Government of Western Australia
School Curriculum and Standards Authority

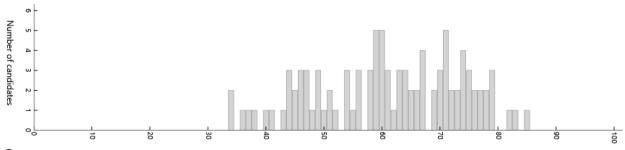### Summary report of the 2017 ATAR course examination:
Marine and Maritime Studies

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2017	98	2
2016	62	0

Examination score distribution – Written

Summary
Attempted by 98 candidates   Mean 60.94%   Max 84.80%   Min 33.73%

Section means were:
Section One: Multiple-choice   Mean 73.42%
Attempted by 98 candidates   Mean 14.68(/20)   Max 19.00   Min 7.00

Section Two: Short answer   Mean 59.54%
Attempted by 98 candidates   Mean 29.77(/50)   Max 42.50   Min 16.43

Section Three: Extended answer   Mean 54.96%
Attempted by 98 candidates   Mean 16.49(/30)   Max 27.75   Min 3.00

Overall this was a relatively straightforward examination. The paper as a whole seemed achievable with all sections answered reasonably well by candidates. Almost all candidates made an attempt on all questions with a few individuals not answering a few questions. Almost all candidates, with the exception of one or two, appeared to complete all sections in adequate time.

This examination comprised of three sections. Sections One and Two required candidates to answer all questions, while Section Three required candidates to answer two of four questions.

A number of one mark questions were utilised in this examination enabling candidates to gain marks by answering these factual questions correctly. A number of candidates who gained marks through these more simple questions failed to gain as many marks from interpretive or reasoning questions.

Nearly all candidates made a reasonable attempt at the extended answer in Section Three. Questions 27, 29 and 30 were the most frequently responded to by candidates with only a few candidates responding to Question 28.

Very few questions allowed for the pre-preparation of answers by candidates. This may have been due to the questions testing different topics to past examinations.

General comments
In general, candidates did well. Responses were well considered with candidates structuring their responses.

Questions ranged from recall, to interpretation and explanation through to application. As such, means decreased as the questions' requirements changed which indicated candidates were able to demonstrate recall but progressively found it more difficult to answer higher order questions. This enabled the examination to discriminate between candidate capabilities.

Advice for candidates
- Link and use diagrams to structure the response. Mention the diagrams in the text of the answer. Use these to develop depth and breadth in the response.
- Study specific terminology used in Marine and Maritime Studies. Misunderstood terminology leads to time spent on incorrect answers. Because the syllabus content is diverse and wide-ranging, a significant amount of time invested in terminology may be rewarded.
- Use the number of marks allocated to each question as a guide to structuring your answer. Too many responses were weak, vague and/or lacked sufficient development of ideas to gain top marks. Candidate responses brushed around the edges of the question.
- Be sure to answer the question as it is asked, and not try and answer the question how you want to. Firstly, identify how the answer is to be written, identify what the major areas are to be discussed and then address each part, rather than a general story about the topic being questioned.

Advice for teachers
- Consider the breadth of content as well as depth for students to be able to provide full answers. A broad content may not always require deeper understanding of all concepts.
- Do not ignore material like graphs, scientific method and diagrams while covering the course even if students already know the material from previous years of study. These help students clarify the material being covered.

Comments on specific sections and questions
This was a straightforward examination with many candidates achieving good marks in most sections. The majority of candidates attempted most questions across the paper. A generally high quality of response was noted in many questions, especially Sections One and Two but less so in Section Three. The broad range of knowledge demonstrated was pleasing.

An area of weakness would appear to be wreck artefact handling; from finding, right through to display. Few candidates answered this question (Question 28 in Section Three) and those attempting this question failed to cover the content with any level of understanding. A similar comment is made in respect to Question 29 on 'sand budget' with many candidates attempting to answer this question.

Section One: Multiple-choice (20 Marks)
Most candidates did well in Section One. Questions 8, 9, 10 and 12 were poorly responded to by candidates. Question 8 suggested a lack of understanding of the position of a whale shark in food chains, and Question 9 suggested candidates did not understand that a coral polyp is a very soft bodied organism and as such could provide little protection. In Questions 10 and 12 candidates tended to select the distractors, with Question 12 also suggesting that candidates misunderstood buoyancy calculations.

Section Two: Short answer (70 Marks)
The range of results showed that the breadth of content challenged some candidates while the depth challenged others. While the maximum possible marks for each question were achieved for almost all questions, few candidates managed to score highly on all questions. Other candidates gave relatively superficial answers across the range of content. Overall, this section catered for a range of candidate and enabled discrimination of candidate capabilities.

Section Three: Extended answer (40 Marks)
While the maximum possible marks for each question were achieved for almost all questions, few candidates managed to score highly on all questions. Many candidates gave relatively superficial answers across the range of content and showed an inability to apply knowledge to novel situations. Questions were straightforward and should not have posed any difficulties for the candidates. Requirements were clear as to expectations.