

Examiners report

CTSI Professional Competency Framework

Stage 2 Professional Interviews Weights and Measures June 2023

This year the professional interview presented candidates with scenarios on a short measure petrol complaint; an airport inspection; a short measure whisky complaint; an average quantity complaint and inspection; and advice to a craft beer producer. Five questions are asked per scenario, and the scenarios are marked out of 100. Not all questions are allocated 20 marks.

Petrol complaint: several candidates did not know how to test working standard capacity measures despite this being a mandatory element in the portfolio. The question had the inspector investigating the complaint and performing tests on the equipment. Almost all said they would perform full verification tests on the dispenser when in fact, all they should be trying to do is to replicate the circumstances of the complaint. Only one candidate would remove the covers to check seals. The question involved STA so this should have formed an element of the feedback given to the complainant.

Airport inspection: this involved testing of baggage weighers and looking at size gauges and customer use scales. All candidates thought that size gauges were prescribed equipment because they are in use for trade. For customer use scales, just because a fee is mentioned do not assume it is in use for trade. One question concerned a borderline result, but no candidate worked out the error range on the instrument despite having the information to do so.

Short measure whisky: very well answered by all candidates with one scoring over 70% despite scoring zero for the fifth question.

Average quantity: This involved a short weight pack and candidates were asked to investigate. In gathering information, a methodical approach to gathering information is required – where it was bought, when, how much was paid, is there a receipt, record batch code/use by, weigh gross, tare, net.

Craft beer: this required a good understanding of the packaged goods regulations and the available guidance. A picture of a template was shown, but only one candidate closely looked at it and made comments. This scenario also included advice to the packer on a suitable scale. This should be a gift for any candidate: division size < 0.2TNE, suitable max, conformity assessed etc, but no one scored well on this. One candidate even said that the trader should take advice from a scale supplier despite being asked what they would advise.

General comments

Candidates should remember that the question will give clues as to what information might be asked for in the questions. If the capacity and division size of scale are given then the error ranges should be worked out during the reading time. Similarly, if a figure for TNE is given then candidates should calculate T1 and T2. If a picture is shown it will be for a reason so attention should be paid to it.

At least 2 of the questions asked for information that would be included in a notice. This was generally answered well, but future candidates would do well to adopt a systematic approach and include premises details, officer details, legislation, time limit, description of the non-compliance, and what should be done to rectify it.

Candidates understandably get nervous and are anxious to give as much information as possible, but those that score the highest carefully consider the question and answer appropriately. Employing a scattergun approach rarely works because the questions are framed in terms of “what advice do you give to the trader” or “what do you tell the consumer” or “what information do you gather”. In real life an

inspector wouldn't tell a trader everything they know about the packaged goods regulations for example – it would be tailored to the context of the visit/complaint.

- Candidates almost always failing to apply knowledge to scenario at hand, e.g., STA given in scenario, but not referenced in answer; or stating you would ask equipment to be moved to a quieter location, when that equipment is fixed / in situ.
- Candidates almost always talking around a subject with no reference to legislation (for powers, offences, etc.). Simply saying 'must have markings', for example, is not enough
- Shockingly no one could explain sufficiently how to test LA fuel measures, despite this being compulsory for competence in the Portfolio. Simply saying 'we send then to X authority' is not acceptable.
- Candidates need to know all aspects of the topic; if they are using spreadsheets or aides in the office, there is still a requirement to know how an answer is reached. You could be in court and asked how you know an electronic calculation was correct – this is not simply relevant for the exam. To say 'I would put the information into a spreadsheet and it would tell me the result and if I need to adjust' is not acceptable.
- Sometimes the question will provide the candidate with a little more information, before asking a question. Make sure you answer the question, and do not get sidetracked in a discussion about the additional information provided
- If your question is about equipment, do not assume that equipment will be in use for trade and / or prescribed. Know how to determine this. Do not make assumptions.
- Just because a fee is mentioned, does not mean equipment is in use for trade. Know how to apply requirements of use for trade / extended use for trade.
- Some candidates wrote paragraphs of correct info, which had absolutely no bearing to the question being asked. Or gave legal detail, but did not apply it to the question, as was asked for. Candidates do really need to read the questions. This could mean a difference between pass or fail. It is not about writing down everything you know about a subject, but that application to the question.