

UNDERMANAGER CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE

JANUARY – JUNE 2015

Examination panel report

October 2015

Summary of results and general comments

Applications

Number of applications received: 33

Number of applications approved: 32

Written examination – Part B

Date: 18 March 2015

Number of candidates sitting all papers: 13

Number of candidates who passed all papers: 5

Legislation UB1 (out of 100 marks)

Lowest mark: 39.5

Highest mark: 91

Average mark: 64.6

Number of candidates who sat: 21

Number of candidates who passed: 15

Comments:

The exam was targeted at legislative requirements across the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and accompanying regulations, as well as the *Coal Mine Health & Safety Act 2002* (CMHS) and related Regulations as pertaining to the role of an undermanager. The CMHS questions were generally answered well.

As can be seen from the spread of marks for the legislation exam, some candidates could demonstrate a broad knowledge, whilst others could not. All candidates are reminded that exam questions can, and generally are, drawn from multiple pieces of legislation.

Legislation questions focus on matters appropriate to the working knowledge required by an undermanager.

Note, answers can be in dot point form, examiners are looking for the candidate to demonstrate a working understanding of the intent of the legislation, it is not necessary to provide legislation verbatim.

Ventilation UB2 (out of 200 marks)

Lowest mark: 62

Highest mark: 149

Average mark: 113



Number of candidates who sat: 21

Number of candidates who passed: 13

Comments:

Despite the average mark for the ventilation exam being 113/200 the majority of candidates passed this exam. Once again the average has been drawn down by a number of candidates who had difficulty demonstrating their ventilation knowledge, resulting in some low individual marks.

A number of candidates continued to rely heavily on 'rules of thumb' or use assumptions that are not explained or justified. Each candidate should briefly explain why their assumptions are appropriate for the ventilation question.

Question 2 made reference to the management systems in place to manage risks associated with ventilating the mine. Candidates are encouraged to approach questions such as this from the perspective of what aspects will need to be included in the relevant management systems.

The candidates who obtained good marks in the ventilation paper provided answers from the perspective of an undermanager, who could identify the potential hazards associated with the ventilation arrangements and provide specific measures to control the risks from those hazards.

The knowledge of spontaneous combustion was generally good.

Candidates are reminded to read the question carefully as a number of candidates did not provide answers which reflected the mine plan and details provided in the question

The current format of the ventilation paper is consistent with previous papers. Candidates are required to provide an explanation of their understanding of ventilation principles in relation to the data and other details provided in the exam.

Coal mining practice UB3 (out of 100 marks)

Lowest mark: 50

Highest mark: 63.5

Average mark: 58.3

Number of candidates who sat: 16

Number of candidates who passed: 10

Comments:

The spread of marks across candidates was minimal, with the majority of candidates achieving the 60 marks required to pass this paper.

Generally candidates answered the longwall strata control question well.

A number of candidates had difficulty with questions relating to contractor management and stone drivage.

Candidates are reminded that due to the range of hazards in the underground coal industry, there are also a wide range of controls that they are expected to have a working understanding of. – this includes specialised practices such as gas drainage and stone drivage.

Oral examination

Date: 17-18 June 2015

Number of candidates eligible to sit: 32

Number of candidates who sat: 26

Number of candidates deemed competent: 16

Comments:

The comments below are very similar to those made in all recent reports. This is because those candidates who have not been found competent yet are generally missing the same common opportunities to demonstrate their competence.

A number of candidates continue to have trouble identifying the notifiable incidents and particularly whether the incidents required immediate notification and/or a non-disturbance period.

It is common for a shift undermanager to be required to deal with the immediate actions following an incident. It is important that all candidates have a working knowledge of the requirements for notification of incidents.

The need for benchmarking mines across the state has always been an important aspect of a candidate's preparation for their undermanager's exam. A number of candidates presented for the oral exam with limited benchmarking behind them. A candidate should approach the task of benchmarking from the perspective of identifying the major coal mining hazards and visiting those operations which provide an opportunity to learn how those hazards are managed.

Candidates will gain an improved understanding from their benchmarking by seeking to understand why a particular mine operates as it does as opposed to simply looking at how the mine operates. Candidates also need to be prepared to communicate their learning outcomes from each benchmarking visit.

It is common for candidates to approach scenario questions in an oral exam from the perspective of a deputy or their normal role. Each answer provided needs to be from the perspective of an undermanager. By doing this the candidate can more readily demonstrate his/her knowledge, both technical and practical.

Candidates are reminded that the undermanager's role is an operational role requiring a structured management approach which incorporates practical mining solutions. The importance of this holistic approach to the role cannot be overstated.

Furthermore, the importance of the undermanager taking control of the situation and managing operations is of the utmost importance for a candidate to demonstrate his/her competence.

More information

Business Processes and Authorisations Unit

Phone: 02 4931 6625

Acknowledgments

Undermanager examination panel

© State of New South Wales through the Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services 2014. You may copy, distribute and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services as the owner.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (October 2015). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services or the user's independent advisor.

PUB15/445