hopefully, the revised arrangements will redress this anomaly.

Intermediate 2 Computing

41 of the centres moderated had material at Intermediate 2 level within the sample. Five of these were 'Not Accepted'. In one case the centre had submitted work completed as part of the Software Development unit as the candidates' projects. After taking advice as to the validity of this action, the centre was asked to either submit a recognised project for each candidate or evidence of other assessment material from Software Development. Another centre had chosen to use an internally devised project specification. Centres should be advised that it is in their own interests to seek prior moderation for such materials before using them as instruments of assessment with candidates. Other issues highlighted included a lack of documentation to support the implementation of projects and marking which was too lenient. Moderators worked to a tolerance of ± 3 out of the total mark of 42.

Higher

- Out of the 94 centres that submitted samples containing Higher materials, 6 were 'Not Accepted' at that level. Moderators applied the same tolerances of ± 2 as last year.
- Where centres used assessments from NABs 1, 2 and 3, the moderation team continued to apply the

same criteria for determining the 'additional' marks for the Software Development and Investigation coursework as last year. Computer Systems and Artificial Intelligence still presented problems where there are no marks just checklists.

- Considerably more centres had used NAB4 which was easier to moderate but, as last year, some had chosen not to use the cut-offs given in the official marking scheme.
- Some centres had submitted very well documented materials which aided the moderator's task considerably and such practices are to be encouraged by all.

Advanced Higher

- Of the centres selected for moderation 50 submitted samples containing Advanced Higher materials. 8 of these were 'Not Accepted' at that level. Moderators applied the same tolerances of ± 7 as they had done the previous year.
- Two centres had failed to add in a mark out of 10 for the evaluation of the project and had submitted marks out of ninety.
- The consideration of alternative strategies continues to be a major problem for a large number of candidates. This part of many projects is very superficial and it is obvious that it has been done as an afterthought. Some candidates even offered alternatives that were in no way computer-based solutions.
- Some candidates are tackling projects at too low a level, for example, it is possible for quite young pupils to construct a website but if such a task is undertaken for an AH project the candidate must demonstrate much higher order skills
- Some candidates have considerable difficulty expressing themselves in a written report and would benefit from more guidance regarding the structure of the report and the checking of grammar and spelling
- AH software development projects should provide evidence of a working solution. Too many candidates submitted reports with no such evidence.

Feedback to centres

Higher Computing

Some centres will continue to offer the current Higher arrangements in 2005. They should note the need to clarify individual candidates' marks out of 10 for each of the items of coursework. In addition, where NABs are being used that have only checklists, details of how grades are derived should be included. Where NAB4 is used, centres should ensure that they use the stated cut-offs.

Advanced Higher Computing

The existing arrangements for AH Computing will continue to be used for 2005. Centres should ensure that projects attempted by candidates are at an appropriate level for Advanced Higher. Candidates should be encouraged to consider different strategies before selecting the most appropriate. This should be seen as an important part of the software development process. Candidates should also be advised of the need to structure reports carefully and to proof read all their work.

Many centres will be moving over to revised arrangements in Intermediate 1 Computing Studies, Intermediate 2 and Higher Computing. All new courses will require candidates to submit coursework specified by the SQA. Centres are encouraged to carefully annotate the marking of this coursework in line with the marking scheme provided. Markers' comments are very useful to moderators trying to check that standards have been applied accurately.