



## External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	<b>Administration</b>
Level	<b>Intermediate 2</b>

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

As usual, candidates attained higher marks for Paper 2. Many candidates did not manage to achieve half marks for Paper 1. Almost all candidates completed both papers in the time allocation. In Paper 1, Section B, most candidates attempted Question 1, Questions 2 and 3 were equally popular, and there were very few instances of candidates attempting all three questions.

Many candidates are still not inputting their name on printouts, or putting printouts in the correct order when they are submitted.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Paper 1

Candidates tended to expand their answers; very few candidates gave one word answers.

#### Section A

- ◆ Question 1 (b) — most candidates attained at least one mark for this describe question; many attained two marks.
- ◆ Question 2 (a) — candidates had a good knowledge of the information in a contract of employment.

#### Section B

- ◆ Question 1 (a) — many candidates could outline hotdesking, but many failed to justify its use.
- ◆ Question 1 (c) — candidates had good knowledge of the impact of poor customer service.
- ◆ Questions 2 (a) and 3 (c) — most candidates gained some marks; very few gained full marks.

### Paper 2

#### Task 1

Most candidates understood what they were trying to do with the spreadsheet. Even if they were unable to insert the formula correctly, they were able to key in figures and so continue with the paper. Most candidates were awarded the count mark. Most candidates gained the 10% increase mark and formatted the heading correctly.

#### Task 2

Many candidates attained very highly in the database.

### **Task 3**

Most candidates handed in merge fields and a merged letter printout. This task tended to be either very well done or very poorly done — there were few in the middle mark range.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Paper 1**

#### **Section A**

- ◆ Question 3 (a) — very vague answers; very few candidates were able to describe sales department activities.
- ◆ Question 3 (b) — many candidates referred to the sales department instead of the purchases department as asked.
- ◆ Questions 4 (a) and 5 (b) — many candidates did not compare, or did not use a link word.
- ◆ Question 5 (a) — very vague answers; very few candidates justified or mentioned uses of itineraries.

#### **Section B**

- ◆ Question 2 (b) — very vague answers.
- ◆ Question 2 (c) — candidates were not specific to the sales department.
- ◆ Question 3 (b) — candidates were often confused between WAN and LAN.

### **Paper 2**

#### **Task 1**

Some candidates were unable to sort the spreadsheet, sorting on column rather than whole sheet. Many candidates were unable to input an IF statement formula or use an absolute cell reference. Many candidates did not use cell references in their formula.

A number of candidates did not input the gift information correctly. Candidates had difficulty using named cells in another worksheet. Many candidates did not proofread the graph, so were unaware that information was missing and the title they made up did not make sense.

#### **Task 2**

Many candidates did not hand in a printout of the report. Very few candidates gained the award for the report heading. Few candidates were able to sort on two non-consecutive fields.

#### **Task 3**

Again proofreading was poor; few candidates gained full marks for accuracy. Many candidates were not awarded marks for the correct salutation and complimentary close. Surprisingly, many candidates did not change the margin as instructed. Some candidates did not use the database search for the merge.

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

Centres must continue to impress the meanings of the command words, so that candidates answer the question which is asked. Although many candidates are extending their answers in Paper 1, many are still not answering the question being asked.

In Paper 2, candidates must read the introductory instructions and the instructions for each task to ensure they complete the task correctly.

Candidates should be encouraged to proofread their work, especially when keying in text. Candidates must also be very careful about following printing instructions for values or formula, and gridlines and row/column headings.

Candidates should be using appropriate formula at this level, ie SUM and AVERAGE, not adding each individual cell. This approach is not awarded marks at Intermediate 2 level. Candidates also need to know how to sort a spreadsheet — not simply sorting on one column.

Candidates should be encouraged to read the introductory instructions to try to understand what a graph should display. This will enable them to devise a suitable heading, relevant axis labels and legends. Again, proofreading to ensure there are no basic errors and that it makes sense is essential.

Fewer candidates than last year are inserting their own name within a field in the database, but there are still some. This can cause problems when they try to sort the database. Functions available within the software should be used to alleviate this issue, eg publishing with Word (or naming the table candidate's name). Candidates are penalised if their name appears in a field within a record, as this affects the validity of the information.

Candidates must know how to sort on two non-consecutive fields in a database.

As always, candidates must know the layout of word processing documents — very few candidates demonstrated the correct layout of a letter.

Candidates must also key in their name on all pieces of work and ensure that the paper submitted is in the correct order.

Centres should use the Understanding Standards website when preparing pupils for the exam. This details the mark allocation for tasks and the command words that are used. The sample candidate responses have also recently been updated on the website. Marking instructions for SQA papers are also available on the SQA website, and these are annotated for ease of use.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	4494
Number of resulted entries in 2010	4198

## 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	18.0%	18.0%	755	72
B	31.4%	49.4%	1317	60
C	25.8%	75.1%	1081	49
D	9.7%	84.8%	408	43
No award	15.2%	100.0%	637	–

### 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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.