

YOUNG ENTERPRISE SCOTLAND EXAMINATION 2015

Senior Examiner's Report

Most candidates in this year's examination demonstrated that the experience was of practical benefit to their personal, vocational and educational development. There was also evidence that the experience had a positive impact in encouraging and inspiring many to look at business as a career option, either by starting their own business or working in a business.

A total of 952 scripts from 125 schools were marked. The YES exam differs from other examinations in that it does not follow formal coursework. There are no set texts nor are there right and wrong answers. YES examiners do not have rigid guidelines to apply.

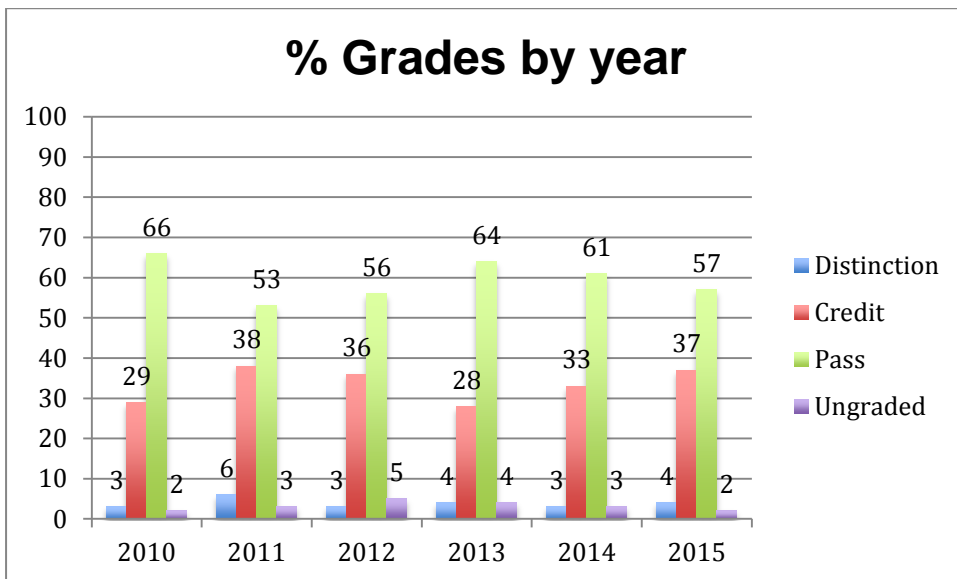
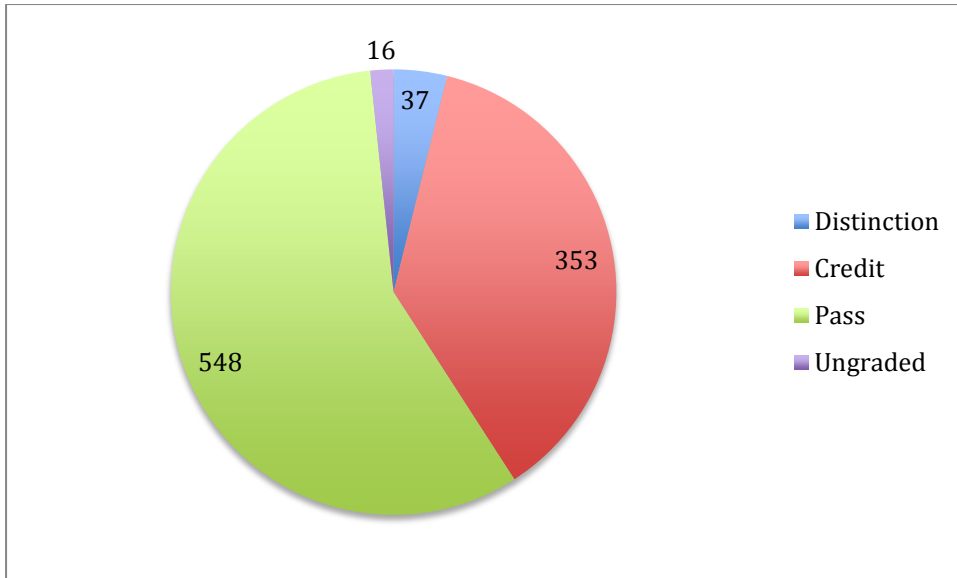
The grades are based on the level of enthusiasm, commitment, engagement, and the beneficial gains expressed in the papers. Examiners acknowledge the diversity of maturity, ability and fluency across the wide range of individuals and schools participating and they are careful to evaluate each paper on its own merit. They also take into consideration contributing factors such as: the attitude and presentation of the individual, the synergy within the team, the support of teachers and advisers, the immediate network, the commercial environment and any prevailing influences.

