



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject	Business Management
Level	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

Overall, candidates performed at a similar standard to last year.

Many candidates seemed to have a poor understanding of business terms, other than the most basic examples.

Some candidates did not attempt all the questions.

Some candidates are giving very brief answers (often only one word) for *describe* questions.

Areas in which candidates performed well

- ◆ training
- ◆ types of business organisation
- ◆ objectives
- ◆ online selling
- ◆ stock levels
- ◆ use of business information
- ◆ areas of discrimination
- ◆ market research
- ◆ software packages

The specific questions were:

Section 1

- ◆ Question 2a): Most candidates knew how to describe on the job training and induction training.
- ◆ Question 2b): Most candidates knew how to outline costs of training.
- ◆ Question 3a): Most candidates knew how to describe advantages and disadvantages of a partnership.
- ◆ Question 3b) i): Most candidates knew how to identify methods of raising finance available to a partnership.
- ◆ Question 3c): Most candidates knew how to identify and describe a business organisation other than a partnership.
- ◆ Question 4c): Most candidates knew how to suggest objectives for a partnership.

Section 2

- ◆ Question 2a): Most candidates knew how to identify stock levels from a stock control diagram.
- ◆ Question 3a): Most candidates were able to describe how owners and employees would use business information.
- ◆ Question 3b): Most candidates knew how to outline areas of discrimination covered by the Equality Act 2010.
- ◆ Question 4: Most candidates knew how to describe field and desk research and could give an example of each.

- ◆ Question 6a): Most candidates knew how to identify a software package.

Areas which candidates found demanding

- ◆ sectors of industry
- ◆ types of information
- ◆ human resource terms
- ◆ financial statements
- ◆ software tasks for a specified department

The specific questions were:

Section 1

- ◆ Question 4: Many candidates struggled to identify and describe sectors of industry.

Section 2

- ◆ Question 1 (b): Most candidates failed to give two *types* of information (written, oral, pictorial etc.) giving only examples.
- ◆ Question 3 (c): Most candidates did not know what a works council is.
- ◆ Question 5: Most candidates had difficulty describing a trading account and a cash budget.
- ◆ Question 6: Most candidates had difficulty describing a software task appropriate to a specific department.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Candidates should have a clear understanding of all appropriate business terms.

When answering *describe* questions, candidates should try to give developed answers (ie several words at least).

Candidates should be properly prepared by having the opportunity to practise past papers.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2012	1286
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	1324
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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 50				
A	34.1%	34.1%	452	35
B	24.2%	58.3%	320	30
C	17.8%	76.1%	236	25
D	7.5%	83.6%	99	22
No award	16.4%	100.0%	217	-

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.