



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Managing Environmental Resources
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

Centres are to be congratulated on the performance of their candidates. The high levels of commitment and enthusiasm were obvious in the candidates' answers.

Areas in which candidates performed well

- ◆ Candidates knew the difference between natural and semi-natural environments, examples of tourist attraction and temporary jobs in Q1.
- ◆ Question 1 was a good settling-in question and most candidates scored highly.
- ◆ Renewable and non-renewable energy sources were well understood, as was calculating a ratio and naming two recreational activities in a forest in question 2.
- ◆ Biological definitions were well answered and very few candidates forgot to include the arrows in question 3.
- ◆ Personal ways to save energy (Q4) and water (Q8) were well answered as well as the problem solving in Q4. The results of ozone depletion in question 5d were better answered than in previous years.
- ◆ In question 6, the concept of planning permission and the impacts of a new development were well understood by the majority of candidates.
- ◆ The mass calculation in question 7 and SSSI of question 8 were both well answered.

Areas which candidates found demanding

- ◆ Candidates scored least well in the investigation, question 6 and in the interpretation, question 7. In both these questions candidates were presented with a lot of information in different forms.
- ◆ Candidates have difficulty with the term wetland — question 1b(i). Answers for an endangered species included whale, haddock and panda.
- ◆ Naming a piece of legislation at national level question 2c(iii) proved difficult, as always, legislation proves to be an unpopular topic.
- ◆ In question 3c(i), some candidates assumed that the marks on the drawing were stripes.
- ◆ Only the more able candidates could explain the meaning of the word extinct in question 5, and name the waste which could be composted in Q7.
- ◆ The completion of the conclusion also proved difficult in question 7.
- ◆ In question 8, a lot of candidates did not know that 'permanent' was the answer in part c.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	16
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	17
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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 - 80				
A	23.5%	23.5%	4	56
B	11.8%	35.3%	2	48
C	35.3%	70.6%	6	40
D	23.5%	94.1%	4	36
No award	5.9%	-	1	-

All assessments on standard, therefore no adjustments were made to the grade boundaries.

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.