

Scholarship

2014 Assessment Report

Agricultural and Horticultural Science

COMMENTARY

In 2014, 58 candidates sat the examination with 11 achieving 'Scholarship' and one candidate achieving 'Scholarship with Outstanding Performance'. This continued the steady increase in candidate numbers from the previous three years.

The 'cut score' was set at 13 and virtually all candidates attempted all three questions. The planning pages in the answer booklet continue to be well used – especially by those candidates that have considerable information/knowledge on the question and need to organise it to allow a coherent answer.

In 2014, there was no significant difference in the marks gained by candidates across the three questions. This tends to indicate that most candidates allocated time evenly during the examination and completed all questions to the best of their ability.

The overall quality of the cohort's answers was improved compared to 2013. This was illustrated by the increased number of candidates scoring in the 10–12 bracket. A disappointing factor for many of these candidates was they scored poorly in Question One. This question on Nutrient Management linked closely with the environment issue that candidates had studied in the Level 3. However, rather than discussing the impacts of nutrient loss limits, many defaulted to their Level 3 learning and the discussed the causes of nutrient losses and their environmental impacts.

Phrases in the performance standard like analyse, integration, synthesis, logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas need to be evident in candidates answers and therefore, candidates need to know what the phrases mean in the first instance and what it looks like within a candidate's answer.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- discussed the question effectively with a high level of perception and critical understanding of what was being asked
- showed evidence of careful planning
- provided responses that were articulate, coherent and contained elements of extrapolation.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- planned their response for each question to assist the construction of an answer that contained relevant and appropriate information
- chose nationally significant primary products that are typically exported and that related well to the selected contemporary issue/question
- answered questions on (or drew reference to) two primary products (Question Two)
- provided a well-structured series of paragraphs
- used clear, correct statements and appropriate data to back up their statements/discussion
- demonstrated a depth of understanding of their chosen product(s) and contemporary issues.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship or Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- provided vague, shallow answers that lacked detail in either the information provided or the discussion of that information.
- gave rote-learned answers that were out of date, incorrect or not relevant to the question
- wrote answers that indicated a poor awareness of actual social, political or economic implications
- failed to differentiate between general information/facts and those that are 'critical' or highly significant within the context of the product/issue/question.