

Young Enterprise Scotland Examination 2016

Senior Examiner's Report

Introduction

It is a pleasure to report that this year's examination saw a major improvement in the standard over previous years. The level of distinctions awarded reached 7% for the first time in the exam's history and the level of ungraded papers dropped below 2% for the first time.

This is a credit to all those who took part and a reflection on all the work and effort of the students and those who helped them.

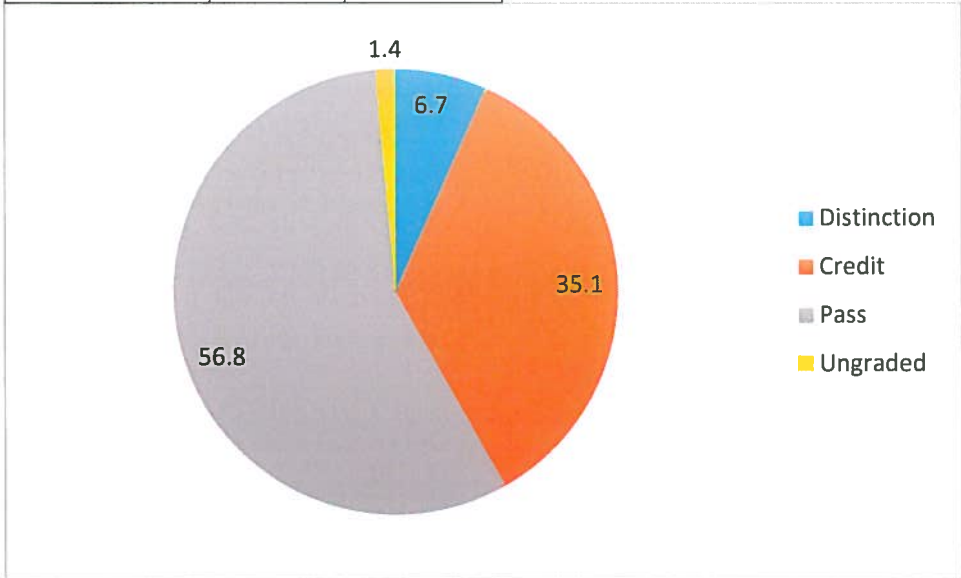
All the examiners noted that from early on in the marking they could see that the standard was much higher than in the other years.

Overall the papers expressed a positive reflection of the experience and demonstrated how the Young Enterprise experience was of significant benefit in advancing their understanding of, and increasing their enthusiasm for business start-up and venture creation.

