# 8970 Spreadsheet Processing Techniques - Essential

General observations
The majority of candidates at Essential and Intermediate levels were well prepared and understood the requirements of the examinations. Tasks requiring the use of presentation features such as bold, italics, changing font size and using borders and/or shading were usually completed well.
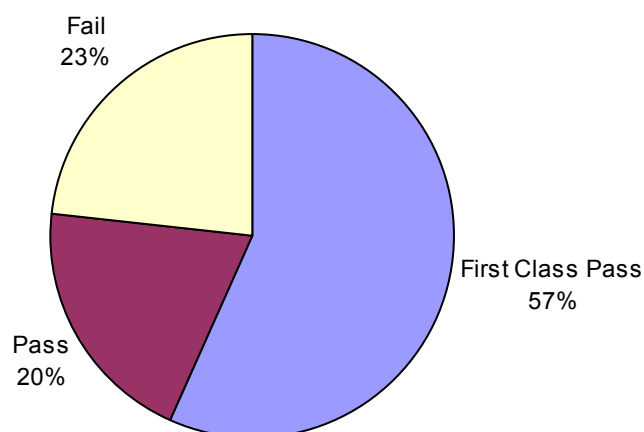
Areas of good performance
The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of what is required at this level. The instructions were usually carefully followed and errors in data entry were rare.

Areas for development
Problems that arose at this level were often due to one or more of the following:
- failure to format data correctly eg incorrect number of decimal places
- data incorrectly aligned
- failure to produce the correct number of printouts
- failure to print the formulas as requested
- data not fully displayed in a column
- incorrect calculation for an average
- inclusion of extra or incorrect cells in a formula for SUM or AVERAGE.

Recommendations
Candidates need to read carefully through the whole paper before commencing the examination and complete the tasks in the order given. All completed work should be checked against the instructions to ensure that the requirements of the tasks have been met.

Tips

- Always read the instructions carefully in order to meet the requirements of the tasks eg use SUM function, format data.
- Tick off instructions as they are completed.
- Check the spreadsheet to make sure that the required data has been correctly entered in the correct cells is in the correct format and is aligned as instructed.
- Make sure that data is formatted to the correct number of decimal places and numbers are displayed as integers when requested.
- Display formulas when requested and adjust column widths so that all formulas are fully displayed.
- Use the correct orientation (portrait or landscape) for printouts as requested.

8970 Spreadsheet Processing Techniques-Intermediate

First Class Pass
33%

Fail
41%

Pass
26%
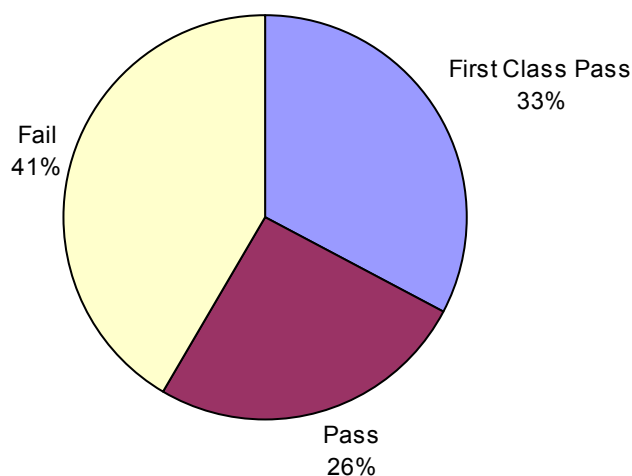
Areas of good performance
The majority of candidates entered at this level were well prepared and, on the whole, transfer of information from the examination papers was done accurately. Amendments, alignment and formatting were usually completed correctly.

