



CPQ ADVANCED STAGE REPORT BY THE STAGE CHAIR ON CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE IN JANUARY 2025 EXAMINATIONS

Overview

Total number of attempts across all modules	Number of Passes	Overall Pass Rate
594	514	87%

This session saw a further increase in the number of candidate entries; there was an 8% increase from the June 2024 session. This upwards trend is encouraging to report, particularly as many candidates have, again, demonstrated exceptional performance, which also continues to reflect well on the quality of teaching of training providers.

General Comments

The Advanced Stage assessments require candidates to display a progressively deeper level of specialist technical knowledge and understanding in their respective subjects and to apply that effectively to complex client scenarios, demonstrating accuracy, logical reasoning, and the use of appropriate language. Candidates are also expected to explore the range of options available to a client and provide well-reasoned advice and recommendations on the best course of action.

Candidates should be aware that professional ethics is assessed at the Advanced Stage and they should be familiar with the professional conduct rules which are likely to be relevant in each practice area.

Each Advanced Stage module assessment has two sections: A and B. Section A consists of 30 auto-marked questions, each worth one mark. These questions are presented in various formats, including multiple choice, list ordering, drag and drop, and highlighting. Section B incorporates both auto-marked and examiner-marked questions, including open response tasks. This section is framed within a progressive case scenario, designed to reflect real-world practice and the complexities of handling a client matter.

It is encouraging to see candidates engaging so effectively with questions spanning different cognitive levels. Many candidates demonstrate strong skills in answering open response questions, including where some thought as to tactics and strategy might be required, hence maximising their marks. However, very brief answers to questions carrying higher marks may result in missed opportunities to secure full credit.

When responding to questions assessing the quality of communication, candidates should be mindful of the context and recipient to ensure that tone and style are appropriate. Furthermore, attention should be given to questions assessing professional conduct and ethics to ensure that expected professional standards are met.

As with previous reports, it is pleasing to see the maintenance of high performance standards across all modules, and an upward trend towards higher performance in some modules. As always, a recurring theme is that strong performance is underpinned by firm subject knowledge, a clear and logical application of the law to specific facts, and the ability to provide client-focused advice. This mirrors professional practice, where clients expect tailored guidance rather than a general legal overview. Candidates who do not perform as well tend to rely too heavily on outlining processes and rules without fully applying them to the given scenario, which can significantly impact their scores. Another key observation is the importance of presenting the required output and content to be sure of alignment with the expected content.

Congratulations to all successful candidates on their excellent results.

Grade boundaries

CILEX takes every precaution to ensure that the CPQ examinations are fair, accurate and set at the right level. Prior to releasing results, CILEX scrutinises the performance of each question to identify and address any issues. The notional pass boundary for all Advanced modules is set at 60%. Remedial action is taken to address any performance issues, to ensure that the results issued to students are fair. Remedial action may include, but is not limited to, adjusting the grade boundaries.

Individual Module Reports

The following module reports have been compiled with the assistance from the Module Leads.

A1 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The overall pass rate of 88% continues the trend of robust performance achieved by the majority of candidates in this module, which also continues to have the greatest number of candidates.

Encouragingly, candidates generally performed very well on the examiner-marked questions. It was noted that candidates largely showed a good understanding of the operation of damages-based agreements. Additional focus might be given to certain areas of the syllabus, for example, about case management, witness statements, particularly where delay in exchange is at issue, and relief from sanctions.

It is important that candidates take careful note of the required output as some candidates failed to appreciate where a communication question was being posed. Consequently, their responses did not meet expectations and the full range of marks available could not be achieved.

A2 CRIMINAL LAW AND PRACTICE

The pass rate of 84% shows candidates' good understanding and application of criminal law principles. Although there is a modest performance dip in comparison to previous cohorts, this pass rate remains well within the expected performance range.

