

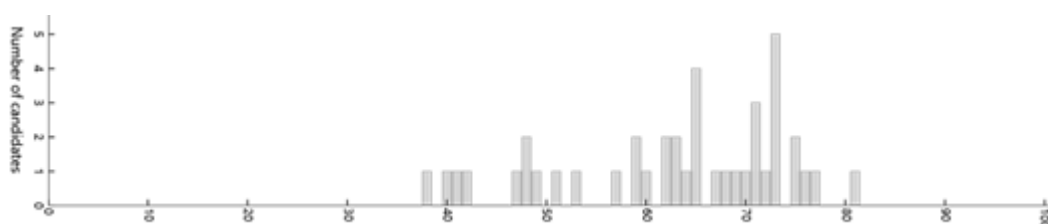


## Summary report of the 2021 ATAR course examination report: Plant Production Systems

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2021	41	0
2020	43	0
2019	39	0
2018	54	1

The number of candidates sitting and the number attempting each section of the examination can differ as a result of non-attempts across sections of the examination.

### Examination score distribution–Written



### Summary

The examination's mean is consistent with that of past years. The candidates' strength was in the multiple choice and their weakness lay in the Extended answer section.

Attempted by 41 candidates    Mean 62.70%    Max 81.13% Min 38.30%

Section means were:

Section One: Multiple-choice	Mean 74.76%		
Attempted by 41 candidates	Mean 14.95(/20)	Max 19.00	Min 11.00
Section Two: Short answer	Mean 61.70%		
Attempted by 41 candidates	Mean 30.85(/50)	Max 40.62	Min 13.80
Section Three: Extended answer	Mean 56.34%		
Attempted by 40 candidates	Mean 16.90(/30)	Max 25.50	Min 0.0

### General comments

While the exam had a similar mean to previous years, the maximum mark achieved was lower than in the past two years. Candidates struggled to write in-depth responses, particularly in Section Three.

#### Advice for candidates

- Taking a few minutes to plan before responding to the Extended answer questions will help to map out a path.
- Read the questions carefully, break them down and look at the marks allocation to make sure sufficient time is given to maximise your performance in line with the marks available.
- Use practical examples to demonstrate your depth of knowledge and understanding, particularly where you can clearly establish their relevance to the question.

### *Advice for teachers*

- Revise with students the technical terminology in the syllabus. This must be understood before they can write an answer that makes sense and is accurate.
- Students need to have in-depth knowledge of at least one plant production enterprise, from paddock to plate.
- Instruct students about how to answer questions according to the Authority's *Glossary of key words used in the formulation of questions* (e.g. state, define, discuss, and explain).
- Provide students time to practise breaking down and decoding questions.
- Extended answer planning under examination conditions is a critical skill. This will assist students to maximise their marks in a section of the examination that is generally done poorly. An extended answer is not essay writing, but students must provide the marker with a coherent and concise response.

### ***Comments on specific sections and questions***

#### **Section One: Multiple-choice (20 Marks)**

Generally, candidates had a solid grasp of the impact of plant production on the environment. Where they struggled was with the basic physiology of plants. Question 10, for example, asked: 'At which stage of plant growth is phosphorus fertiliser most beneficial?'. If a plant struggles to germinate, all other stages will be affected.

#### **Section Two: Short answer (96 Marks)**

Where candidates were asked to list, state or outline, their answers were generally of a high standard. However, when they were asked to describe, evaluate, recommend, explain or propose, accessing the full range of marks available was affected by candidates reverting to simply outlining. The lack of knowledge in the answers was evidenced by the lack of depth candidates provided.

#### **Section Three: Extended answer (40 Marks)**

The mean for Section Three was 56.34%. While candidates found the compulsory Extended answer to be accessible, achieving a mean of 65.85%, the elective questions were found to be more challenging.