



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Chemistry
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

The level of candidate performance in this exam was good, with all nine candidates passing the exam. Candidates, in general, had a good grasp of the ideas and concepts examined in Intermediate 1 Chemistry.

Areas in which candidates performed well

There were many areas in which the candidates performed well. In the multiple-choice section, candidates did particularly well in questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.

Candidates did well in a large proportion of the questions in Section B.

Areas which candidates found demanding

There were few areas that the candidates found demanding.

In the multiple-choice section, candidates had difficulties with questions 1 and 12.

In Section B, candidates found questions 3(b), 6(b), 7, 9(a) 9(d), 11(a) and 14(a) demanding.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	275
------------------------------------	-----

Number of resulted entries in 2015	9
------------------------------------	---

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 60				
A	55.6%	55.6%	5	42
B	33.3%	88.9%	3	36
C	11.1%	100.0%	1	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

For this Course, the intention was to set an assessment with grade boundaries at the notional values of 50% for a Grade C and 70% for a Grade A. The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

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.