



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Economics
Level(s)	Intermediate 2

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

There were many strong candidates who had been well prepared by their centres. In some cases, the knowledge and understanding demonstrated was well beyond the Course Arrangements. This is not surprising given that some centres spend two years covering the Course.

The graphical and numerical elements of the Course still pose a challenge for weaker candidates.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Part 1

Item A

- ◆ (e) (i) and (ii) Many candidates wrote full and accurate answers.

Item B

- ◆ (c) (i) and (ii) These questions on International Trade were well-answered.

Part 2

- ◆ 1(a) and (b) Many candidates had been well prepared for these questions and demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding.
- ◆ 3 This essay was generally well done.
- ◆ 4(c) (i) and (ii) on the effects of unemployment elicited strong responses.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Item A

- ◆ (d) (i) Weaker candidates were unable to shift the correct curve in response to this question.

Item B

- ◆ (d) The effects of a change in the exchange rate on import prices posed a challenge for some candidates.
- ◆ (e) Some candidates were unable to draw a basic Circular Flow of Income diagram.
- ◆ Essay 5 (c) and (d) Some candidates struggled to write about the Current Account of the Balance of Payments, having been attracted to the question by parts (a) and (b).

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to pay attention to the mark allocation and the command word to ensure that they match the depth of their response to the requirements of the question.

Candidates should be advised to spend time choosing their essay option to ensure that they choose one which gives them the best chance of maximising marks.

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Intermediate 2**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	238
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	345
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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 60				
A	75.7%	75.7%	261	40
B	14.2%	89.9%	49	33
C	5.2%	95.1%	18	26
D	1.2%	96.2%	4	22
No award	3.8%	100.0%	13	-

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.