Grade Breakdown

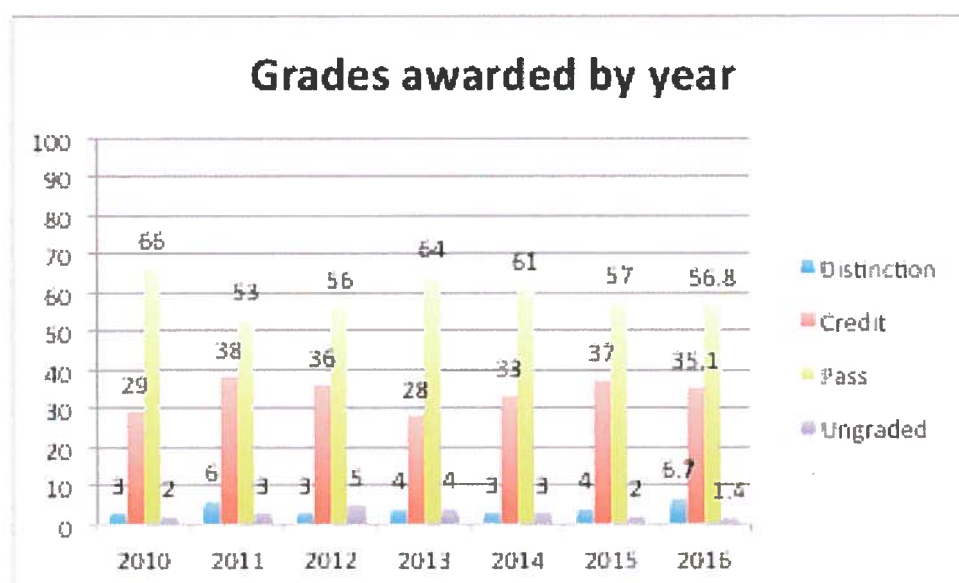
Table 1: Grades Awarded 2016

Distinction	63	6.7%
Credit	328	35.1%
Pass	531	56.8%
Ungraded	14	1.4%



Grades awarded by year

Table 2	Distinction	Credit	Pass	Ungraded
2010	3%	29%	66%	2%
2011	6%	38%	53%	3%
2012	3%	36%	56%	5%
2013	4%	28%	64%	4%
2014	3%	33%	61%	3%
2015	4%	37%	57%	2%
2016	7%	35%	57%	1%



This year saw a significant increase in the level of distinctions awarded. This year's high may have been due to a number of reasons:

1. Increased interest and awareness of the programme generally amongst students, staff and advisors
2. Number of questions reduced from 7 to 6 affording students more time to read each question and be more focussed
3. Easier to understand questions with prompts to guide answers.

There was an equally significant reduction in ungraded papers while the level of credits remained consistent with previous years. The majority of pass grades were much higher than other years which reveals that the overall standard of the results were impressive. Students demonstrated their enthusiasm and commitment to the programme and it was clear that the experience was of value and will help to inform their future careers.

Marking Approach

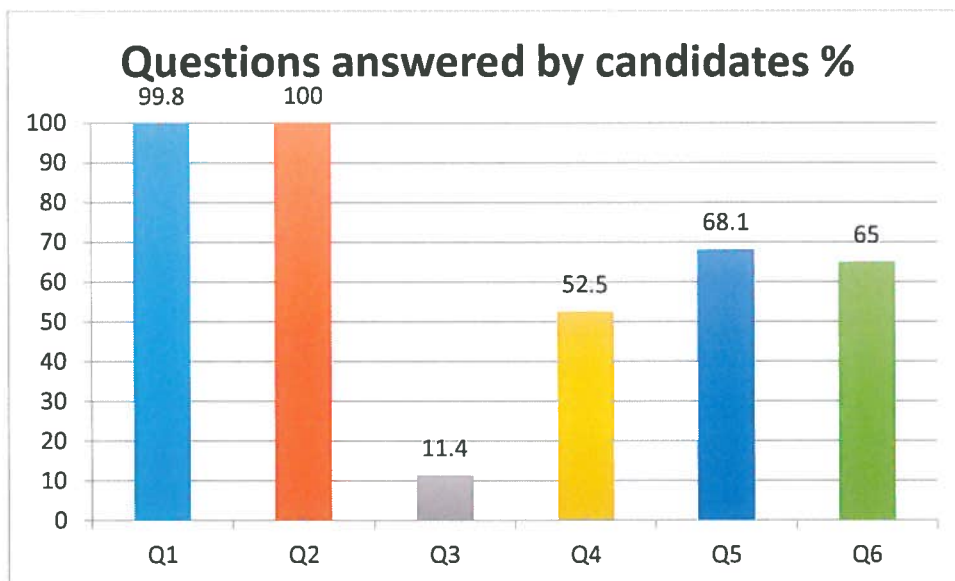
The YES exams is different from other university examinations. It does not follow formal coursework. There are no set texts nor right and wrong answers.

Grades are awarded on how the students show such things as attitude and presentation, commitment, engagement and clear indication of the benefits gained. Examiners acknowledge the diversity in maturity, ability and fluency across the wide range of individuals and schools participating and the markers are mindful that each paper is marked on its own merit.

