



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Administration
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

Once again, candidates attained higher marks in the practical part of the paper. Most pupils were able to attempt all parts of the paper and very few candidates did not complete the paper in the required time. In previous years, many candidates have not attempted the KU questions in Task 4; however, most candidates did attempt Task 4 this year. As in previous years, many candidates missed spreadsheet printouts and handed in value printouts instead of formula printouts and vice versa. Some printouts still do not have the candidate's name printed on each sheet. Many candidates showed an ability to follow quite detailed instructions.

Once again, many centres did not include a hard copy of the exam files. A number of centres also changed the files which had been downloaded from SQA; this can disadvantage candidates as they try to carry out a function which has already been carried out.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Task 1 (a): most candidates were able to create a database and input the correct field names accurately. Most candidates keyed information to the database accurately, especially unfamiliar words and numbers.

Task 1 (b): most candidates were able to delete and edit records.

Task 1 (c): most candidates were able to search the database using the correct criteria.

Task 1 (d): many candidates were able to search the database using <= criteria then print out other fields.

Task 2 (a): most candidates were able to follow the instructions to edit the main and sub-headings. Most candidates were able to insert and delete columns as instructed. Accuracy when keying in numbers was excellent. Many candidates attained a large proportion of the formatting marks. Most candidates were able to print in landscape view.

Task 2 (b): most candidates were able to insert a row accurately and edit the database as instructed.

Task 2 (c): most candidates were able to create a pie chart.

Task 3: almost all candidates had a really good attempt at this task; the itinerary part of the task was usually well laid out. Most candidates knew what the manuscript correction signs 'uc' and 'trs' meant and most were able to insert the correct search.

Task 4, Questions 1 (a) and 3 (b), were well done by most candidates.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Task 1: a small number of candidates edited the spreadsheet file instead of creating the database.

Task 1 (a): many candidates did not sort the database.

Task 1 (b): many candidates did not key in the new column heading accurately. Many candidates had difficulty in ensuring the correct accommodation had the mileage attached, due to lack of attention to detail rather than numerical ability.

Task 2 (a): many candidates did not insert the column heading accurately, even though this was a very clear instruction. The instruction to right align and wrap column headings was also frequently missed.

Task 2 (b): many candidates did not insert the row in the correct place and did not update the total as instructed.

Task 2 (c): most candidates did not insert the graph heading accurately and many did not include suitable data labels.

Task 3: many candidates did not appear to read the instruction at the top of the page. This meant that some candidates started to complete an e-mail, when the e-mail had just been given as a source of information to them. Most candidates did not insert the year when inserting the date. Correct capitalisation was rare, even though the task was mainly copy typing. The majority of candidates had no idea what the STET manuscript correction sign meant. Many candidates left an inappropriate title in the inserted search. Most candidates did not get the presentation mark as there was inconsistent line spacing between the different sections of the task.

Task 4

Generally many students struggle with outlining and describing when answering questions, and do not give enough detail to be awarded marks.

Question 1 (b): many candidates did not attempt this question, but those who did tended to input a date returned, so that a mark could not be awarded.

Question 1 (c): many candidates did not realise that the steps to be listed were for a visitor without an appointment, so did not mention someone being available (or not). Many candidates did not list the steps in a logical order.

Question 2 (a): many candidates were unable to identify the equipment given in the picture, even though the illustration was very clear.

Question 2 (b): many candidates' responses were extremely vague, did not really apply to travel, and did not name the equipment they were suggesting a use of. Many candidates used the words 'photocopy', 'laminated', 'scan' in their descriptions of the equipment.

Question 2 (c): many candidates misread this question, referring to the security of information rather than security of equipment.

Question 3 (a): many candidates were unable to outline the working practices, simply naming them.

Question 3 (c): many candidates did not name the mobile technology they were describing, and repeated 'to keep in touch' from the question.

Question 3 (d): many candidates did not read the question and described advantages rather than disadvantages.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

One of the best ways of preparing pupils for the final exam is using timed past papers. This gives candidates practice of time management. It is important that pupils have a routine of inserting their name in the footer of all printouts; this ensures that they are used to doing this under examination conditions. Candidates should also practise putting all of their printouts in the correct order by using the template in the 'instructions for candidates' section of the examination paper. This will ensure printouts are not missed and the correct value/formula printout is submitted.

As stated in previous years, candidates must read and follow the instructions given. The instrument of assessment is designed to take candidates through a series of logical steps to complete the task. This will assist candidates to demonstrate their abilities instead of missing out sections of a task.

Candidates who attained highly in Task 4 were those who applied the command words correctly. Many candidates appeared to have little knowledge or experience about how much information to give depending on the command word used.

Candidates must also key in their name on all pieces of work and ensure that the paper submitted is in the correct order.

Centres should use the Understanding Standards website when preparing candidates for the exam. This details the mark allocation for tasks and command words which are used. The sample candidate responses have also recently been updated on the website. Marking instructions for SQA papers are also available on the SQA website, and these are annotated for ease of use.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2010	2,761
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	2,720
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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	34.7%	34.7%	943	71
B	28.5%	63.2%	775	60
C	18.2%	81.4%	496	50
D	5.6%	87.0%	152	45
No award	13.0%	100.0%	354	-

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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.