

4800-111 (Paper)

Essential Skills Application of Number Level 1

Chief Examiner's report – September 2018

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide centres with feedback on the performance of candidates for 4800-111 Essential Skills Application of Number.

This report covers the period from October 2017 to September 2018.

2 Overall Performance

2.1 Areas of good performance

There are a number of areas across the papers for Level 1 where the candidates have performed particularly well:

Candidates are successfully **solving problems** by using appropriate **calculations**. They are also showing competence at using their answers to make choices with good explanations. A good understanding of **fractions and percentages** is also being shown. They are **extracting data** well from tables and effectively identifying the relevant information given to them.

Performance on questions requiring the **presentation of tables and charts** has continued to be good. Good understanding of questions with **ratios** and the **calculation of means and ranges** is also being demonstrated.

Areas where candidates have shown partly good performance include **probability**. Candidates perform well when asked to select the appropriate probability term which describes the likelihood of an event happening

Perimeter is another area where the candidates have shown reasonable levels of understanding. Candidate responses on this topic are particularly good when they are presented with the values required for the calculation without reference to a diagram.

2.2 Areas for development

There are a number of areas across the papers where the candidates are still struggling to achieve marks:

Scale Diagrams. Some candidates are still struggling to draw and use a scale diagram effectively. Good understanding of scales and their use are skills which can significantly boost a candidate's total marks. A significant number of diagrams created by the candidates are out of tolerance by a large number of squares. Only a half square tolerance is allowed for all diagrams across the papers. Many candidates are still losing marks due to the omission of labelling on their diagrams. They should be encouraged to read the questions carefully to identify what needs labelling on their diagram. If no specification is made, it is advisable that they label all parts of their diagram.

Perimeter. Candidates are struggling to find perimeter when they have to use values shown on a diagram. Some candidates are also failing to provide the correct units with their numerical answer.

Interpreting range. Interpretation of the range is poorly attempted with candidates unable to make accurate statements relating to the consistency of data. An increased number of candidates are at least showing some understanding of the range. Some responses mention that a high figure for range indicates low consistency/high variety of data or that a low figure for range indicates high consistency/low variety of data. Whilst these statements are correct, the candidates must ensure that they relate them to their value for the range.

Interpreting mean. Questions requiring the interpretation of a mean are being answered less successfully over the last year. A large number of candidates' responses are treating the mean value as the set value for something rather than an average. Some candidates are also incorrectly referring to their mean as being a maximum value.

Units. Some candidates are giving answers in incorrect money format, e.g. an answer of £213.50 written as £213.5 will be penalised.

Checking. There has been an improvement in the number of candidates successfully performing checks of their work. However, some candidates are still not even attempting to perform a check of a previous calculation. This is another area which candidates can, with simple preparation, almost guarantee an additional mark on their paper. Checking calculations requires candidates to use a different method from the original calculation, usually reverse calculations or approximation. Many candidates are losing a mark for checking because the question upon which the check is based does not include any working and, therefore, there is not an original calculation.

Mean from a table. Candidates are showing understanding of the calculation required to find a mean. However, they are finding this more difficult when they first need to extract the relevant data from a table. It is the skill of reading and understanding a table in this context which requires more practice than the mean calculation itself.

Probability. Candidates have shown some good understanding of probability. However, a particular question which they've found challenging has been to find the probability of an event not happening. This has required either the use of a table shown in an earlier question or the understanding that the probability of an event either happening or not happening is 1. ie $P(\text{event does not happen}) = 1 - P(\text{event does happen})$

Candidates are showing competence in their understanding of probability terms but struggle more in probability questions requiring the use of fractions.

Presentation of results. Most tasks require some graphical support for, and/or summary of results. Although most candidates produce good presentations, a number of candidates lose marks for the following reasons:

Charts / graphs:

- failing to label axes, particularly the vertical axis
- not constructing a continuous linear scale on the vertical axis

- failing to start the vertical scale at zero (bar chart only)
- not drawing bar heights, plots or sectors accurately

A few candidates are still drawing charts or graphs (for which they will be penalised) when asked to present a table.

Sensible Answers

Candidates should be encouraged to consider the size of their answers within the context of the exam questions. Some answers are seen which are considerably too small or, more often, too large for the questions' contexts. Candidates who take the time to consider their answers in this way are more likely to identify that an error has been made and to re-attempt the question.

3 Recommendations/Advice for centres

Centres should carefully consider whether a candidate is operating at an appropriate level for entry at Level 1. Unfortunately there have been a small number of candidates who were clearly way below the standard required.

There has been a lack of working out shown on a significant number of papers. Candidates who have failed to provide a correct answer are, therefore, missing out on compensation marks. It is recommended that the candidates show as much working out as possible.

Some candidates are using the extra space for workings and answers at the back of the exam papers. It is advisable that the candidates indicate when they have done this on the relevant answer section of the paper.

Centres should advise candidates about appropriate 'exam technique' particularly with regard to attempting Tasks in order. Candidates may attempt Tasks in any order and it may be to a candidate's advantage to start with Task 2 or 3 rather than Task 1.

4 Additional Information

Centres should be aware that pass marks may vary from paper to paper as a result of an awarding process undertaken by City & Guilds. Any difference in pass marks reflects the perceived and actual difference in demand of the exam papers, including the source materials and the questions themselves. Therefore, it is possible that two candidates with the same score may have different overall results (pass or fail) if they have taken different versions of papers.