One examiner remarked: *'the fact that these youngsters give up a large part of their free time to participate in the experience fills me with admiration for their commitment and their desire to acquire the skills necessary for building a working career. My enthusiasm for this marking process is undimmed.'*

Questions Answered

Table 3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
Number of Students	935	936	107	491	656	608
Percentage of Students	99.8%	100%	11.4%	52.5%	68.1%	65%



As in previous years the question on financial management (Q3) was the least answered question. As noted last year it may not be all that surprising that given the choice students will avoid a 'dry' subject.

One examiner remarked: *'I continue to be disappointed at the number of candidates who chose to attempt it and, for those who do, how poor the financial information is managed and the demonstration of the implications of cash flow management on their businesses.'*

Like last year the two most popular question was question 5 which asked about promotion and selling. This might suggest that students find this the most attractive and interesting area.

Being consumers themselves, students may be more confident discussing branding and image.

The second most popular was question 6 asking them to discuss the way the business idea was generated. This may be seen as an easy choice as good marks can be achieved by describing the development of the idea.

Main Issues Identified

Negatives:

1. The quality of writing in terms of legibility, grammar and spelling remains an issue. One examiner made the point that the papers might be seen as a business report to reflect on the impact that the experience has had on them. As such it should be presented as a business report. After all we are now truly in the digital age.
2. As in previous years some papers are long and rambling narratives recounting remembered events without any meaningful analysis or insights.
3. Low confidence or interest shown in answering question 3.
4. Coming up with a good business idea appeared problematic for many of the teams. Choosing one seemed haphazard and often with the idea imposed by a minority or one person and everyone else tagging along.
5. One school raised some concerns in that many answers were very similar.
6. Lack of relevant financial measurements and a lack of understanding of the fundamental differences between turnover and profit.
7. The need for planning and time management is continually underestimated prior to start up. Candidates continue to be surprised by times pressures and deadlines are missed.
8. Not enough attention paid to research role expectations prior to allocation/ election of management posts.

Positives:

1. The main feature of this year is the very positive increase in distinctions. This is the highest level achieved to date as almost double that of previous years.
2. The level of ungraded papers is also the lowest to date.
3. All examiners reported that the overall standard was significantly higher than in previous years
4. All students provided insightful answers to the two mandatory questions in section A and demonstrated that the overall experience was valuable both to their own development and that of the groups.

5. The YES programme is regarded as a positive learning experience both in personal and educational development. Many students intend to apply the learning in future career choices.
6. Most students demonstrated objectivity and honesty in their reflections and self-analysis in question 2.
7. Many students confirmed that as a result of the experience their communication and interpersonal skills have been greatly enhanced.
8. An increasing number of students are now following the prompts provided in the questions.
9. The increase in the volume of typed papers is making the examiners' task easier.

Recommendations

It is very encouraging to see the continuing improvement in the overall standard and results. The marking team have a wealth of business and education experience and this year saw no divergence within the marking range across the examiners. The questions have been shortened and simplified which provides and therefore more easily understood.

1. Teachers should remind the students of the benefit in following the guidance notes and using the prompts to ensure that answers are well structured.
2. Teachers should stress the importance of clear and legible writing.
3. From next year distinctions should be in the 80 – 100 range as the credit range is too narrow. It is important to note that most distinctions were over 80 this year.

The Top Ten Papers

Emma Wilson	Castlehead High School
Amy Garrow	Keith Grammar School
Kiera Jack	Fortrose Academy
Cally Dickie	Keith Grammar School
Gemma Muir	Castlehead High School
Sophie Moar	Anderson High School
Jemima MacDonald	Inverness High School
Mariam Al-Hajaj	St Andrew's Academy
Michael Johnston	Meldrum Academy
Isla Mackay	Fortrose Academy

Well done to everyone who participated in the Young Enterprise Scotland 2016 examination. I would like to thank the examiners for their great work and heartfelt gratitude to Caroline, Emma and Olivia for their patience and courtesy.

Frank Dunne Senior Examiner May 2016