



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Modern Studies
Level(s)	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the Examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The Setting team was very pleased with the quality of response from candidates across the three papers. The number of papers where candidates had attempted very few questions, especially at General level, was very low, which was a testament to the quality of teaching and learning and the accessibility of the papers. Very few candidates attempted both options in Syllabus Area 3, whilst those who did tended to do so in the Foundation paper. The number of centres teaching China stabilised at an already low base. The vast majority of candidates had been entered at the correct levels.

Foundation/General Level

The overall response to the Foundation paper was very pleasing. This was especially so for the Knowledge and Understanding element (K/U), where a large number of candidates achieved full or near full credit. Enquiry Skills (ES) proved to be a little more challenging but many candidates did achieve high marks.

Cut-off scores for K/U were in line with the *a priori* position of 70/50. For ES, cut-offs rose slightly from last year, which reflected a return to a more appropriate standard of question.

The changes in question styles at General level continued to have a positive effect on candidate performance and this was reflected in the increase in the percentage of general level awards.

General/Credit Level

The General paper presented few problems to genuine G/C candidates, which suggested that the level of the exam was correctly pitched. The element of K/U was well handled by candidates who used the prompts to inform their answers. The element of ES was also well handled, with many candidates achieving full or near full marks. Few candidates failed to finish either paper.

K/U in the Credit paper was well done by many candidates, who gave detailed answers. It was pleasing to note that cut-offs for K/U returned to the *a priori* position of 70/50. Cut-offs for ES at credit level were reduced to take account of issues with particular questions.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Foundation level

The overall response of candidates to the Foundation paper was very good. K/U questions were well done by the vast majority of candidates. The vast majority of ES questions were also well handled by candidates. Question formats in both elements appear to be working well.

General level

Question 2(a) Well done, with almost all candidates using the prompt to fashion their answer.

Questions 2(b) & 4(b) This particular question style was well received by F/G candidates as less extended writing was required to achieve the marks allocated. Many G/C candidates did not read the questions properly, however, and gave an explanation for both of their choices.

Question 2(c) Well done. The majority of candidates provided the appropriate linkage between parts of the view and the appropriate evidence.

Question 2(d) Linkage from part of the view to the appropriate evidence was good.

Question 3A/B(b) Well answered.

Credit level

Question 2(a) Well done with a spread of answers across the four options.

Question 3A/B(b-c) As in 2011, hypotheses and aims were of a better quality this year. There were other questions where parts of the question elicited very good responses but a number of candidates could not sustain the quality through the rest of the question. This was particularly the case in Questions 1(d), 3A(a) and 4(b).

Areas which candidates found demanding

Foundation level

Question 3A/B(g) What the examining team were looking for in the answer may not have been as obvious from the graphic as we had imagined when the question was set and vetted. However, few candidates found difficulty with this question.

General level

Question 2(b) Not as well done as hoped. A number of candidates did not really appreciate what the term 'new technology' might encompass. Too many talked about 'machinery' and 'phones' as examples of new technology. These were not accepted.

Question 4(a) A number of candidates merely lifted the headlines from the graphic but failed to develop the point.

Credit level

Questions 1(a) & 1(b) A very straightforward, mainstream introduction to the Credit paper. There was, however, a real lack of actual examples. Answers to both

questions should have had many examples of Trade Unions and Pressure Groups.

- Q1(c) The wording of this question caused difficulty with many candidates. A number of candidates achieved full credit, but most did not. A change to the Marking Instructions allowed for different interpretations of the view. This allowed many candidates, who would otherwise have been awarded zero marks, to achieve two marks.
- Q2(d) Surprisingly, this question was very poorly done. The majority of candidates did not read the question carefully. Instead of focusing on the research preparation, candidates tended to evaluate the sheltered housing complex.
- Q4(b) As mentioned previously, answers to this were a bit of a mixed bag in that bullet points 1 and 2 were well done but bullet points 3 and 4 less so.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

The Foundation paper is working well and will continue in its present form as it has proved to be very accessible to candidates. The most recent question formats will continue unchanged.

Centres must re-emphasise to candidates that they must read each question carefully so that they are aware of what they are meant to do in answering a particular question style. A couple of markers questioned question styles, especially at General level. Both alluded to the PEE method of answering a question and felt that candidates had been left in a state of confusion as the question format did not follow what they had been taught. SQA does not formulate questions which are tailored to satisfy a commercially produced template.

The use of high quality exemplification should again be prioritised by centres. A number of markers remarked on the lack of quality in the exemplification called for in all Syllabus Areas.

The most recent style of 'Selective in the Use of Facts' question will continue. Centres should re-emphasise to candidates that they are looking to prove each sentence in the view either correct or incorrect. They are not expected to look for selectivity within a statement. Centres must also ensure that candidates are aware that there are degrees of selectivity going from zero to 100%. In other words, statements within the view can be: all incorrect; or two incorrect and one correct; or one incorrect and two correct; or all correct.

It is also worth noting that the 2013 exam will be the fourth year that this style of question has been used. It is also important to note that the setting team would expect the style of

questions used in the most recent examinations to be replicated in any preliminary examination.

At both General and Credit levels, candidates should again be made aware that, to receive full credit in certain ES questions, an explicit linking of evidence to a specific point of view must be included. This was much improved this year, but it is important that the message is emphasised to candidates.

It is worth making the point once again that centres should carefully study the Marking Instructions posted on the SQA website. They detail the ways in which marks are awarded for candidates' answers. It is an important tool in helping candidates frame answers. With appropriate emphasis on technique, answers, marks and grades can be improved.

Statistical information: update on Courses

STANDARD GRADE

Number of resulted entries in 2011	13337
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	13216
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Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	27.0%
Grade 2	19.1%
Grade 3	23.4%
Grade 4	14.9%
Grade 5	12.2%
Grade 6	2.5%
Grade 7	0.8%
No award	0.0%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
KU	32	22	15	28	19	15	20	14	10
ES	40	24	19	36	24	18	28	18	12