



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Administration
Level	Advanced Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

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

Report

The Business Report was completed much better this year with most candidates and centres using the advice on the SQA website about completion of the report.

Exam

In general candidates are showing a good level of knowledge of the curriculum. The area which is letting them down is their understanding of the command words. Some candidates are not addressing the command words so are unable to gain full marks. The same command words are used for Advanced Higher Business Management and can be found on the Administration and Business Management subject pages.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Candidates performed much better in the report this year. The majority of the reports followed a recognisable business layout and answered the question from the case study. There was good use of theorists and good examples of research to back up their recommendations and conclusions.

Areas which candidates found demanding

In the case study candidates were asked for benefits but a number of candidates listed disadvantages and drawbacks so were unable to gain marks for this work.

In the extended answer section candidates did not fully answer the question in relation to the command words particularly the questions with discuss in them. There was often little or no evidence of any discussion taking place therefore reducing the number of marks available to the candidate.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Make sure all candidates are familiar with the guidance on completing the Business Report on the SQA website.

Ensure that candidates are familiar with and know how to answer the command words which they will encounter at Advanced Higher level.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	15
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	7
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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	14.3%	14.3%	1	70
B	28.6%	42.9%	2	60
C	28.6%	71.4%	2	50
D	14.3%	85.7%	1	45
No award	14.3%	100.0%	1	-

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.