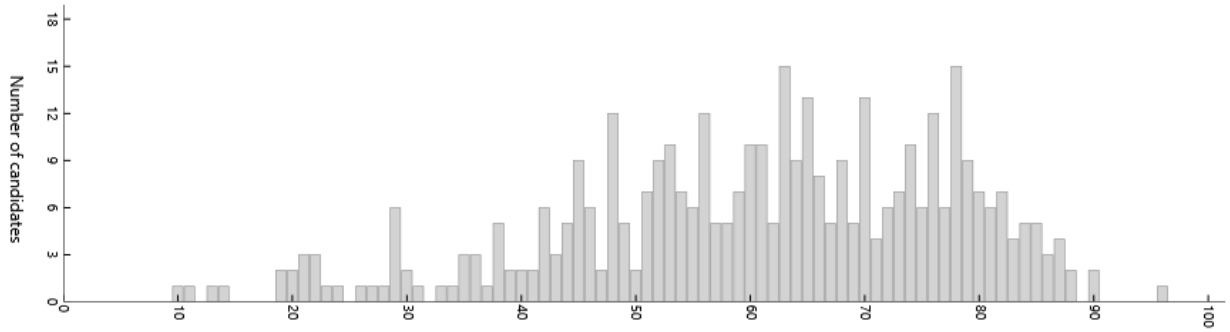
Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

Summary report of the 2017 ATAR course examination: Computer Science

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2017	389	6
2016	444	19

Examination score distribution – Written



Summary

The Computer Science examination paper contained two sections. Section One: Short answer contained twenty questions with all questions to be answered; and Section Two: Extended answer required candidates to answer all four questions provided. The accompanying Source Booklet provided information required to answer Question 21. The examination was attempted by 389 candidates and provided a mean of 60.54%. Scores ranged from a minimum of 9.96% to a maximum of 95.93% and the standard deviation was 16.83%.

Section means were:

Section One: Short answer	Mean 54.54%		
Attempted by 389 candidates	Mean 21.82(/40)	Max 36.47	Min 1.18
Section Two: Extended answer	Mean 64.54%		
Attempted by 389 candidates	Mean 38.72(/60)	Max 59.46	Min 0.00

General comments

Fewer candidates sat this paper than last year. The difficulty of the examination was comparable to that of recent papers as evidenced by the mean and maximum scores. Overall, the examination provided top candidates with the opportunity to achieve high scores and discriminated well across the range of candidate performance.

Advice for candidates

- Read questions carefully to ensure you make use of information given and respond to all key words in the questions.
- Check the mark allocation for each question, as this is a strong indicator for what may be required in the answer to a question. Generally you are guided by the scaffolding supplied along with the amount of lines given for supplying the answer. However, Question 6(a) for example, asked candidates to describe the role of open systems in database interconnectivity. Both the instruction to *describe* and the allocation of 2 marks, signalled to candidates that they needed to provide a full description that would have two aspects to it in order to achieve full marks.

Advice for teachers

- Provide your students with many opportunities to write algorithms in both pseudocode and the programming language of their choice.
- Provide practice in writing SQL.
- Show students how to create network diagrams from problem statements.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Short answer (68 Marks)

Better than 50% average marks were attained in most questions, with the exception of Questions 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 16 and 18.

Section Two: Extended answer (111 Marks)

Most candidates attempted most of the questions, with Question 22(c) having the lowest attempt rate and Question 23(c) having the second lowest attempt rate. This latter question was a programming question requiring candidates to write pseudocode.