



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Business Management
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

Overall candidates performed at a similar standard to last year.

Many candidates seemed to have a poor understanding of business terms other than the most basic terms.

Many candidates did not attempt all the questions.

Some candidates are giving very brief answers (often only one word) for 'describe' questions.

Areas in which candidates performed well

- ◆ product life cycle
- ◆ stakeholders
- ◆ sectors of activity
- ◆ the Internet
- ◆ grant
- ◆ methods of production
- ◆ sources of information
- ◆ uses of information
- ◆ types of information
- ◆ cash budget
- ◆ charity

The relevant questions were:

Section 1

Question 1(a): Most candidates knew how to describe the stages of the product life cycle.

Question 3(a)(i) and (ii): Most candidates knew how to identify two stakeholders and describe an interest for each.

Question 3(b): Most candidates knew how to describe the primary and tertiary sectors of activity and give an example of each.

Question 4: Most candidates knew how to describe ways a business might make use of the internet.

Section 2

Question 1(b): Most candidates knew how to identify a grant from the description given.

Question 2(b): Most candidates knew how to identify and describe job production and flow production.

Question 3(a): Most candidates knew how to correctly identify descriptions of information as either internal or external.

Question 4: Most candidates knew how to identify two types of information other than graphical information.

Question 4(b): Most candidates knew how to describe a cash budget.

Question 5: Most candidates knew how to state an objective of a charity.

Areas which candidates found demanding

- ◆ group bonus
- ◆ mortgage
- ◆ trading account
- ◆ balance sheet
- ◆ public sector
- ◆ legislation

The relevant questions were:

Section 1

Question 2(b): Many candidates ignored the word group in the question and only described a bonus.

Section 2

Question 1(b): Few candidates were able to identify a mortgage from the description given.

Question 4 (b): Few candidates were able to describe either a trading account or a balance sheet.

Question 5: Few candidates were able to describe the public sector:

Question 6: Few candidates were able to name two pieces of legislation that organisations must follow.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- ◆ Candidates should have a clear understanding of all appropriate business terms.
- ◆ Candidates should try to give developed answers (ie several words at least) when answering 'describe' questions.
- ◆ Candidates should be properly prepared by having the opportunity to practise past papers.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	1324
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	335
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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 50				
A	38.5%	38.5%	129	35
B	25.7%	64.2%	86	30
C	13.1%	77.3%	44	25
D	7.5%	84.8%	25	22
No award	15.2%	-	51	-

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.