

4800-121 (Paper)

**Essential Skills Application of Number
Level 2**

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 4800-121 Essential Skills Application of Number Level 2.

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

The Chief Examiner's Report has been provided as a result of feedback from centres, to give them guidance in preparing candidates for examination.

2 Overall Performance

2.1 Areas of good performance

A good level of basic numeracy skills has been demonstrated on both tasks.

Candidates have shown proficiency at calculating suitable **averages** for sets of data. Most candidates have also shown a good understanding of **fractions, percentages** and the **calculation of ranges**. Numerical skills have also been used effectively for **solving problems** in Task 1.

Basic probability has been successfully calculated as a fraction by a high number of candidates. The presentation of results using **charts** has also been carried out extremely well.

2.2 Areas for development

There have been a significant number of candidates unable to show understanding on the following areas of the Level 2 papers.

Explaining choice of average. Candidates are struggling to provide satisfactory explanations for their choice of data average used. Reference is too often being made to the ease of calculation or to the details of the calculation method. Candidates need, instead, to be confident at knowing the advantage of their choice of average based on its accuracy. For example, reference to extreme values not affecting the result is a good justification for using the median. Reference to all data being used is a good reason for the choice of mean.

Interpretation of range. Interpretation of the range is poorly attempted with most candidates unable to make accurate statements relating to the consistency of data. 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.

Calculation of specified averages. When given a choice of any average type to calculate, most candidates can select and calculate the answers correctly. However, it is important that the candidates are confident at calculating all averages as they are less successful when a specific average type is requested in the question.

Scale Diagrams. Some candidates are struggling to draw and use scale diagrams. 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.

Checking. A large number of candidates are 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. Candidates must show the original calculation in their working.

Probability. Whilst most candidates are competent at working out a probability in terms of a fraction, there are few who can construct and interpret a tree diagram. They must be able to draw and accurately label a tree diagram then use its values to calculate probability. There are also too many candidates who are unable to draw and use probability scales correctly. The candidates are struggling to identify the correct position for their probabilities on the scale between 0 and 1.

Area. Whilst most candidates were able to calculate the area of a rectangle, there is still considerable room for improvement in their ability to calculate areas which include L-shapes or multiple rectangles with more than one calculation required.

Conversions within the same system. Very few candidates were able to convert a measurement given in centimetres to metres.

Volume. Very few candidates are displaying any knowledge of volume. Errors are made when the candidates fail to ensure that all values used have first been converted to the same units. Most candidates fail to attempt questions on volume at all suggesting that they may not know the formula required for finding it.

Units. Some candidates are giving answers in incorrect money format, eg an answer of £73.50 written as £73.5 will be penalised.

Presentation of results. The presentation of results in charts has been done extremely well by most candidates. However, there are common reasons why some candidates fail to achieve full marks for charts:

Charts / graphs:

- fail to label axes, particularly the vertical axis
- do not construct a continuous linear scale on the vertical axis
- fail to start the vertical scale at zero (bar chart only)

Trend lines:

- generally a straight line drawn between graph plots with approximately the same number of plots either side of the line will suffice. Many candidates draw a line with the correct gradient but position it with the vast majority of points either above or below the line.

Sensible Answers. Candidates should be encouraged to consider the size of their answers within the context of the 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 2. Unfortunately there have been a small number of candidates who were clearly not at 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. Therefore, it is possible that two candidates with the same score may have different overall results (pass or fail) if they sat different papers.

The indicative pass mark ranges can be found in the ESNI Specification, which can be found on the City & Guilds website.