



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Business Management
Level(s)	Higher

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

The majority of candidates performed very well showing very good knowledge across the course. There were a significant number who achieved high marks. Very few candidates were entered at the wrong level.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Generally candidates performed in all areas of the course, although those who opted for Question 1 and Question 5 in section 2 tended to achieve higher marks.

Most candidates managed to deal with the command words for questions well, showing good understanding of their use and purpose.

Question 1 in section 1 was well done by the majority of candidates

Areas which candidates found demanding

- ◆ In section 1 Q3, some candidates confused an entrepreneurial structure with the role of the entrepreneur.
- ◆ Q7, with two command words in the question, proved difficult for many candidates to achieve full marks. In the new Higher only one command word will be used in each question.
- ◆ In section 2 Q1 (b) (i), few candidates managed to identify three environmental factors, opting to describe three weather factors.
- ◆ For Q2 (e) many candidates chose to describe ratios rather than discuss their use.
- ◆ Q3 (f) proved difficult for candidates to describe the advantages of collective bargaining.
- ◆ Q4 (c) and Q5 (a), both finance topics, continue to show that Finance continues to provide some problems for pupils.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

The vast majority of centres showed that they are well prepared for moving over to the new higher in 2016.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	7853
Number of resulted entries in 2015	3195

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	37.7%	37.7%	1206	75
B	25.7%	63.5%	822	64
C	17.2%	80.7%	550	54
D	6.3%	87.0%	202	49
No award	13.0%	-	415	-

For this Course, grade boundaries have been stable for a number of years and the intention was to set similar grade boundaries to previous years. There was an identified unintentional overlap across two questions. The grade boundaries were increased by 3 marks to reflect this.

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.