

Joint Insolvency Examination Board

The results of statistical analyses carried out into the results for the 2021 sitting

Every year since 2004, the Joint Insolvency Examination Board ('the Board') has asked an expert to analyse statistically the results of the examination. This process has been repeated for the 2021 sitting.

Since this process started, the analyses have been carried out by Norman Gealy who is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors and a current Member of the Ofqual Standards Advisory Group. Mr Gealy has worked in the UK and overseas in fields relating to assessment (and related psychometrics), and on the design, the development and the regulation of qualifications at all levels from basic skills to post-doctoral.

The Board is extremely grateful to Mr Gealy for his work, both on the 2021 sitting and over the many previous years, advising and assisting the Board as the examination has evolved.

Each year the analyses are restricted to the results in England. It is not possible to conduct any meaningful analyses of the results in Scotland because of the very low number of candidates who sit the Scotland version of the papers.

The main purpose of the analyses is to investigate the papers' reliabilities. As noted in the 2013 Ofqual paper 'Introduction to the concept of reliability', examination reliability can be thought of as 'the extent to which a candidate would get the same test result if the testing procedure were repeated'.

Like other professional examination boards, the Board has procedures in place to limit the impact of the factors listed in the Ofqual paper that might lessen reliability. These procedures include the following: moderating the marking of individual examiners; ensuring that the individual papers cover a balanced range of topics; examining individual scripts, particularly around the pass mark for comparison year to year; examining the marks due to individual questions to identify any that appear harder or easier than in previous years; and setting different types of question to draw on different intellectual requirements, such as understanding and analysis.

As part of the statistical analysis, estimates are produced of what the 2013 Ofqual paper refers to as 'internal reliability'. This relates to the extent to which a candidate would get the same mark if the testing procedure were repeated. There are a number of different coefficients that can be used for this purpose: currently used is a coefficient known as McDonald's omega, which is recommended in the 2013 Ofqual paper 'Estimation of internal reliability'. The coefficient values for the 2021 personal insolvency and corporate insolvency papers continue to be around or above the target values suggested by Mr Gealy and compare favourably with the values calculated for other examinations.

As a subsequent stage in the statistical analysis, Mr Gealy calculates estimates of what the 2013 Ofqual introductory paper refers to as 'classification accuracy'. This relates to the extent to which a candidate would get the same result (i.e. pass or fail) if the testing procedure were repeated. For candidates whose marks are well below or well above the pass mark, their results would be expected to be the same, but for candidates whose marks are closer to the pass mark, there is an increasing likelihood that their results might differ if the testing procedures were repeated. Again, there are a number of different ways of arriving at estimates: currently used is method 2 from the 2011 Ofqual paper 'Classification accuracy in results from Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests'. The results estimated by Mr Gealy for 'classification accuracy' confirm that the examination continues to score highly on decision

consistency, meaning that the processes and procedures that the Board has in place to set, mark and moderate the papers are working well. The results for the examination compare favourably with those for other examinations.

The statistical analyses are extremely useful to the Board in that they provide evidence that the papers set by the Board and the assessment process generally are robust and fit for purpose. Although the analyses have shown this to be the case over many years, the Board is determined that future candidates and those helping them will be able to have confidence in the papers and in the processes and procedures that the Board has in place.

The various papers from Ofqual mentioned in this article are all available on gov.uk.