Examiners report

Trading Standards Qualification Framework

DCATS: Intelligence and Investigative Principles Examiners' Report November 2017

General

50 students sat the Intelligence and Investigative Principles paper in November 2017. 40 students passed and 10 students failed the exam. The highest mark achieved was 66% and the lowest 25%. The mean score was 46%. There were some very good papers with well answered questions, but some really disappointing papers with very poor answers.

This year the majority of students had taken on board previous advice from the examiner in respect to handwriting, presentation and instructions which assists with marking.

Section A

Section A questions provides the examiner the opportunity to see if candidates have looked at the full breadth of the syllabus. Some candidates answered questions in this section better than others. The lowest mark in this section was 5 out of 25 and the highest was 17 out of 25.

Q1. All students answered this question, however generally this question was not answered well. The question asked for a brief explanation about the importance of witness credibility. Those students who did not score well discussed other matters such as capacity of witnesses and made no mention of credibility. To gain marks it is important for students to answer the question that is asked and not write about something else. Students achieved a variety of marks with the maximum mark being 3.

Q2. All students answered this question, which was generally answered fairly well. It was pleasing to see a variety of examples being used to explain why time limits are important.

Q3. All students answered this question. The answers ranged from some very good answers to some poorer attempts. Better answers referred to the requirements of the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996.

Q4. All students attempted to answer this question, which was either answered really well or not very well at all indicating students either knew the answer or didn't have any knowledge about this area. Some students wrote about other intelligence products, such as I2 and the problem analysis triangle which did not gain marks as it was not what the question had asked.

Q5. Two students did not attempt to answer this question. Out of the responses this question was the best question answered in section A with 8 students achieving full marks. The better answers clearly explained the differences between the old and the new forms.

Section B

Section B questions are asking candidates to critically evaluate a particular subject area, providing reasoned arguments and justification for any views they express. Good answers are well structured essays with an introduction, discussion points both agreeing and disagreeing with the topic area and a well-formed conclusion. The marks in this section ranged from 5 to 20 out of 25.

Q6.   31 students chose to answer this question which was answered well overall. Students who did not score well wrote extensively about the importance of training and where responsibility for such matters should lie. Better answers clearly explained a variety of different legislation that governs how Trading Standards should operate including Police And Criminal Evidence Act 1984, Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, Human Rights Act 1998 and the Scottish equivalent legislation.

Q7.   Although less students answered this question the majority of students produced good answers with one student achieving 20 out of 25 marks. Better answers included clear discussion points and examples to illustrate both the advantages and disadvantages to an intelligence led approach. Inclusion of National Trading Standards and how the Intelligence Operating Model and the National Intelligence Model operate and the roles and relevance of local intelligence, regional intelligence and national intelligence helped students score good marks.

Section C

Q8.   47 students attempted to answer this question, making it the most popular section C question. Students are reminded to read the whole question and consider how the points are allocated to the various parts. Some students spent a disproportionate amount of time with very lengthy answers to part b which had the least amount of marks allocated to it. Some students also went into great detail about matters that were not relevant to the question being asked.

Part A was generally answered quite well with one student achieving full marks for this section. Better answers included a good discussion about how the scale of the problem could be understood. This could include an interrogation of open and closed intelligence sources, e.g. inhouse databases, intelligence systems such as IDB or Memex, websites, blogs etc. Establishing whether any action was already being taken by another authority, previous advice, Primary Authority Partnerships, witness statements, legal entity of the business, do they have an on-line presence, experts testing of the cars, a discussion of whether or not a test purchase would be appropriate.

Part B split the students with some clearly answering the question that had been asked. One student scored full marks and the majority of the students scored 4 marks. Other students spent a long time writing lengthy answers which had nothing to do with the question that had been asked and therefore were awarded lower marks.

Part C answers were varied, better answers clearly explained the importance of the enforcement policy drawing on appropriate case law to illustrate why.

Q9. 30 students answered this question. The highest mark for this question was 15 and the lowest 4.

Part A was poorly answered by more than half the students. The poorer answers did not answer the question that was asked. One student achieved 5 marks for their answer. Their answer discussed the appropriateness of Achieving Best Evidence interviews, the use of video with trained officers and the use of victim impact statements.

Part B. Marks for this part of the question ranged from 0 to 3. Better answers understood the requirements for record keeping throughout an investigation.

Part C provided a mixed response of answers from students, some answers were very good and scored highly whilst others were poor. The students who scored well clearly explained which legislation applied to schedule of evidence and disclosure. They explained the difference, using examples of unused, non-sensitive and sensitive. They also mentioned Public Interest Immunity Hearings.

Q10. 23 students answered this question which was the least popular in Section C.

Part A. Some students did not apply their knowledge to the question asked, therefore they achieved low marks. However, all other students achieved good marks. The best answers clearly discussed powers under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, the issue of the business premises spanning two local authority areas, risk assessment considerations and who would be appropriate to accompany the raid. The process of warrant application was also discussed well.

Part B. Overall this question was not answered well with only a few students understanding the correct legislation and processes for the seizing of electronic data.