



## External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Computing Studies
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

As in previous years, candidates struggled with questions where they were asked to justify or explain answers, even in questions where they had had to answer the same style of question in the Coursework.

Similar to previous years, the majority of candidates answered the option on Computers and the Internet.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Section 1

- ◆ Question 1 and 2: most candidates knew the functions and features of text and graphic editing.
- ◆ Question 3: most candidates understood the basics of spreadsheets.
- ◆ Question 4(b), (d), (e): most candidates were familiar with computer systems.
- ◆ Question 5: most candidates had knowledge of graphics.

### Section 2: Computers and the Internet

The majority of candidates answered the questions well.

### Section 2: Information and the Internet

Fewer candidates answered this option than Computers and the Internet.

The majority of candidates answered the questions well.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Section 1

- ◆ Question 1(a): Several could not identify why desktop publishing should be used in the situation rather than word-processing.
- ◆ Question 2: some candidates had difficulty with the laying out of text and graphics.
- ◆ Question 3: some candidates had difficulty in describing spreadsheet advantages.
- ◆ Question 4(a),(c): several candidates did not know the difference between a hard disk and random access memory, or the function of an operating system.
- ◆ Question 5 (a)(ii),(b)(i): candidates were not clear on how edits were carried out.

### Section 2: Computers and the Internet

- ◆ Question 6(b): several candidates used backing storage rather than memory.
- ◆ Question 6(e): several candidates did not read the specification.

## **Section 2: Information and the Internet**

Question 7: several candidates were not confident in the basics of databases.

### **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

Many candidates are still producing answers using application names rather than the type of application.

Candidates should be aware of how computer systems are used in real world situations.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	1402
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	310
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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	43.2%	43.2%	134	70
B	25.5%	68.7%	79	60
C	17.4%	86.1%	54	50
D	5.2%	91.3%	16	45
No award	8.7%	-	27	-

## 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.