HEQ Examiner Report – Guidance and Templates

Guidelines for the writing of examiner reports

1. The examiner reports will be published on the BCS website, along with the past papers, and will be in the public domain.
2. They are intended primarily to assist course providers and future examination candidates.
3. They **must not** include full exemplar answers.
4. A successful examiner report will include:
    - Areas where candidates were successful.
    - Areas where candidates may need additional support.
    - Reflections on examination techniques.
    - Points of advice for future candidates.
5. The language should be constructive and informative, and the report should promote a better understanding of the specification content and application of the HEQ assessment criteria.
6. The examiner reports should be created **alongside** the marking of the papers for each examination session.
7. **If a question has several parts (a/b etc.) this must be made clear on the report and comments made on all parts**

Guidance notes

The Examiner report will provide the paper section, question number and a balanced description of question performance including common problems, shared strengths and areas for development.

Comments must be linked to the syllabus where possible in order to provide the most effective feedback to candidates and centres.

We will **not** provide complete model answers in the report.

Please ensure comments are neutral and factual and offer constructive information so centres and candidates can clearly identify what is working well and where there are areas to improve.

All feedback needs to take the form of closed commentary.

There is a short section at the top of the template for general comments which can be completed.

The final page of this document is an Appendix to allow examiners the opportunity to feedback any specific or confidential comments directly to BCS.

Comments in the Appendix will **not** be published to allow direct feedback from examiners on anything that is out of scope for public feedback.

Example texts

Please see below some example commentary to demonstrate how the reports can offer constructive information without providing exemplar answers.

General Comments example text:

In general, candidate responses demonstrated subject knowledge appropriate to the specification and the majority of candidates were prepared for the rigour of the examination. There were a number of candidates who created numbered bullet points or dashed lists for questions that

required free responses. This is to be discouraged because where candidates are asked to 'explain', 'describe', 'discuss' or 'evaluate' a topic, the use of bullet points rarely produces little more than simple points or short statements with no explanations or descriptions. These answers did not score the full marks.

A significant proportion of candidates lost marks for failing to respond in context. However, it was refreshing to see good answers being provided for the question on …, but unfortunately, … as a topic is still proving difficult for many. It is very important that, when answering questions, candidates read the rubric and answer the question in the appropriate manner.

Question Report example texts: *Please note the topics referred to in these comments are not specific to HEQ syllabi but are meant to serve as a generic model question analysis.

	This question was relatively well answered with many candidates being able to describe how the loop works. Good answers described the loop step by step while weaker answers lacked details. Only a few candidates gave the output, most appearing to ignore this part of the question. Most of those that gave the output showed it correctly, but many did not realise that it would be 1, 4, 7 only and never reaching 10.
	A number of candidates did not realise you do not need to memorise lots of commands if using a GUI. A small minority of candidates ticked fewer than the four answers requested and missed the opportunity to gain marks.
	This question was poorly answered, with candidates seeming to know the components of an expert system but unable to describe them in the detail required at this level. Many just named the components. It is worrying that candidates are learning topics off by heart without understanding what it is they are remembering. For example, it is not sufficient to know that an inference engine exists; candidates must be able to understand what it does.
	A substantial number of candidates did not attempt this question in full. The more able candidates were able to explain how to set up a dynamic query in great detail, but those candidates who seemed unable to do this aspect were still able to gain marks by explaining the other steps needed in the setting up of a query.
	Candidates scored good marks on this question, but answers lacked sufficient detail to score all the marks. Answers should have included details of the declaring and naming of the variables and then expanded upon to explain how this would be done.
	Most candidates could describe the contents of a software specification, but many would have scored higher if they had made reference to the purpose and intended audience for the software, user interfaces that would be used and the limitations of the software, security and privacy systems to be used.
	Most candidates could extract the information from the illustration and give reasons for their choice of the most suitable CPU to use. A common error was to mis-read the graphical information provided.

Examiner Report	
Qualification Name	Higher Education Qualification
Qualification Level	Diploma
Date/ Series	April 2026
Module	Big Data Management

Question no.	**Comments**
A1	70% of candidates attempted this question; all of those passed the question. Candidates were generally aware of challenges for organisations implementing big data strategy, data quality and GDPR. Marks were generally lost as the answers did not provide sufficient detail or did not explore more breadth of a topic often focusing on one or two aspects when they could have consider 5 or 6).
Question no.	**Comments**
A2	60% of candidates attempted this question; all of those passed the question. Again, a strong set of answers with learners showing the general concepts of hosting big data solutions in house vs cloud and the financial costs attached. Answers often lacked detail; where comparing inhouse vs cloud was required answers often only presented one side of the argument. Where it came to risks and mitigation there are 10 or so different risks that could have been explored but most candidates focused on 2 or 3 only.
Question no.	**Comments**
A3	70% of candidates attempted this question; 60% of those passed the question. This question explored different types of data; most candidates were familiar with structured data, but showed less clarity about unstructured and streaming data and their applications. Answers often lacked detail. Kafka was familiar to most at a high level, but there was very little detail about Kafka data modelling and even less about challenges of using it in answers.

Question no.	Comments
B4	40% of candidates attempted tis question, none passed the question. The concept of NoSQL was generally known but key features were less well understood. Advantages of RDBMS mostly included a focus on scalability, but other features such as unstructured data, variety of data models, handling, or performance, cost effectiveness etc were not explored. Discussing BASE and ACID was very superficial with candidates expanding the acronym but not really answering how the approaches help with transaction processing and concurrency control.
Question no.	**Comments**
B5	85% of candidates attempted this question; 100% of those passed the question. Answers were generally better here; most candidates were familiar with cloud storage/onsite storage, as well as respective advantages. Details on HDFS were also generally known. Answers to this question have generally been very strong.
Question no.	**Comments**
B6	70% of candidates attempted this question; 80% of those passed the question. There were some perfect answers to this question, but also some very weak ones. Use of AI with big data was generally understood with some answers lacking detail; the issues for the weaker results were that answers were partial (i.e. some questions were not attempted); while most managed to mention three machine learning algorithms there was little on how they are used; methods and use of AI were generally good but many candidates confused logistic regression (a mathematical technique) with logistics (the transportation of goods).
