



EXAMINER'S REPORT

NOVEMBER 2020

PORT AGENCY

Overall Comments Guidelines

The overall standard for the Port agency examination in November 2020 was of a very high quality. Students answered the questions on laytime, marketing, vessel disbursements, operations, the impact of Covid-19 on the port agency business, cargoes and trade routes competently.

Concerns remain regarding the quality of maritime geography displayed particularly in the awareness of major loading and discharging ports and also operational questions which require multi-part answers.

Overall Comments

The questions were selected from within the port agency syllabus. And covered a number of topics including, commercial abbreviations, Laytime, cargoes and map work, operational questions, requirements of the P and I club, vessels disbursements, maritime trades routes and ship types and a specific question was tabled on the effects of Covid-19 on the Port agency business.

Question one- Effects of Covid-19

This was a very popular question with students, and most students were able to construct a coherent answer identifying the main effects of the Covid-19 virus on the Port agency industry. The examiners had to utilise an open marking scheme for this question as the virus has had different impacts across the globe. However, most students were able to offer numerous examples of where the virus had negatively impacted the port agency business, and the students who achieved the highest marks were also able to offer suggestions on the future of the ships agency business moving forward. Although this question was non syllabus, it was given the issues faced in 2020 deemed to be a reasonable question to set, and in most cases the students were able to offer high quality answers.

Question Two: Social Media

This was a new type of question which focused on the developing usage of social media in terms of port agency marketing. The question was reasonably well handled by students who were able to construct a marketing message and then offer a number of different social media platforms where the marketing message could be used.

The examiners had to adopt a more open marking scheme to adapt to the unforeseen approach by the students when answering this question.

Question Three- General Average

The question on General Average was very well handled, and a popular choice for students.

The students who scored the highest marks created a formal response, were able to offer a detailed analysis on the salient aspects of General Average, and were able to use the correct phraseology, which is an important aspect in determining that General Average does actually apply. The students then went on to discuss the needs of the receivers to work with the average adjusters to ensure general average bonds and guarantees are in place to ensure that the cargo can be received as soon as possible.

Question Four-Operations

The question on operations was generally well handled, and crucially the majority of students were focused on the financial aspect of the question and were on the whole focused on ensuring that the port agent's financial position did not deteriorate further.

However, the other issues that this question raised such as the relationship with the port authority and the alleged issues with the crew of the ship were largely and often completely ignored.

Question Five - Added Value

Students were able to highlight many of the core aspects of the port agency business; this aspect was very well handled.

The aspect of added value services was more of a struggle and students who did manage to highlight added value services in many cases strayed from the question and failed to offer added value services that were aligned to the tanker trade.

Question Six-Laytime

The laytime question was well handled by students in the November exam. The vast majority of students were able to offer a solid laytime structure which enabled the examiner to easily award marks where rain, laycom, half time or time was to be deducted were noted, but the student had failed to achieve a correct answer.

There were also an increased number of students who achieved the correct answer to the laytime question.

Question Seven –Maritime geography and Trade Routes

The question on map work and trade routes was modestly handled by the students. Most students were able to offer the correct vessel types and give a reasonable amount of information on the vessels tonnages, draft and dimensions.

However, yet again the students awareness of maritime geography was concerning.

Question Eight-Disbursements

The question on disbursements was modestly handled with some students incorrectly interpreting that the examiners required information on the time charterers costs.

The students also struggled with the interpretation of the INCOTERMS which differentiated the costs of the shippers and receiver.