

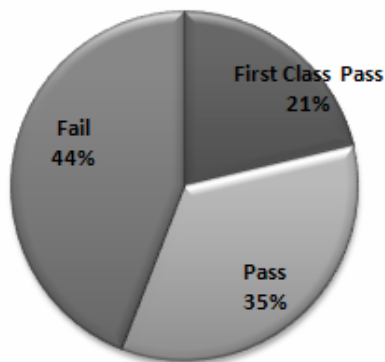
8960 English for Office Skills

General Observations

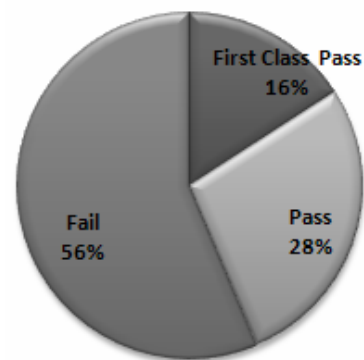
The English for Office Skills examinations are designed to meet the needs of organisations which value the accurate use of written English in their transactions. Typical candidates for these assessments are clerical or secretarial staff who may not have to draft original documents, but are certainly expected to prepare final drafts, or prepare documents for publication. The principal skills tested are linguistic accuracy (spelling, syntax, vocabulary and punctuation), comprehension (listening and reading) and proofreading.

This year it was disappointing to note that at Level 1, whilst the percentage of Pass grades remained the same, there were fewer First Class Passes and more Fail grades and that at Level 2 there was a considerable decrease in First Class and Pass grades and a major increase in the number of Fail grades.

LEVEL ONE



LEVEL TWO



Areas of good performance

Most candidates completed all questions, with those obtaining a First Class Pass generally scoring well in all seven sections. There was generally good performance in the vocabulary and comparison proofreading (Proofreading A) exercises.

Areas for development

The spelling, listening and reading comprehensions, syntax, punctuation and Proofreading B exercise (without access to a correct version) posed problems for many candidates, at both levels.

At Level 2, a significant number of candidates were unable to identify and/or correct the errors in the syntax section.

Recommendations

Candidates should practise exercises of the same type as those in the examinations in order to ensure that they understand the format. Past papers are available. Lists of the words tested for correct spelling are available in the Qualification Handbook and should be learned. Candidates should have practice in listening to messages and conveying these in written form. It would also be useful for candidates to practise completing sentences grammatically, in order for them to cope better with the reading comprehension exercise. Whilst many candidates are able to spot syntactical errors, many are unable to supply the correction. Exercises in correcting syntactical errors should therefore prove advantageous. Candidates must remember to ring the error in the syntax exercise in addition to writing the correction.

Practice in punctuating unpunctuated text is also to be recommended, with emphasis on the use of the apostrophe and the correct punctuation for indirect speech. Additional practice of the Proofreading B exercise is also to be recommended – candidates should realise that they only have to ring the errors on this exercise: they do not have to correct them.

Tips

- Make sure you can spell all the words in the spelling lists (available in the Qualification Handbook).
- Make sure you know (and can use correctly) all of the ‘similar words’ (eg access/excess) in the lists in the Qualification Handbook.
- Practise summarising and adapting information in line with the requirements of the comprehension exercises. Make sure you fill in the gaps in the Reading Comprehension exercise so that the sentence is grammatically correct.
- Practise correcting syntactical errors.
- Use past examination papers for practice.
- Make sure you understand the requirements of each part of the examination and follow the instructions given.
- Write answers clearly in the spaces provided.
- Check all your answers carefully.
- Do not leave blanks in your answer book – sometimes a sensible guess may give you an additional mark.
- Do not write in pencil.
- Do not ring more errors than stated in the instructions for the proofreading exercises; doing so may result in a lower mark.
- Only use upper case characters where they are needed in the punctuation exercise.
- Write clearly (especially in the spelling, punctuation and vocabulary exercises). If your answer can’t be read, it can’t be marked as correct.

Additional comments

The Qualification Handbook provides information for centres and candidates on the requirements of these examinations and is available, free of charge, along with a selection of sample papers. The Qualification Handbook includes lists of all the words that are used in both the spelling and vocabulary sections of the examinations.