



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Computing Studies
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

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

Candidates wrote their solutions clearly on the paper.

Similar to previous years the majority of candidates answered the option on Computer and the Internet.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Section 1

Question 1, 2e)–f) and Question 3

The majority of candidates were confident in all areas assessed in these questions.

Section 2

Computers and the Internet

Candidates were generally well prepared for this section.

Information and the Internet

Candidates generally performed well in Q6.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Section 1

Question 2a)–d) Candidates knew the application was a spreadsheet but found it challenging to apply knowledge of spreadsheets and how they are used.

Question 4b) Candidates were required to show knowledge of how to search a database

Section 2

Computers and the Internet

- ◆ Several candidates found the input device for a Palmtop Q5h)i) challenging.
- ◆ Several candidates were unclear as to the purpose of a network card Q6a).
- ◆ Several candidates were unsure of the difference between a program and a file Q6d)ii).

Information and the Internet

- ◆ Several candidates were unsure of how to perform a search on a database Q6b.
- ◆ Several candidates were unsure of the different formats used for data entry and/or display Q6c.
- ◆ Several candidates were unable to explain what is meant by the World Wide Web Q7c.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Objective questions

Centres are advised to remind candidates to select one answer. This year there were several examples of candidates either not answering or ticking two boxes.

Many candidates are still producing answers using application names rather than the **type** of application, eg where the answer was 'Drawing' candidates were answering with 'Serif'. Centres are advised to ensure that candidates know the application types.

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Intermediate 1**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	1994
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	1402
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	42.4%	42.4%	595	70
B	29.2%	71.6%	409	60
C	16.8%	88.4%	236	50
D	3.3%	91.7%	46	45
No award	8.3%	100.0%	116	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.