

## Examinations report 2017

### Candidate numbers and results

Since 2017 is the last year in which the Society offers its own examinations, the patterns of candidate numbers and results are in several respects considerably different from those of recent years. It is clear that many candidates were aiming to complete their qualification this year, while other potential candidates may not have begun the qualifications because there is no good prospect that they would be able to complete them.

The uptake of modules fell on the two Certificates compared to the previous year, with a particularly marked fall on the Higher Certificate. The uptake remained stable on the Graduate Diploma. Module pass rates, however, increased on all three qualifications, and the overall number of awards rose substantially on all three.

This year 55 and 60 candidates sat the two modules of the Ordinary Certificate examination, the numbers in 2016 having been 61 and 72. There were 53 (i.e. 96%) and 40 (67%) passes respectively, compared with 58 (95%) and 34 (47%) in 2016, while 40 candidates were awarded the Ordinary Certificate, 12 of them being with credit and 4 with distinction as against 35, 12 and 9 in 2016. The reduction in uptake of modules and the increase in awards of the Certificate are doubtless to a substantial extent a consequence of the Society's decision not to continue with its examinations after 2017.

Candidates at the Higher Certificate level sat 253 modules in total and recorded 157 passes (an overall pass rate of 62%) compared with 363 modules in total and 221 passes (61%) in 2016. 46 (26 in 2016) candidates successfully completed the Higher Certificate this year, 17 (6) of them with credit and a further 15 (11) with distinction. Though the uptake of modules was considerably lower than last year, the pattern was not consistent across all modules, with those earlier in the Certificate (modules 1 to 4) showing marked decreases, while numbers on later modules were stable or increased. This is consistent with a large proportion of candidates attempting to complete the Certificate in its final year, while many fewer candidates started the Certificate anew. The pass rate on individual modules was stable, and the performance in terms of completions of the Certificate showed a very considerable increase.

Candidates at the Graduate Diploma level sat 230 modules in total and recorded 110 passes (an overall pass rate of 48%) compared with 229 modules in total and 97 passes (42%) in 2016. 26 candidates successfully completed the Graduate Diploma (12 in 2016), 4 (4) with credit and 5 (1) with distinction. The increase in the pass rate of individual modules is welcome, and the number of awards shows a very substantial increase on what was already a run of relatively high award numbers in recent years. We warmly congratulate the candidates on this excellent achievement.

The usual collaboration continued with the Hong Kong Statistical Society for offering professional examinations in Hong Kong. We are grateful to Howell Tong, who acts as the moderator for these papers.

The separate arrangement with the Japan Statistical Society (JSS), whereby the Society's examinations are offered under licence to candidates in Japan with the JSS taking responsibility for administration and awards, also continued at the Graduate Diploma and Higher Certificate levels. Numbers of candidates, and their performance, were both down. 13 candidates sat at least one of the Higher Certificate modules (30 last year), and 7 candidates sat at least one of the Graduate Diploma modules (14 last year). Altogether 42 modules were taken at Higher Certificate level of which 13 (43%) were passed, the corresponding figures in 2016 being 80, 45 and 56% respectively. 4 candidates were awarded the Higher Certificate, 2 of them with credit, as against 9 and 6 last year. A

total of 18 Graduate Diploma modules were taken, of which 8 (44%) were passed, the corresponding figures for 2016 being 33, 19 and 58%. One candidate was awarded the Graduate Diploma (compared to 2, one with distinction, in 2016). We are grateful to Yoshikazu Ojima, who acts as moderator for the JSS papers.

### **Reports from examiners**

The reports submitted by RSS examiners on their papers include detailed comments on individual questions. These comments are available at the examinations section of the Society's website:

### **Personnel**

In 2017, the full team of examiners comprised: Geoff Clarke, Paula Curtis, Ian Jolliffe, Hilary Kimber, John Lane, John McColl, John McDonald, Andrew Mead, Kay Penny, Karen Pettit, and Neil Sheldon. As usual, the examiners also acted as markers, with one exception. Sadly, Geoff Clarke passed away shortly before the examinations period, and we are very grateful that Wojtek Krzanowski was able to carry out marking in his place. Geoff had agreed to act as an examiner to cover this last set of examinations, but his involvement with the Society's professional examinations, in many capacities, goes back many years, and his very valuable involvement in this and in so many other aspects of the Society's activities will be sadly missed. Penny Bidgood and Lawrence Pettit were our senior examiners, with John Haigh and Martin Ridout as assessors. We thank all these colleagues for their professional approach to setting, scrutinising and marking the RSS papers.

Once again, the Board is most grateful for the work undertaken in support of the examinations by the whole team at Errol Street, in particular Sarah Barker; the success of the examinations system depends heavily on their hard work and care day by day. Sarah is leaving her position at the Society and the Examinations Board thanks her for her painstaking hard work and her exemplary positive attitude over many years. Special mention, as always, is also due to James Clark for the speed, efficiency and accuracy of his typesetting of the examination papers.

*Kevin McConway*  
*Chairman, Examinations Board*