



Course Report 2016

Subject	Administration and IT
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the assessment

Component 1: Assignment

The assessment covered a wide range of the course content and could be completed within the 4-hour time allocation. There were positive comments about the theme of the paper, which made it accessible and enjoyable for candidates. Evidence showed that candidates were familiar with the type of assessment provided. They were able to access e-files and to action and delete comments appropriately.

In Task 4a centres were required to send an e-mail to candidates. When centres copied and pasted the information, some systems deleted formatting within the e-mail. It was evident that this omission had not been picked up by some centres. The functions used in Task 5 (spreadsheet) were not as demanding as previous years. These issues were addressed when making grade boundary decisions.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Assignment

- Task 1: Tended to be well done — most candidates were awarded most of the marks.
- Task 3a: Candidates attained highly in this question.
- Task 3b: Many candidates were able to complete the search, though some searched for >5 instead of >=5 members. Most candidates were able to select the correct field names in the correct order.
- Task 4a: Almost all candidates were able to insert a new slide, insert graphics, apply a design slide and print three slides per page. Most candidates attained at least one keyboarding mark.
- Task 4b: Most e-mail printouts showed evidence of sending the e-mail with the correct attachment.
- Tasks 5a and 5b: Most candidates made a good attempt at this question using the formula and naming/using absolute cell references appropriately, so gaining the majority of the marks.
- Task 6: Most candidates inserted the essential information and most printed a long and skinny wristband.
- Task 7: Most candidates attained highly in this task.
- Task 8: Most candidates were able to select the correct record and print out a form.

- Task 9: Most candidates attained most of the marks in this task.
- Task 10: The majority of candidates were able to follow instructions to insert a front page with the appropriate information and were able to print the document correctly.
- Task 11a: Most candidates were able to search the database correctly and print the information on one page.
- Task 11b: Almost all candidates were able to use the headed paper, which had been created in an earlier task, and insert the correct reference and date. Most candidates used the correct complimentary close for the letter.
- Task 12: Most candidates were able to outline three principles of the Data Protection Act.
- Task 13: Candidates attained highly in this task. Most candidates used the logo appropriately throughout the tasks, and were able to follow the instructions to complete a Main Stage pass.
- Task 14: Most candidates attained highly in this task. Almost all candidates enhanced the heading correctly and increased the line spacing. Keyboarding was also usually good in this task.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Assignment

- Task 1: The keyboarding mark was the one most frequently missed by candidates.
- Task 2: Answers for describe and explain questions were sometimes brief. Candidates should be reminded that there must be a 'why' when answering explain questions.
- Task 3a: Some candidates were unable to complete a two-criteria sort.
- Task 3b: Many candidates were not awarded the heading mark due to incorrect capitalisation or the heading not relating to the search. A number of candidates updated one of the entries to 'confirmed', but not the other.
- Task 4a: Many candidates did not include a footer, and sometimes the text in the footer was so small it was illegible. Some candidates chose a design/background for the slides that made some of the text in both the footer and body of the slides very difficult to read or illegible. Many candidates used bullets for all the information on the final slide, instead of starting the bullets after the introductory paragraph.

Task 4b: Many candidates did not use the reply function or send to two different e-mail addresses. The vast majority of candidates were not awarded the keyboarding mark due to the layout of the e-mail, incorrect capitalisation within the e-mail or because the content of the e-mail did not make sense.

Tasks 5a and 5b:

Many candidates were not awarded the formatting mark due to inconsistencies in currency formatting. Some candidates incorrectly included 'equal to £500,000' when inputting the IF statement. A number of candidates used the 'sum' function incorrectly in these tasks. Many candidates also incorrectly keyed information into the shaded cells.

Task 5c: Many candidates inserted an inappropriate heading and the lines were indistinguishable in a number of scripts.

Task 6: Many candidates did not attain the keyboarding mark due to inaccuracies or including too much information, ie day ticket prices.

Task 7: Some candidates did not select 4-star hotels; instead they chose a hotel with a 4-star rating from a review site, and a few candidates did not show the date of the flight on the screen dump from the internet, so did not attain these marks. Some chosen hotels were not within Aberdeen city centre.

Task 8: Many candidates did not insert an appropriate heading or there were capitalisation inconsistencies. Very few candidates were awarded marks for inserting all the fields in the form, so they did not attain the keyboarding mark either.

Task 9: Some candidates are still finding difficulty with truncation of e-diaries, and not providing supplementary sheets. Keyboarding was also poor in this task.

Task 10: Many candidates were unable to move text and ensure that spacing was correct. A number of candidates did not follow the layout of the template, particularly with the semi-colon and dash. Keyboarding accuracy was also poor and a significant number of candidates shaded only some rows containing the dates.

Task 11a: Many candidates did not include appropriate fields in the query printout. Many candidates did not submit a printout for this task.

Task 11b: Some candidates did not use the query they had created, therefore they did not gain the merge marks. Candidates also struggled with this task because they did not have the correct fields in Task 11a.

Many candidates did not attain the presentation mark due to changes in font throughout the letter. A number of candidates incorrectly used their own name and designation as the signatory. Letter layout continues to be a problem for many candidates.

Task 12: Many candidates were not specific about information in their answer to the first section of this question; they were often generic security answers.

Task 14: A number of candidates were unable to use the search and replace function and did not justify the text.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Assignment

Staff in a number of centres keyed in the e-mail themselves, and keyboarding errors were made. It proved difficult to ensure candidates were not penalised for staff errors when marking. If an e-mail has to be sent in future assessments, centres are advised to copy and paste the information from the Instructions to Teachers document and then check the formatting for consistency.

Candidates must ensure that they read all the instructions, not just the first part, and that they read carefully, especially in the spreadsheet, ie >500000, not >=500000.

Colour graphs must be printed on a colour printer; where a black and white printer is used the graph selected should be black and white.

Proofreading was quite poor; accuracy of keying-in is vital to ensure that mailable copies of documents are produced.

The sum function must be used correctly. Centres should refer to marking principles for guidance.

E-mail layouts are improving. However, accuracy of keyboarding still impacts candidate marks.

Footer text, eg in presentation task must be visible and legible to gain marks.

The quality of the printing was poor in many cases. This created issues for markers being able to read detail in candidate scripts. In many cases the ink was so faint it was difficult to read. Data must be legible to gain marks.

Theory that had been tested in previous years was good. However, candidates need to keep working on providing full answers to the questions that are asked to attain maximum marks. Where examples are given, candidates should read the example and model their answer using the same structure.

Candidates must answer the question according to the command word used. Where candidates are required to 'describe', they must write a detailed sentence — this is more than an outline. Where candidates are asked to 'explain', they must outline and add an additional 'why' — for example, be motivated and keen to learn, to keep up with technological changes.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	5619
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	5448
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	30.5%	30.5%	1664	72
B	28.0%	58.5%	1523	61
C	20.3%	78.8%	1108	50
D	7.2%	86.0%	392	44
No award	14.0%	-	761	-

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.