

The results of statistical analyses carried out into the results for the 2022 sitting of the Joint Insolvency Examination

The Joint Insolvency Examination Board (“the Board”) has asked an expert to analyse statistically the results of the 2022 sitting of the Joint Insolvency Examination (the “Examination”).

This exercise has been undertaken for each year since 2004. Throughout, the analyses have been carried out by Norman Gealy who is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors and, before it was recently disbanded, was a 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, development and regulation of qualifications at all levels from basic skills to post-doctoral. Once again, the Board is extremely grateful to Mr Gealy for his work on the Examination.

The analyses carried by Mr Gealy are restricted to the results for the two papers sat by candidates in England. The very low number of candidates who sit one or more papers in Scotland means that it is not possible to conduct any meaningful statistical analysis of the Scottish results.

The principal purpose of the analyses is to investigate the papers’ reliabilities. Examination reliability can be thought of as the extent to which a candidate would get the same test result if the testing procedure were to be repeated.

As with other professional examination boards, the Board has in place procedures which are designed to limit the impact of factors 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 on individual questions to identify any that appear harder or easier than in previous years; and setting different types of questions to draw on different intellectual requirements, such as understanding and analysis.

As part of the statistical analysis, estimates are produced of what is referred to as “internal reliability”. This relates to the extent to which a candidate would get the same mark if the testing procedures were repeated with equivalent examination papers. The coefficient currently used by Mr Gealy is known as McDonald’s omega and the Board is very pleased to see that the coefficient values for both papers in the 2022 sitting continue to be at or above the target values suggested by Mr Gealy and to compare favourably with values calculated for other examinations.

Also as part of his analysis, Mr Gealy calculates estimates of what are known 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 procedures were repeated. For candidates whose marks are well below or well above the pass mark, their results would be expected to be the same. However, 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. The method currently used by Mr Gealy for estimating classification accuracy is one of the methods from the 2011 Ofqual paper “Classification accuracy in results from Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests”. The results estimated by Mr Gealy for the Examination confirm that it continues to score highly on classification accuracy, meaning that the processes and procedures that the Board has in place to set, mark and moderate the papers are working well. Again, the values 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. The analyses have shown this to be the case over many years, but 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.

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