Course Report 2014

Subject	Lifeskills Mathematics
Level	National 5

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question paper

Paper 1 is a non-calculator paper, designed to check candidate's ability to apply numerical operations as well as reasoning, without the aid of a calculator.

Component 2: Question paper

Paper 2 consists of case studies, ranging from short (4–6 marks) through medium (8–10 marks) to extended (12–15 marks). This is designed to look at the candidate's ability to sustain reasoning through a 'themed' question.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1

As this was the first year for this course/assessment, uptake was low; around 220 candidates in total. There appeared to be a wide spread of ability of candidate entered for the assessment.

Overall, candidates performed reasonably well in this component.

Component 2

This component was designed to increase in demand as the paper progressed, leading candidates in with shorter case studies to 'familiarise' them with the type of response required.

Generally, given the small cohort, a number of candidates made reasonable attempts at a number of the questions.

Many candidates made good inroads to the early parts of the questions, but the 'new' element of justification/reasoning was found to be more challenging.

There were some very good scripts with sustained reasoning, especially in the earlier case studies.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1

Question 2: Most candidates knew how to apply tolerance and justify reasoning.

Question 6: Most candidates were able to complete the network diagram from a precedence table.

Question 7: Most candidates were able to interpret/compare a stem and leaf diagram with a box plot.

Questions 8(a) and 8(b): Foreign currency (in 2-step calculation) was dealt with well by candidates.

Component 2

Question 1: Most candidates scored well in the standard deviation question.

Questions 3(a) and 3(b)(i): Most candidates coped well with the early parts of the navigation question.

Question 6 (a): A number of candidates coped well with the early part of the 'formula 1' question on speed, distance and time.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1

Question 3(b): Area of two triangles was not well done by a number of candidates.

Question 5: Was poorly done, especially changing units from m/s to km/hr.

Question 8(b): Money calculations involving foreign exchange — many candidates found the basic numeracy required here, without a calculator, to be challenging.

Question 9: A number of candidates, who perhaps did not expect to see 'π' in a non-calculator paper, found this question challenging.

Component 2

Although a number of candidates did reasonably well in the introductory parts of each question, they found the justification/reasoning and communication elements more challenging. In particular:

♦ Question 2(b): Comparison of discounts — some candidates were let down by early rounding, or using incorrect data.
♦ Question 3(b)(ii): Finding the distance and bearing from one point to another was found to be challenging.
♦ Question 6(c): Conversion of units (and 'decimal parts of time') was found to be challenging to the candidates.
♦ Question 7(c): Whilst some candidates made some attempts to calculate various costs associated with laying the drive, few carried this through to give a suitable comparison. Many said, for example, 'Tarmac as it is cheaper' without fully trying to justify their choice in terms of cost per year, and so on.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1

Candidates need to be able to apply numeracy skills at National 5 across a range of problems. In particular, care needs to be taken when working with fractions and percentages.

Component 2

Some work on layout and presentation would be beneficial.

Candidates should be encouraged to 'follow through' calculations and state the conclusion clearly — and justify where necessary. For example, candidates should use a comparison if possible, eg 'since 47·7>47·2 which is the upper limit, the patient is not in good health'.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	0

Number of resulted entries in 2014	223

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 90				
A	8.5%	8.5%	19	60
B	19.3%	27.8%	43	50
C	26.0%	53.8%	58	41
D	12.6%	66.4%	28	36
No award	33.6%	-	75	-