

## Examiners report

### Trading Standards Qualification Framework

#### DCATS: Legal Metrology Law Examiners' Report November 2017

##### General

This year saw a significant increase in the number of candidates undertaking the Weights and Measures Law examination compared to the previous year, increasing to 27. Twenty-five of the candidates achieved the pass mark of 40 or better (93% pass rate). There was a considerable spread in the range of total marks awarded, ranging from 36 to 73 (average mark awarded 54).

Candidates, supervisors and local authorities are advised to study the following comments carefully and to consider them along with the comments from previous Weights and Measures Law examiner's reports. These comments should be used to inform and direct candidates' training and development activities.

##### General Comments

Once again certain common failings could be identified in the papers from candidates that failed to achieve a pass mark. Candidates should be mindful of the need to answer the requisite number of questions, structure answers logically and to provide sufficient detail in answers to questions. Candidates will tend to fail if they do not answer the prescribed number of questions, produce confused answers or make unspecific comments lacking in detail.

Furthermore, if a question asks for the use of practical examples or decided cases to illustrate an answer then candidates should do so. Those candidates that were able to do so achieved higher marks than those that did not. In this regard local weights and measures authorities, supervisors and candidates should consider the section 73 statutory qualification as a process containing several inter-related elements that include the two metrology written examinations, the practical and oral examinations, the legal metrology portfolio and (perhaps most importantly) exposure to real-life, operational metrological work.

##### Section A

The purpose of section A is to test prescriptive knowledge. Candidates are frequently asked to use practical examples to illustrate answers. The average mark obtained by candidates in section A was 3. The range of marks awarded in this section varied from 9 to 21 out of a possible 25.

- Q1.** An understanding of WELMEC working groups is increasingly important for Inspectors to ensure uniformity and consistency of regulatory decision-making. Overall, performance in this question was reasonable. Marks awarded ranged from 0 to 5, average 3. The information required to score well in this question was freely available on the WELMEC website.
- Q2.** The concept of "conformity assessment" is an important one for a proper understanding of the NAWI and MI Directives (2014/31/EU and 2014/32/EU respectively). The terms are clearly defined in the Directives and further assistance is available in the Blue Guide 2016. Overall performance in this question was reasonable. Marks awarded ranged from 1 to 4, average mark 3.

- Q3. This relatively straightforward question was answered well by candidates. All students were required to demonstrate a knowledge of legislation applied to practical examples. Marks awarded ranged from 2 to 5, average 3. Candidates lost marks for an inability to use practical examples to illustrate their answer.
- Q4. Performance in this question was average. This was disappointing given the importance of local authority standards and the fact that the topic is complementary to weighing and measuring technology, portfolio exercises and the practical and oral examination. Candidates wishing to become Inspectors of Weights and Measures should have a sound knowledge and understanding of this topic given its importance in the United Kingdom system of metrological control. Marks awarded ranged from 2 to 5, average 3. Guidance on the topic is freely available from the Office of Product Safety and Standards website.
- Q5. This relatively straightforward question was answered reasonably well by the majority of candidates. Marks awarded ranged from 0 to 5, average 3. Marks were lost due to an inability to use suitable practical examples.

## Section B

The purpose of section B is to test the depth of candidates' understanding of weights and measures law. Candidates are frequently asked to critically evaluate, compare or contrast, discuss, analyse, etc., and to use practical examples to do so. Good performance in section B requires breadth and depth in knowledge. It was encouraging to see some good answers in this section. The average mark obtained by candidates in section B was 12. The range of marks awarded in this section varied from 4 to 22 out of a possible 25.

- Q6. This was the least popular of the two questions in this section. Eight of the twenty-seven candidates attempted this question. Marks awarded ranged from 4 to 19, average 10. The scope of application of national and European-based legislation is a core concept for Trading Standards in general and weights and measures in particular. Marks were lost due to an inability to use decided cases and / or apply the legal concepts using practical examples, suggesting that students require more practical experience in legal metrology. Employing authorities and supervisors should note this point.
- Q7. This question was popular, with nineteen candidates attempting it. Performance was better than in question 6, with an average score of 15. The ability to clearly understand legislation and its associated strengths and weaknesses is an important skill for Trading Standards Officers.

## Section C

The purpose of section C is to test candidates' ability to analyse a practical situation, identify compliance and non-compliance and propose appropriate remedies. Good performance in section C requires a sound knowledge and understanding of the legislation and its application to everyday scenarios within the context of the current regulatory framework. Practical "professional practice" scenario questions test a student's ability to perform duties in real life.

- Q8. This question was the most popular in section C with every candidate attempting it. Performance was generally good. Marks awarded ranged from 8 to 22, average 14. Common failings were an inability to answer the practical part of the question and to draft the information / charge.

- Q9. This question was the second most popular in section C with twenty candidates attempting it. Performance was mixed with marks awarded ranging from 8 to 17, average 12. Students struggled to apply legislation to the question and consequently could not clearly identify reasoned, proportionate enforcement action.
- Q10. This question was the least popular in section C with only seven candidates attempting it. Marks awarded ranged from 2 to 12, average 6. Marks were lost due to an inability to clearly explain the statutory provisions across different regulatory regimes and to use decided cases.