



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Administration
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests.

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

Previous years' cohorts of candidates included many more (younger) able pupils and consequently the standard this year was slightly below that of last year. This is a direct result of the effect of the new Nationals. However, almost all candidates completed the paper in the required time — most candidates submitted at least one printout for each of the IT tasks. Like last year, most candidates attempted Task 4.

Many candidates did not hand in the correct printouts in the spreadsheet, especially the formula view, where a lot of marks are awarded. It was obvious that the task had been completed well as this was clear from the value printout, which displayed the correct data. However, omission of the actual required printout meant that those candidates gained less marks than they should have.

The graph task was poorly done — many candidates selected the wrong data and failed to add appropriate labels and/or appropriate title.

Some information in printouts (mainly database Task 1a) was truncated, which occurs when candidates print directly from the database and do not check the hard copy.

As in previous years, candidates performed better in Tasks 1–3 than in Task 4. However, this year many candidates did better in Task 4 than they have in previous years. There was a disappointing understanding of command words, with answers to 'outline' and 'describe' questions which were too brief to be awarded any marks.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Task 1: Database

The database was created and populated well by many candidates. Nearly all candidates gained high marks, with most candidates only making minor keying-in errors — capitalisation and spelling being the most common ones. The editing task was very well done, with many candidates gaining full marks. Search criteria was well understood and executed.

Task 2: Spreadsheet

Completion of data and formulae was well attempted by most candidates, as evidenced by value printouts.

Task 3: Word Processing

All candidates used the template for the Form and printed on one page as instructed. The majority of candidates understood what the manuscript correction signs required them to do. Inserting the database search in the correct place was completed accurately. Many candidates achieved half the marks available — a notable improvement on previous years.

Task 4

Question 1: The majority of candidates were aware of the contents of a contract of employment and the areas of Health and Safety covered at Induction Training.

Question 2: Most candidates were able to name reprographics equipment.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Task 1

It is still the case that candidates who print directly from the database table have problems with Field Names and detail being truncated, resulting in the loss of accuracy marks.

Task 2

As in previous years, a good number of candidates did not submit the correct value and formula printouts for this task, losing marks unnecessarily. Accuracy when inserting rows and keying in additional labels was poor, even though the labels were stated clearly in the paper.

Updating of formulae (Total Net Income for Hands-Off Security) went unchecked by many candidates.

The creation of the chart: although the type of chart chosen was correct, this was very poorly done this year. As previously stated, many candidates did not select the data required and sensible labelling of axis and/or legend appeared to have been ignored.

Task 3

Although this was well attempted, there were many accuracy errors which appeared to be due to carelessness rather than misreading the text in the question. Some candidates struggled with extracting the correct information for insertion into the table — especially the Name of Organisation, Contact Name and Contact e-mail.

Task 4

Question 1: Many candidates were unable to read/understand the Skills Scan or the Visitor's Book to extract a very simple Identify and State question.

Question 2: Although most candidates attempted this question, many were unable to describe the 'use of' the equipment. Similarly many candidates were unable to describe security measures to protect equipment.

Question 3: Most candidates named mobile technology rather than outlining. Also they did not relate their answers to Scotia Sports as requested.

Question 4: Very few candidates were able to name the legislation/act relating to the problems outlined.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

As in previous years, candidates must read instructions carefully – especially what to print out, how many printouts are required, then checking what has actually been printed out.

Centres should encourage candidates to print database tables or searches using a word processing document in the form of a table. This will ensure that no fields are ever truncated, sorting can be easily completed if needed, printing is easily set to one page, landscape or portrait using the table functions, and name and school can easily be printed in the footer.

Candidates need to look at what they have printed out and check with the paper to make sure that:

- ◆ it is as instructed, ie value or formula, gridlines, etc if it is a spreadsheet task
- ◆ information is not truncated – especially the database table
- ◆ it makes sense

Following other instructions is also very important. For example:

- ◆ Candidates need to be aware that sometimes there are two instructions in one sentence. They must make sure they complete both instructions to achieve one mark.
- ◆ Candidates need to pay attention to showing meaningful data in a chart, eg labelling and legends. In some situations it is acceptable to delete the legend if the chart will make sense. If they are included, they must enhance the meaning of the chart. Leaving the default legend [Series 1] is never acceptable at any level.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	79
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	8
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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	37.5%	37.5%	3	84
B	25.0%	62.5%	2	72
C	25.0%	87.5%	2	60
D	12.5%	100.0%	1	54
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

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.