Table 1: Grades awarded

Distinction	37	4%
Credit	353	37%
Pass	548	57%
Ungraded	16	2%

Table 2: Grades awarded by year

	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%



Main Issues identified

Positives:

1. The main feature of this year is the significant increase in both credits and distinctions; the highest level since 2011 (a year that had noticeable deviance from the other years).
2. The total number of ungraded scripts continues to fall. The proportion of ungraded candidates has dropped to the lowest level since 2010.
3. The vast majority of students regarded the YES programme as a positive learning experience both in personal and educational development and expressed the intention to apply this learning in future career choices.
4. There is a genuine honesty and willingness for students to reflect on their experiences. There were very good responses to Q2 generally where students have the opportunity to address and analyse their own development, competencies and behaviours.
5. The majority indicated that the experience enhanced their understanding and interest in the world around them.
6. Overall there was evidence of the application of creative and innovative thinking.
7. Many believe that their confidence and communication skills have been significantly improved as a direct consequence of participation in the programme.
8. There was good balance and reflection on the positives and negatives of the interpersonal dynamics within groups.
9. Good attention to detail provided in mandatory questions in Section A.
10. Many papers were a joy to read as they were full of interesting observations and perspectives.

Negatives:

1. Some papers consisted of long rambling narratives recounting a sequence of events without aim or focus. One candidate wrote a sentence of 85 words. Highest marks were achieved by candidates who followed the 'points of consideration' below each question, systematically and concisely.
2. Poor handwriting is still an issue. Careless or untidy writing may obscure good content resulting in lower marks.
3. Low confidence or interest shown generally in addressing Q3, the costing and finance question.
4. Generation of the business ideas somewhat haphazard and unfocused. Evidence of running with the first idea that springs to mind or imposed by the interest of a minority (or one person). and very little meaningful research undertake prior to deciding on product
5. Q5, the most popular question was answered by many but not particularly well.
6. Evidence that there was not enough focus on role expectations
7. Some indication that whilst the link teacher and adviser were clearly a great help they may have had too much influence and as a result some learning opportunities may have been lost.

Question Choice

Total Students	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
Number of Students	954	954	99	357	599	445	394
Percentage of Students	100%	100%	10%	37%	63%	47%	41%

Least popular question

Only 10% of candidates answered Q3; the question about financial management. It may not be surprising that given the choice many students will avoid a 'dry' and challenging subject.

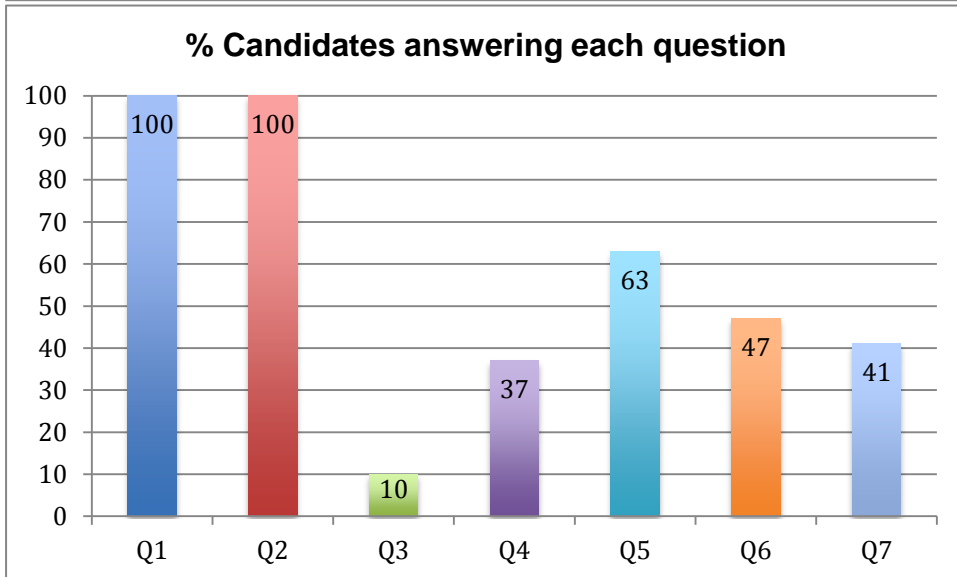
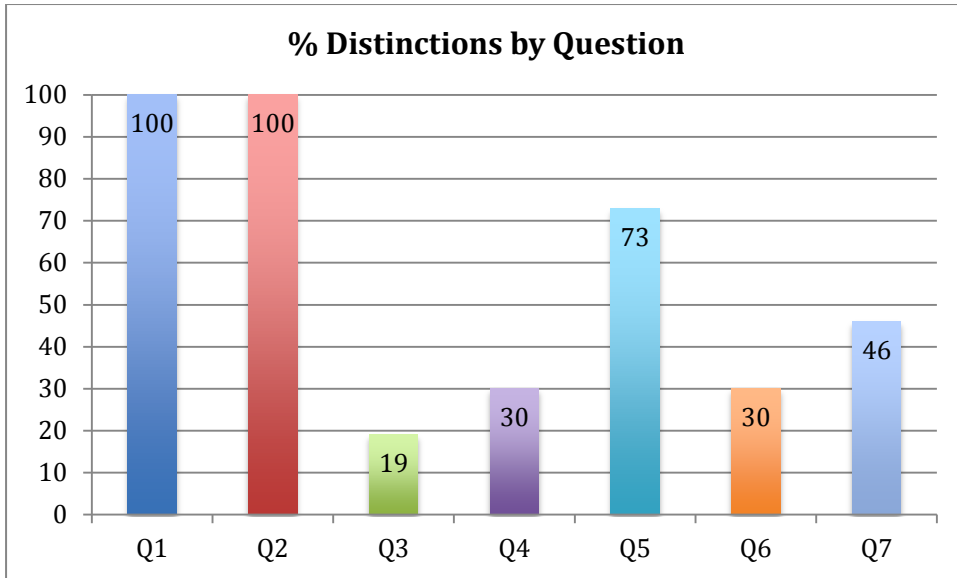
One examiner with mentor experience in YES expressed the view that there seems to be an issue to get students to focus on the financial aspects of the business, not just in the exam, but throughout the programme.

