PGT Exam Performance Feedback
2017/2018 Semester 1

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Comments   Despite constant warnings to avoid 'regurgitating' theory rather than apply it to the respective case studies in the questions, many students failed to gain marks by doing just what they were warned against. For example, if questioned about a bank's information system, a student would (appropriately) use the soft systems methodology but only to describe theory in general terms of actors, customers, and owners. They would not (alas) explain the roles in the system (directors, managers, developers, customers, regulators, cryptanalysts, auditors etc.) that the general categories represent. The students' answers in so many of these examples was null because the response to the question had only tenuous relevance.

It is always good to see that students have been reading more widely but in a discussion of metrics about the security of systems, students should consider whether their use of leading and lagging metrics in sales forecasting is relevant.

Many students seemed not to 'read' question 3a before answering and they wrote about the usefulness of the user education rather than the risks that the question was asking about.

It seems that a higher proportion of students than usual failed to complete the 'questions answered' log on the front of the exam script booklet. This was more than inconvenient for the marker because the untidy layout of many scripts, the lack of numbering, the almost random order that parts of the different questions would be laid out in, and most tellingly the vagueness (note the comment about 'regurgitation' above) of many answers; this would often make it difficult to be sure which questions had been tackled.

Suspicions that one question in particular might have been too difficult given the poor quality of answers were allayed by noting that this question had been used successfully in previous years.

It seemed that students had prepared – and learned by rote – model answers for types of questions based on previous years given the similar language on a number of scripts and the repetitive examples of students not considering whether the emphasis and context of the questions had changed.

The inability of some students to list the 6 principles of governance that the 5-week module is based on is inexcusable.