

4800-111

Essential Skills Application of Number
Level 1

Chief Examiner's report – March 2017

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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 the introduction of the qualification in January 2017 to March 2017.

2 Overall Performance

2.1 Areas of good performance

Candidates have generally been performing better on the tasks covering the curriculum area of *Number* rather than *Measures, Shape and Space* and *Handling Data*.

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

The candidates have shown that they have an aptitude for questions requiring both a number of **calculations** and good understanding of **fractions and percentages**. There has also been a high number of candidates showing proficiency with **reading timetables**.

Other areas of good performance include the presentation of **tables and charts**, the understanding of **ratios, extracting information from tables** and **calculating ranges**.

Areas where candidates have shown partly good performance include **probability**. Whilst some questions have presented significant problems for candidates, the vast majority have shown that they understand and can identify the correct probability words to describe the likelihood of an event happening. **Perimeter** is another area where the candidates have shown a degree of good performance. Candidate responses have been good when they were clearly presented with both values required for the calculation.

2.2 Areas for development

Scale Diagrams. Candidates have struggled both with using a scale diagram and drawing a scale diagram. 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. Many candidates are also losing marks due to the omission of labelling on their diagrams.

Measure and dimensions. Whilst most candidates are showing a proficiency at carrying out calculations, the inclusion of measures in a question is resulting in less accurate answers. This could be due to errors with reading and comprehension and/or a lack of confidence with measurements.

Perimeter. Candidates are struggling to find perimeter when they have to use values shown at an earlier point in the paper. They need to be aware that they will occasionally have to turn

back a page in order to find the relevant value(s) for their calculation. 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.

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

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. The candidates can also be asked to carry out a check which relates to the interpretation of a scale plan. Candidates should be able to explain their use of scale by relating the scale used to the actual and scaled length on a diagram. Some candidates lose marks by missing either reference to the scale or reference to the scaled length.

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.

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:

A few candidates still draw charts or graphs (for which they will be penalised) instead of the required table.

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.

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 not anywhere near 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.

For further information about the Level 1 coverage and range, please refer to the qualification specifications and assessment criteria (section 5 of our Essential Skills qualifications handbook). These criteria are common to all awarding organisations' Essential Skills qualifications, and were developed by CCEA Regulation.

Whilst the technical content and demand of the Essential Skills qualifications align with the Department for the Economy (DfE) Essential Skills Standards and Curriculum, it is important to bear in mind that the qualifications explicitly require candidates to demonstrate purposeful application of their numeracy skills.

Our Essential Skills qualifications handbook and the DfE Essential Skills Standards and Curriculum document can both be accessed from our **Essential Skills (4800) qualification documents webpage**.