External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Administration
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

There were very few candidates, and they were mostly college candidates. This is the last year of this level.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Task 1: Database — amended and edited well by many candidates. Nearly all candidates gained high marks, with most only making minor keying-in errors — capitalisation being the most common one. The editing task was very well done with many candidates gaining full marks. Some candidates did not print new field as Yes/No but True/False (which is not acceptable). Search criteria was understood and executed well.

Task 2: Spreadsheet — creating and entering of data into the spreadsheet was well done by many candidates. Amending the SS was accurate and appropriate, by most candidates. Nearly all candidates created the graph.

Task 3: Word processing — all candidates attempted the task and printed on one page as instructed. Some understood what the manuscript correction signs required them to do. Inserting the database search in the correct place was completed accurately. Many candidates achieved half the marks available.

Task 4
Question 3: The majority of candidates were aware of the Data Protection Act.
Question 4: The majority of candidates were able to complete the Print and Copy Request Form.
Question 5: The majority of candidates were able to name the features of an electronic diary.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Task 1: Some candidates were unable to print only the required fields.

Task 2: As in previous years, a good number of candidates did not submit the correct value and formula printouts for this task, losing marks unnecessarily. Accuracy when inserting rows and keying-in and formatting additional labels was poor, even though the labels were stated clearly in the paper. The creation of the Chart — although the type of chart chosen was correct — was very poorly done this year. As previously stated, many candidates did not select the data required, and sensible labelling of axis and/or legend appeared to have been ignored.

Task 3: Although this was well attempted, there were many accuracy errors that appeared to be due to carelessness rather than misreading the text in the question. Some candidates struggled with extracting the correct information for insertion into the itinerary — especially the workshops.

Task 4

Question 1: Many candidates were unable to *identify* two qualities that would be included in a Person Specification.

Many candidates knew the benefits to the employee of working from home, but did not write enough for an *outline* question.

Many candidates named a flexible working practice but failed to *describe*.

Question 2: Although most candidates attempted this question, many were unable to *state* areas covered by the Health and Safety (Display Screen) Regulations 1992 but focused on other Health and Safety Legislation regarding Fire Drills.

Question 3: Most candidates knew the correct legislation but were unable to *state* the correct name.

Question 5: Very few candidates were able to *outline* specific improvements to the file management. Most candidates knew advantages to the organisation of using the internet, but very few candidates were able to *describe*. Most candidates were able to name the use of the mobile technology (ie texting, phone calls) but failed to *name* the mobile technology as requested.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Candidates must read instructions carefully – especially what to print out, how many printouts are required, then checking what has actually been printed out.

Centres should encourage candidates to print database tables or searches using a word processing document in the form of a table. This will ensure that no fields are ever truncated, sorting can be easily completed if needed, printing is easily set to one page, landscape or portrait using the table functions, and name and school can easily be printed in the footer.

Candidates need to look at what they have printed out and check with the paper to make sure that:

♦ it is as instructed (ie value or formula, gridlines, etc) if it is a spreadsheet task
♦ information is not truncated — especially the database table
♦ it makes sense

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	650

Number of resulted entries in 2015	34

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 100				
A	26.5%	26.5%	9	72
B	17.6%	44.1%	6	61
C	17.6%	61.8%	6	51
D	5.9%	67.6%	2	46
No award	32.4%	-	11	-

For this Course, grade boundaries have been stable for a number of years and the intention was to set similar grade boundaries to previous years. The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

General commentary on grade boundaries

♦ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

♦ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.

♦ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

♦ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.

♦ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.