Almost twice as many as the average (19%) answered it at distinction level.

It would be tempting to conclude that the more able students are up to the challenge of a question that appears to be more demanding and precise but overall there appeared to be little hesitation to discuss financial issues amongst the students when the subject came up in other questions. For example, one student answered Question 3 within Question 2.

Most popular question

The most popular was Q5 at 63%. This proportion increases to 73% for distinctions and to 90% in the Top Ten. Q5 is about promotions and selling, branding, image etc. Clearly it is the most attractive and interesting area as far as the students are concerned. Again, what conclusions can we draw from this? A day-to-day understanding of marketing and branding is more familiar and accessible to students who are consumers themselves? And unlike Finance, less intimidated by using the terminology?



Top Ten Papers

It was a challenge to select the Top Ten papers. The marks were so close and due to the range of examiners that it would be unfair to list in order of what would appear to be 'best' or 'next best'. These were the best Top Ten in alphabetical order:

Keera Bonar	Twist and Shine	St Machar Academy
Harriet Dixon	Charge	Culloden Academy
Emma Duff	Urban 8	George Watson's College
David Earlie	Cutting Edge	Linwood High School
Ina Milne	Halcyon	Linlithgow Academy
Jennifer McGilvray	Alpha Enterprise	Cardinal Newman High School
Erin Perrie	Branching Out	Beaconhurst School
Scott Watson	Matters Arising	Peterhead Academy
Kirsty Watt	Psychedelic Splash	Hazlehead Academy
Jodie White	Spark	George Watson's College

Conclusions and Recommendations

The operation of setting the Young Enterprise exam and subsequently distributing scripts, marking and collating results ran smoothly. This was due in no small part to the work of Caroline Laurie and Emma Stephen and the co-operation from markers in achieving deadlines.

Some thought should be given, however, to how the process might be improved in the future and recommendations for change.

1. There was some divergence within the marking range across the examiners. This can be attributed in part to the differences between the ranges in quality of scripts by school, but may also point to the need for more guidance on the marking scheme.
2. While the points of consideration following each question provide a reasonable structure for students to follow, few are actually using it. It is necessary to place a greater emphasis on this in the examination guidelines. This revision should be mindful that too rigid a structure could inhibit good insights.
3. Consideration should be given to revising the marking scheme. Currently there are only 10 marks in the credit range (60 – 70) as compared with 20 in the pass and 30 in the distinction.

Finally, on a lighter note

It is always a treat to read some of the intriguing verbal expressions that students can write when in full flow. Here are a selection of some of the most memorable and poetic:

'My job was to encourage everyone to be smiley'

'I had to swallow my shyness'

And a superb encapsulation of the essence of the YES experience:

'The meetings were successful as evidenced by the lack of abject failure and generation of eventual profit.'

'As the model of decision-making previously mentioned was somewhat similar to a communistic Athenian democracy.'

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to the examiners for their hard work and my thanks to Caroline and Emma for their courtesy, patience and indulgence.

Frank Dunne
May 2015