4800-111 (Paper)

Essential Skills Application of Number Level 1

Chief Examiner's report – May 2019

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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 September 2018 to May 2019.

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 **extracting data** well from tables and effectively identifying the correct calculations to carry out. Good understanding of questions requiring the **calculation of means and ranges** is also being demonstrated.

Areas where candidates have shown partly good performance include **percentages**. Whilst some questions have presented significant problems for candidates, the vast majority have shown that they can find percentages of numbers. **Area and Perimeter** are other topics where the candidates have shown a degree of good performance. Candidates have struggled more when they need to be found using the dimensions from part of a diagram.

Performance on questions requiring the **presentation of tables** has been reasonable although there has been a slight decrease in the number of candidates achieving high marks for these. Most of the marks lost for tables are due to candidates inputting the wrong data into their table. They need to read the instructions carefully and take their time when looking for the correct values to use. Some questions on tables also require the use of units with the values so some candidates are losing marks for their omission.

Interpreting mean is generally being done well. However, some candidates are describing the mean value as the set number for something rather than an average so more care is required by some when writing an explanation of this result.

2.2 Areas for development

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

Probability. Candidate performance on probability questions has been mixed. There is a high number of candidates who struggle to select the correct probability term to describe the likelihood of an event happening based on their results. Questions requiring the use of fractions or percentages to describe probability are also proving to be difficult for the candidates.

Comprehension. Most questions requiring the extraction of numbers and their use for calculations are answered well. However, questions with more words and less numbers appear to create more problems for the candidates. Practice at reading and understanding problems should help to improve the results in this area.

Decision making. The candidates are struggling to make correct decisions with appropriate justification based on their calculations and answers. They need to improve their understanding of the results that they find.

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.

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 correctly to their value for the range.

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

Checking. Many 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 to be checked.

Charts. 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

There has also been an increase in the number of candidates plotting the incorrect data. This is another area of the papers where the candidates are struggling to comprehend the instructions given. The candidates need to read the information carefully to ensure they are using the correct data.

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.