

Examiner's report

Qualifications Framework

Stage 2: Weights and Measures

Professional Interview Examiner's Report May 2024

General Feedback:

Four scenarios were used for the May 2024 professional interviews relating to the trade in precious metals, an inspection of an abattoir, medical weighing, and a farmer's market inspection. Five questions are asked per scenario, and the scenarios are marked out of 100. Not all questions are allocated 20 marks.

30 candidates sat the exam, 26 passed which was a pass rate of 87%. The average mark was 51. Lowest mark was 24 and the highest, 73. Several candidates did very well and scored over 60%.

A series of 7 training sessions were offered in the first half of the year to prepare candidates for this exam and most, if not all, attended. The training and mock exam seems to have been beneficial because in May 2023, 13 out of 31 failed. Candidates were given tips on exam technique and got a flavour of the kind of questions that could come up. The mock exam gave valuable experience in actually sitting a professional interview.

Comments on the scenarios:

Precious metals: issues with testing of class II instruments were not thought through. Compliance notices, enforcement notices, and notices under NAWI 2016 Reg 67 were not well understood because the terminology was mixed up by many candidates.

Abattoir: involved an overhead track scale. One or two candidates who had not seen one of these instruments took the time to think logically and correctly surmised that the weights would have to be suspended in some way. The majority thought that weights would have to be balanced overhead on the instrument which would have created many hazards, especially in that environment. Coming up with safe and logical solutions in the field is a key skill of a weights and measures inspector.

Medical weighing: cooperation of the medical facility in conducting these inspections is essential, but some candidates did not think about that aspect. Also, the practicalities of moving large amounts of weights around a hospital were not thought about. Candidates should imagine themselves in the hospital and describe how they would physically conduct the inspection.

Farmers market: informal feedback from candidates was this was a difficult scenario, but everyone who got it passed. It involved imperial scales, the requirements for selling meat, how to test a NSI counter machine, suitable equipment for selling by volume, and a question that comes up regularly: advice to a trader on buying a new scale. Candidates were not, on the whole, sure of what they would do with a trader using the imperial scale.

For further information on the Professional Interview candidates should read my previous Examiner's comments. For preparation for this exam candidates are advised to go on as many visits as possible and to thoroughly complete the portfolio. If a mock professional interview course is available, try to book on to it.