

Principal Assessor Report 2002

Assessment Panel:

RMPS

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
included in this report**

RMPS – Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	
Pre appeal	
Post appeal	1,403

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	1,568
Post appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

The increase in entries is encouraging but should be considered in the light of comments below.

General comments

Candidates generally performed well in Paper 2 – The Extended Essay. There was however a wide range of quality in the performance of candidates in Paper 1. A number of markers again reported that a significant number of candidates are being presented at a level inappropriate to their ability.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

Grade	Band	Minimum Mark
A	2	76
B	4	64
C	6	53

General commentary on grade boundaries

Notional percentage cut-offs for each grade

Question papers and their associated marking schemes are designed to be of the required standard and to meet the assessment specification for the subject/level concerned.

For National courses the examination paper(s) are set in order that a score of approximately 50% of the total marks for all components merits a grade C (based on the grade descriptions for that grade), and similarly a score of 70 % for a grade A. The lowest mark for a grade B is set by the computer software as half way between the C and A grade boundaries.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

No change from previous years. Standard of exam same. Standard of candidates same.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Candidates performed well in Paper 2, ie The Extended Essay. Only two of the 19 markers who reported found a poor standard of response by candidates.

In Paper 1 the standard of response was more varied. Of the 20 markers who reported, seven said that the quality of candidate response was good or better; six reported on an average response and six reported a poor response (one marker's report did not comment on the overall response).

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

1. Paper 2 – The Extended Essay generally.
2.

Paper 1 – Christianity	Questions 1 and 3
Paper 1 – Buddhism	Questions 1 and 3
Paper 1 – Gender Issues	Question 1
Paper 1 – War and Peace	Question 1
Paper 1 – Christianity and Science	Question 3

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Section C: Topic 1 Sec/Humanism

Question 2 (a) and (b) – very few candidates **concentrated** on the problem of suffering. Many saw this question as an opportunity to outline the Secular Humanist challenge in general.

Areas of common misunderstanding

In Christianity and Science Section C Topic 2 Question 2 – candidates tended to stray from the **methods** and wrote general answers about the explanation of reality. Very few candidates performed well in answering this question.

Re Question 1 and Question 3 in the same topic there seems to be a problem for candidates to separate Cosmology and Evolution – too many responses include both in the same answer without concentrating on the one which the question directly relates to.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

1. Do not advise candidates to answer a two-part question in one single essay.
2. Use support materials together with teachers' notes. Too many candidates' essays were of a similar nature because there was no evidence of a wider approach to teaching methods.
3. Candidates should be trained to answer questions in a specific manner. Too many candidates are writing very general answers with the result that a great deal is regarded as irrelevant to the question.
4. Candidates are still showing a lack of knowledge and understanding concerning the principles of Christian Ethics.
5. Make a clear distinction between Cosmology and Evolution in the Christianity and Science topic.