
HEARING AID COUNCIL – EXAMINATIONS 2005(1)
MODERATOR’S REPORT – September 2005 – G R Kirk

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth and final report to the Hearing Aid Council on all parts of the HAC examinations as they are currently organised. The report is presented in the same format as previous reports. Procedures carried out were also similar to the Moderator’s report for previous examinations with some additional work done by the Moderator.

2. PROCEDURE

A. WRITTEN EXAMINATION

- (a) The written papers and their marking schemes were seen by the Moderator prior to the written examination. All questions were assessed for their difficulty and compliance with current HAC syllabus. The marking schemes were assessed for their detail, clarity and consistency.
- (b) The Moderator attended the afternoon session of the written examinations held at Milton Keynes on 20th April 2005. All candidates took their written papers in the National Hockey Stadium with special arrangements made for one candidate.

A total of 73 candidates sat the written papers (65 for Papers 1 & 2 and 8 for Paper 3 – one candidate was absent for Paper 3). The papers were sat in a different order this year to allow more time for security measures etc. Papers 2 & 3 were answered in the morning with Paper 1 being answered in the afternoon. This rearrangement does not appear to have any consequences for the candidates.

The invigilator reported that there was a typographical error in paper 2 which was rapidly rectified by the HAC staff with no apparent consequences for candidates. Credit goes to the HAC staff for handling the situation efficiently, effectively and as unobtrusively as possible.

- (c) There were 4 borderline fails which were remarked resulting in 3 passes and 1 fail. There were 5 borderline distinctions and these were remarked resulting in 4 definite distinctions. A further 14 candidate’s scripts were sampled to assess the spread of marks across Distinction, Pass, and Fail. Therefore, approximately 30% of written examination scripts were seen by the Moderator. In common with examination practice, a full report has been prepared by the Chief Examiner showing the spread of marks for each question and includes individual examiner’s comments.

- (d) Close scrutiny was made by the Moderator of the scripts for two different questions across 14 candidates. Marking was considerably consistent for two specific examiners due to the well planned and detailed marking schemes.
- (a) A moderation remarking exercise was carried out on 13th June 2005 in which a second examiner had to use the same marking scheme as the first examiner and remark 3 questions from different candidates. They had no knowledge of previous marks but did know who the original marker was. Of the 21 questions that were remarked, 60% were within 1 mark of the first examiner and 86% were within 2 marks. This proved quite reassuring that the marking schemes are becoming more detailed and robust.

B. PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

- (a) This was the last time that the practical examinations would be held in this format for so many candidates. Examiners were aware that there was a need to maintain standards and vigilance in this time of change. Marking schemes and recording sheets were the same as 2004(2) practicals.

C. PARTIAL RE-SITS - PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

- (a) The partial resits for 8 candidates took place on 8th September 2005 at the same venue.
- (b) Two examiners and candidates were observed by the Moderator during the partial resits.
- (c) One candidate was interviewed during the day.

3. COMMENTS and DISCUSSION

A. WRITTEN PAPERS

- (a) The Moderator was present at the written examination and observed the entire process of preparing, distributing and invigilating the afternoon session. The security systems and processes seemed to be efficient and delivered with efficiency, courtesy and probity. An inspection was carried out on all the entrances, exits and toilet facilities with a particular emphasis on security.
- (b) Papers were delivered to desks face down and there was no evidence of candidates turning over their papers before being allowed to. Although the papers had been given out in a different order to previous written examinations, this did not seem to have any adverse effect.

- (c) The room and desks were clear of personal effects with only authorised HAC equipment being used on desks. The use of pre-prepared stationery packs was very efficient.
- (d) There are now clear contingency plans should scripts not arrive, one or more invigilators becoming ill, safe despatch and collection of completed scripts to the council and to the individual examiners.

B. PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

- (b) All examiners established rapport rapidly and successfully with candidates and showed good listening skills, took control of the situation and encouraged candidates by giving further information when appropriate. Although the atmosphere in the practical examination rooms necessarily involves stress, the examiners did their best to minimise this and put candidates at their ease. As expected, some examiners were more successful at this than others. Questioning styles varies between examiners and this might be reduced by some formal awareness raising of the need for consistent choice and use of question styles.

C. PARTIAL RESITS - PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

The Moderator attended to ensure that the venue, organisation, marking schedules and recording forms were all the same as before. Candidates were observed and interviewed, if appropriate. The number of candidates was small (N=8) and the examiners were clearly aware of the need to maintain standards.

4. SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATIONS

The HAC and its team of examiners have been successful in maintaining standards for the written examination and the last practical examination in its current format.

It is clearly important that standards, continuity and consistency of examiners and examinations are maintained as the practical examinations move into the new format of Objective Structured Practical Examinations.