



Course Report 2017

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| 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

Summary of the Course assessment

Component 1: Assignment

Centres commented that the content of the paper was very good that it and provided a range of opportunities for candidates to display their knowledge and skills using different software packages. The assignment was well received by centres, and the vast majority of candidates provided evidence for each task.

Candidates were instructed to create a newsletter in Task 11. The vast majority of candidates simply amended the e-file provided. This meant that most candidates were awarded the 2 insertion marks, which had been designed to be more difficult to achieve. This impacted C-grade candidates, as they attained higher marks than expected. This task also impacted on A-grade candidates as it was difficult for them to achieve all marks when a newsletter template was not used, because the presentation tended to be poor. 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 2 – E-file

Many candidates achieved most of the available marks in the social media section of this task.

Task 3 – E-diary

Almost all candidates were able to insert the recurring meeting and the individual meeting, though many had capitalisation inconsistencies and spelling mistakes. When an entry was truncated, the majority of candidates provided supplementary sheets to allow marks to be awarded. However, many candidates did not provide evidence of correctly entering the task.

Task 4 – Internet

Candidates were able to find suitable train times to and from the location. However, most candidates did not achieve the mark for providing a price for a return ticket; instead they gave details of prices for two single tickets.

Task 5a and 5b – Spreadsheet

Candidates generally achieved high marks in both spreadsheet tasks, coping well with advanced formulae. Most were able to name a cell and print selected columns.

Task 6 – Presentation

Almost all candidates achieved more than half marks for the presentation — many gained full marks. The mark most commonly not awarded was the keyboarding mark.

Task 8 – Compliments slip

Many candidates provided a creative compliments slip which contained correct and accurate details.

Task 9 – Poster

Candidates achieved high marks in this task, following instructions to include specific information, to produce a creative poster.

Tasks 12a – Sponsor form

Most candidates made a good attempt at this question, realising that they were required to increase the depth of the inserted row to ensure it could be completed by hand. However, a significant number of candidates deleted the footer text when inserting their own name and were, therefore, not awarded the print mark.

Tasks 12b – E-mail

Most e-mail printouts showed evidence of sending the urgent e-mail with the correct attachment. The standard of e-mail layout has improved in recent years.

Task 13 – Certificate

The vast majority of candidates attained most marks, coping well with mail merge using a spreadsheet.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Assignment

Tasks 1 and 7 – Database

Most candidates were not awarded the new field mark. This was because they did not spell 'received' correctly, they missed '?', or they used different capitalisation to the template provided.

Some candidates had difficulty completing the sort on two fields.

A number of candidates printed either 'yes' or 'no' records only, when they should have printed all records.

Many candidates did not print each task when instructed and instead waited until completing all of Task 1. This impacted on Task 1a, as a record had been added and another deleted.

Many candidates did not include the correct fields in the form. Some duplicated Area ID, and many did not include any fields from the Area Offices table.

Most candidates made a good attempt at the address labels. The majority of candidates were not awarded the print mark as they had omitted the organisation field.

Many candidates were not awarded the heading mark in the report due to inconsistent capitalisation. Again, the sort on two fields was problematic for some candidates.

Task 2 – E-file

Many candidates provided definitions of the electronic communication methods rather than a use. Often the answers were very generic and not specific to the organisation in the assignment.

A significant number of candidates did not use one of the five methods of communication given, including their own suggestions instead, which meant marks could not be awarded.

Task 5c – Graph

Most candidates performed poorly in this task. Headings were not specific (missing year) or were incorrectly capitalised. Some candidates used the data for the fundraisers instead of the events. Many candidates did not select the correct data, which meant that labels were missing or irrelevant.

Task 10 – E-file

Many candidates displayed poor knowledge of corporate image, confusing it with advertising and promoting the organisation — very few marks were being awarded. However, this may have been due to misinterpreting the question. Candidates gained more marks in the file management section.

Task 11 – Newsletter

Very few candidates created a newsletter by using a template. The majority of candidates used the e-file provided and simply edited it.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Assignment

Candidates must read and follow all instructions, to ensure they include all the information required.

Proof reading was poor. Accuracy of keying-in is vital to ensure copies of documents are fit for purpose.

Candidates must ensure that they complete any e-file consistently. The capitalisation already in a document must be continued when new text is added. Where spell check is not available in an application, candidates must proof read work even more carefully.

Searching on two criteria and sorting on two fields must be practised to improve marks awarded for database tasks.

In spreadsheets, the sum function must be used correctly. Please refer to marking principles for guidance.

Candidates must ensure that they can create a chart using non adjacent rows and columns. Inserting meaningful headings, which are correctly capitalised, is also required.

E-mail layouts have improved, but accuracy of keyboarding still impacts on candidates' marks. Candidates must also insert an appropriate subject heading with consistent capitalisation.

If candidates are inserting their name and task number in the footer, they should ensure that they do not delete any text that is already in the e-file footer. The candidate's name should appear below any footer text.

When candidates are required to create or design a DTP or word-processing task, they are expected to open a new document and insert any information required. All marks cannot be awarded when candidates simply edit the existing document. It is recommended that DTP and word-processing templates are used when appropriate.

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

Candidates must ensure that they read theory questions carefully and, when necessary, relate their answer to the organisation. Candidates should continue to develop their understanding of the different command words.

Where examples are given, candidates should read the example and model their answer using the same structure.

Whilst it was pleasing to see that the conditions of assessment for coursework were adhered to in the majority of centres, there were a small number of examples where this may not have been the case. Following feedback from teachers, we have strengthened the conditions of assessment criteria for National 5 subjects and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher. The criteria are published clearly on our website and in course materials and must be adhered to. SQA takes very seriously its obligation to ensure fairness and equity for all candidates in all qualifications through consistent application of assessment conditions and investigates all cases alerted to us where conditions may not have been met.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

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| Number of resulted entries in 2016 | 5448 |
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| Number of resulted entries in 2017 | 5477 |
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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 | 29.2% | 29.2% | 1597 | 71 |
| B | 29.9% | 59.1% | 1639 | 61 |
| C | 20.1% | 79.2% | 1100 | 52 |
| D | 7.9% | 87.0% | 431 | 47 |
| No award | 13.0% | - | 710 | - |

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.