Many candidates succeeded in areas requiring detailed legal analysis and showed skill in managing the more challenging questions where practical application was required. Some responses lacked a basis in law or showed poor application with generic comments and little application to the facts. Areas of the module specification that might be strengthened are police interviews, and the content of the defence statement (particularly the statutory nature and purpose of the document).

However, overall, the pass rate reflects that the majority had prepared effectively.

A3 PROPERTY AND CONVEYANCING

It is good to see such a significant improvement in the overall pass rate to 67%, indicating that candidates are rising to the challenge of presenting the necessary knowledge required for this module, particularly of procedural details. It was encouraging to see a number of candidates attaining very high marks, confirming that, with the appropriate preparation and knowledge, all marks were achievable.

As a general observation, candidates should be reminded that questions which ask for advice/explanation about the legal position need to set out the law clearly and succinctly (not necessarily with reference to specific section numbers/case names) and then to apply the law to the given scenario, bearing in mind the direction given in the question as to the expected content.

Having a good understanding of fundamental knowledge should allow candidates access to a number of additional marks which eluded them on this occasion as a result of not having, or incorrectly stating, that knowledge of, for example, indemnity covenants, express and statutorily implied provisions, potential nuisance claims and remedies for misrepresentation.

In common with all other modules, candidates should be reminded of good practice when preparing for the assessment particularly that not reading the question carefully and/or engaging incorrectly with the facts of a particular scenario is likely to produce an answer which is either too generalised or off-topic.

A6 WILLS, PROBATE AND PRIVATE CLIENT

A pass rate of 92% remains impressively high and reflects consistently strong candidate performance, especially given the increase in student numbers. Candidates generally responded very well to the questions, demonstrating a high quality of answers with some candidates achieving full marks on many questions. However, candidates might be reminded that, to achieve the highest marks for open response questions, they must ensure that they read the questions carefully, note what is being asked for in terms of content, and apply their knowledge to the facts.

A7 FAMILY LAW AND PRACTICE

The pass rate of 79% is a positive result within the range of expected performance, and consistent with previous cohorts. Candidates continue to demonstrate a solid understanding of family law principles and are able to apply them effectively. Candidates should be encouraged to plan their time for covering both sections of the paper and to ensure that they apply the relevant law to respond to what is being asked of them. In this respect, candidates should take particular note of how the question itself is scaffolded, that is, what content is expected in the answer and in what format, for example, a file note, a memo or a letter etc. As for all other modules, the type of output requested by the question is important and may determine the appropriate tone and style so care should be taken to align responses with the specific outputs required.

It was notable that a few candidates were underprepared and did not demonstrate the expected knowledge to answer the questions.

A8 BUSINESS / EMPLOYMENT LAW

A pass rate of 76% reflects strong candidate performance in this module demonstrating the expected level of understanding of underpinning business and employment law principles and how to apply them.

Unsuccessful candidates tended to be weak across all questions and generally did not present the necessary knowledge to respond to questions at the Advanced Stage, where detail, including of statutory referencing, and accuracy is expected. For example, candidates should note the need to be specific and accurate when discussing the Companies Act 2006 and the Partnership Act 1896 and their knowledge and understanding of tax rates.

SKILLS PAPERS

A4 PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:

DISPUTE RESOLUTION; CRIMINAL LAW & PRACTICE; PROPERTY & CONVEYANCING

The pass rate of 96% for Dispute Resolution, and 100% for Criminal Law and Litigation is a very pleasing reflection of the candidates' approach to these practice-based assessments and has predictive value in how well candidates are likely to replicate this approach in their work. It is encouraging to note that there were many excellent examples of well-written communications, demonstrating an ability to manage clients' expectations and an awareness of professional ethics, risk and compliance.

A5 PROFESSIONAL AND LEGAL SKILLS:

LEGAL RESEARCH, ACCOUNTS AND COMMERCIAL AWARENESS

The pass rate of 90% marks a positive performance overall. It is always encouraging to report that candidates have responded so well to a paper and, in this instance, have shown excellent legal research skills, which are so fundamental to acting in the clients' best interests.