

Functional Mathematics Level 1 – Interim Report February 2016

Candidates have now been sitting the remodelled papers for approximately four months following the relaunch in September 2015. The changes in assessment content for Level 1 are minimal as the skills standards remain the same and therefore the patterns of student responses (and difficulties experienced) are similar to those encountered in the previous assessment tests.

The format of the paper based option has minimal changes. For candidates who choose the online assessment option, there are a number of significant changes to the test format and some candidates are not well prepared to cope with those changes. Candidates are expected to show their working in order to be eligible for compensation marks in cases where they have not achieved a fully correct answer. There is a calculation tool bar to assist this process where there is a clear instruction to show working. A few online candidates have missed parts of sections by failing to scroll down sufficiently and some seem unaware of the need to access source material. Many candidates do not appear to have had sufficient practice in using the diagram or chart tools and have therefore lost a significant number of marks. It is important that due regard is given to learner preferred ways of working when the choice of assessment option is made.

Although many candidates have been well prepared for the tests, script marking shows that a significant number of candidates finding difficulties in the following areas:

Checking calculations: Some candidates do not know what is expected of them and therefore fail to access some straightforward marks. A repeat calculation will gain no marks and original calculations must be seen.

Scaling: Many candidates are unable to apply simple scaling principles eg, scaling up (from a plan) or scaling down (to a plan). Many candidates find the construction of simple scale plans difficult. Few candidates can explain the scale they have used in terms of the scale itself and actual and scaled lengths.

Statistics: Most candidates can calculate mean (the only average required at Level 1) and range. However, few candidates can explain the significance of range in terms of the consistency or inconsistency of the original information they are working with.

Explanations: Some candidates are unable to draw simple conclusions from their results, particularly comparative conclusions where the use of eg, 'more' or 'less' or 'bigger' or 'smaller' could help focus the comparison.

Charts: Many candidates lose simple marks for failing to label axes, not starting the vertical axis from zero and careless plotting. It is particularly important that online candidates should be shown and practise the use of the chart maker.

More detail and examples are given in the level 1 Guidance for Delivery, which can be found [here](#).

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