Areas for development
Problems that arose at this level were often due to one or more of the following:
- missing or incorrect brackets for arithmetic operator precedence in a formula
- failure to use an absolute reference to a single cell when requested
- failure to use a cell reference in a formula
- failure to print out the specified area of the spreadsheet when requested
- failure to produce a chart as requested with respect to position on spreadsheet, data labels, labelling of axes, data not fully displayed and selection of incorrect data
- incorrect positioning of a text box or data in a footer
- failure to use a function (IF, ROUND, DATE) correctly or where required
- failure to centre data/chart vertically and/or horizontally on a printout
- failure to shade cells or incorrect cells shaded
- replication not carried out for all the cells requested.

Recommendations

Candidates should be given plenty of practice in working through example materials before attempting the examination.

Candidates need to read carefully through the whole paper before commencing the examination and complete the tasks in the order given. All completed work should be checked against the instructions to ensure that the requirements of the tasks had been met.

Production of charts, manipulation of legends and data labels etc have improved this year, but the following are items that could be improved further:

- selecting the correct data when creating a chart
- labelling the axes on charts as requested and not confusing the horizontal and vertical axes
- including a legend when requested
- making sure all the data is fully displayed
- printing the chart as instructed eg on a separate printout or on the same printout.

Tips

- Follow all the instructions given particularly in respect of formulas and use the correct cell reference ie relative or absolute.
- Check the spreadsheet to make sure that the required data has been correctly entered in the correct cells is in the correct format and is aligned as instructed.
- Make sure the required parts of a spreadsheet are selected and printed.
- Check that the correct cells are shaded
- Make sure that the correct data is replicated into the correct cells.
- Make sure that all data in cells is fully displayed.
- Use brackets where necessary to ensure that arithmetic operators are applied in the correct order in a formula.
- Make sure that functions are used where required.

8970 Spreadsheet Processing Techniques - Advanced

First Class Pass
14%

Pass
16%

Fail
70%
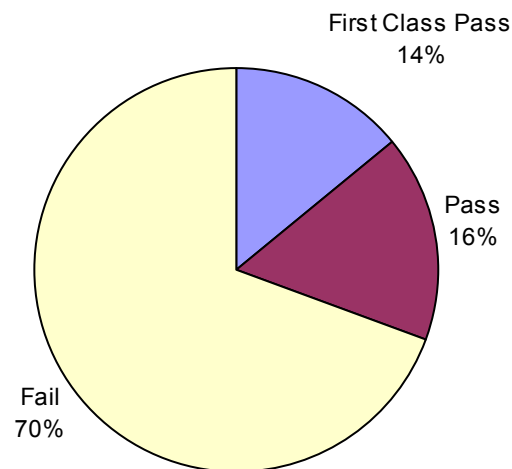
Areas of good performance

There were few entries at this level. Features such as use of text boxes, headers and footers, comment boxes, shading, orientation and clipart were usually carried out to a high standard.

Areas for development

Advanced functions (such as lookup, error trapping), sorting, macros and selection of data for a chart caused problems for candidates who need to show more knowledge and understanding in these areas. Candidates need to show understanding of the difference between relative and absolute cell references and use them appropriately.

Recommendations

Candidates should be given plenty of practice in working through example materials that contain the advanced functions before attempting the examination.
Candidates need to read carefully through the whole paper before commencing the examination and complete the tasks in the order given. All completed work should be checked against the instructions to ensure that the requirements of the tasks had been met.

Tips

- Practice creation and use of macros and use of functions for count, date, lookup and error trapping.
- Practice sorting tables of data and check that all the data is sorted correctly.
- Check the spreadsheet to make sure that the data is in the correct format and is aligned as instructed.
- Make sure that an absolute cell reference is used where appropriate.
- Make sure that all formatting and layout is completed as requested.
- Remember to go back and amend the formulas printout if an amendment to a formula is made in a later task.

Additional comments

Examiners would also like to remind candidates at all levels that it is important that they annotate printouts with their names stating to which task each printout relates. Printouts also need to be collated into the correct sequence, counted, numbered and double-checked against the instructions.