5519-335 - Level 3 Medical Principles for the Administrator
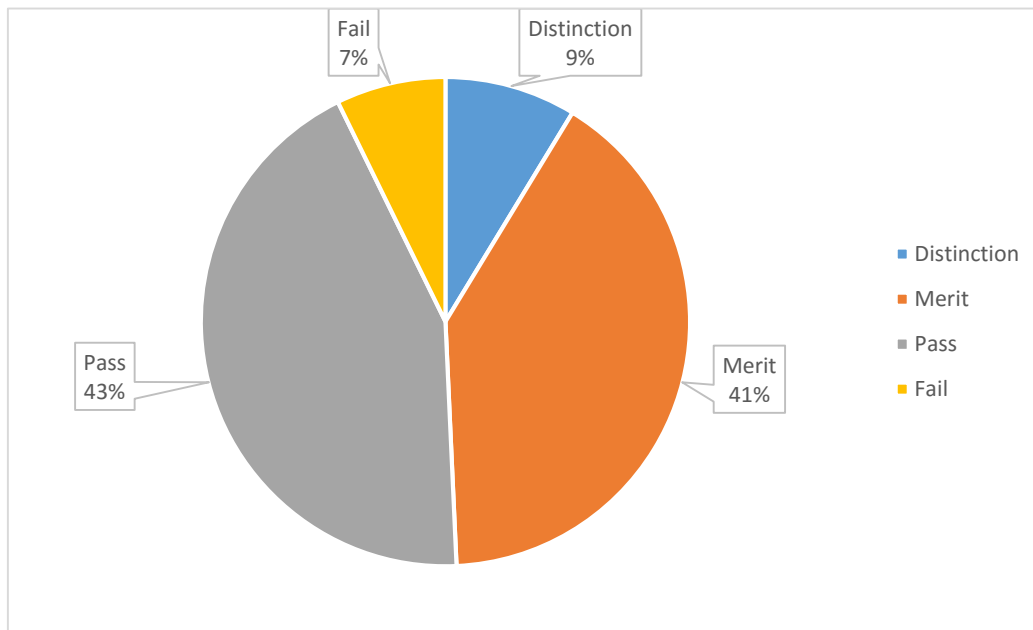
Examiner's report – December 2016 series

Each examination paper is unique there can be slight variations of difficulty from series to series – which means that candidates are required to gain either more or fewer raw marks to compensate and to gain a pass.

General Comments

The exam contains a mixture of short answer questions and others which require more in-depth answers to test candidates understanding of the subject matter.

In this fairly small group of papers the standard was mixed, the majority of results fell into the pass/ merit band. There were some excellent entries, where candidates demonstrated full and accurate knowledge across the breadth of the syllabus, but several papers fell below the standard required for success in an examination set at level three. Many papers were marred by poor exam technique, lack of basic knowledge and very poor spelling.

Areas of good performance

The more able candidates appeared to have no problems with any of the questions on this examination paper.

Questions 2a, 2b, 3b, 5a, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12c, 14a, 14b, 15b, and 16a were the questions which gained the most masks for the majority of the successful candidates. Several of these questions only require the candidate to recall words and phrases from a prescribed list and do not require them to demonstrate any in-depth knowledge or show the ability to describe and explain.

In questions 14, 15 and 16, the candidate is expected to spell the drug information/ classification or the medical name for the bone or body part correctly. If the classification or term was spelt incorrectly then the available mark was not awarded.

Areas for improvement

Poor examination technique marred some papers with candidates often only giving very brief or even one word answers instead of descriptions and explanations. Several candidates gave multiple answers when only 2 or 3 were requested. If the question asks for 2 examples, then only the first 2 answers given by the candidate will be marked even if these 2 answers are incorrect.

Question 1. Was poorly answered by the majority of students. A few candidates mixed up Preventive Medicine (PH) with Health Promotion (HP) and very few mentioned the use of prophylactic vaccinations or medicines in preventative medicine.

Question 3a. Some candidates stated that they would offer advice to patients themselves rather than directing them to suitable literature and making an arrangement for them to speak to a health professional.

Question 4a This was poorly answered by the majority of candidates, with only a handful being able to write the abbreviation in full and fully explain the meaning of the test. A number of students did not attempt this question.

Question 4b. Many candidates appeared to be confused by why screening tests are carried out and were unable to give 2 different reasons. Some candidates mistakenly think that screening tests prevent disease occurring.

Question 6b. Candidates still do not understand the difference between 'signs' and 'symptoms'. A number of candidates gave more than the 4 symptoms required and some gave the same symptom (pain) occurring in four different areas of the body (they were only awarded 1 mark). Only the first four answers given were considered for a mark.

Question 9. This question was one of the most poorly answered on this paper. Inaccurate information was given by many candidates, some even mentioning answers relating to diagnostic imaging. Haematology was the most well understood section.

A high percentage of candidates gained none or very few of the available marks for this question. Some candidates knew the type of work carried out in each section but were unable to name a test in full. Several candidates did not attempt the question.

Question 11. Several candidates gave generic answers rather than focusing on patients as asked in the question.

Question 12a. The majority of candidates gained less than 60% of the available marks for this question. Many did not appear to understand the role played by the administrator in upholding medical ethics and medical etiquette, which, play such an important role when working in a health environment. Answers were generally too brief and not clearly explained.

Question 12b. Many candidates did not read the question correctly and focused on the consequence to the patient or administrator rather than the patient.

Question 13. Many of the answers given to this question were poor with only a couple of candidates gaining all of the available marks. The majority of did not read the question correctly and gave answers which were concerned with the dispensing of patient prescriptions rather than focusing on the other important roles and responsibilities of the hospital pharmacist.

It would appear that many candidates had adequately prepared for a question on this area of the syllabus.

Question 15b. The majority of candidates still do not know the difference between generic and proprietary drug names.

Recommendations and Tips

Reading the questions

Candidates should read the questions carefully and should keep checking their answers to ensure that they are only giving the information/ number of answers requested in the paper. Giving extra answers may use valuable time and cannot gain extra marks.

Candidates should plan and structure their answers in a logical way which ensures that they have only given the number of answers asked for in the question.

Word verbs

The majority of candidates lost valuable marks because they did not give sufficient correct information in their answers. When asked to describe or explain something candidates

should include as much information as possible. The number of marks allocated to a question should give some indication of the length of the expected answer.

Spelling

Spelling is still generally quite poor and a few papers were almost illegible. When learning information such as the medical term/ name for a bone, drug or body part, candidates should practice the spelling of the term until they can spell it correctly. Drug categories, medical terms and the names of body parts/systems taken from the given list, which are spelt incorrectly in the answers, will not be awarded the available mark