



## External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Music
Level(s)	Intermediate 2 and 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 majority of candidates were entered for the model of Question Paper and Performing on two instruments/voice. This is in line with all previous years at these levels.

### Intermediate 1

With the introduction of the new National Qualifications, the number of candidates being presented for Intermediate 1 Music is greatly reduced in 2014. The performance of candidates in the question paper resulted in an average of one mark higher than last year for candidates performing on two instruments/voice. Technology candidates' marks in the question paper were identical to last year's scores.

Candidates' **total** scores for the Performing combination were in line with the past few years' totals. Technology candidates' totals, however, were three marks higher than last year's scores. Performing marks across these two combinations were almost identical.

In addition, 74% of the candidate population entered for Intermediate 1 in 2014 was from S5/6, which is a considerable shift in entries by stage.

### Intermediate 2

At Intermediate 2 level a remarkable level of consistency was again evident, with 94% of candidates gaining a pass from A – C. This percentage figure has been constant over the past four years, and reflects not only a very stable question paper, but also the highly consistent application of performing marking standards by Visiting Assessors across the country. Such stability should assure centres and candidates that their awards are accurate and valid.

The Performing component for candidates opting for two instruments/voice and those choosing the Technology option were almost identical.

There was no significant difference in the *total* marks awarded to Performing candidates and those opting for Technology.

### Question papers

Question papers at both Intermediate 1 and 2 again seem to hold no surprises for candidates. Centres are clearly making full use of the past papers in the public domain and the corresponding answer schemes on the SQA website. This was reinforced by the fact that markers found virtually no examples of candidate bad practice, eg supplying extra answers, providing too many answers, ticking too many boxes etc. This also serves to highlight careful preparation by centres.

## **Areas in which candidates performed well**

The familiarity with the question paper layout, its consistency in successive years and the almost complete lack of bad practice, is testament to solid preparation and sound performance in this component.

In the Performing component, candidates were generally well prepared for the experience, including the sampling of performing programmes.

In MIDI and Sound Engineering, the folios submitted for central marking illustrated a clear awareness of the demands for these levels, with most candidates able to meet the requirements of this component well.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

The traditional notation questions at both levels continue to provide a great diversity of responses, with some candidates (who may be fluent in this medium) gaining very high marks while other candidates were unable to respond well to these questions.

In the question papers at both levels, question 5 (Musical map) and question 6 (Comparison) continue to show a steady improvement. Questions which demand a one word response from candidates, eg identifying an instrument, still present problems to some candidates, particularly at Intermediate 1.

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

Many referrals to the Principal Assessor are concerned with incorrect or inadequate drum kit and guitar programmes. The requirements for these instrumental categories have not changed since the inception of Intermediate level examinations. Centres must ensure that their candidates fulfil the requirements for these instruments in terms of number of styles/number of chords in programmes.

Centres are also reminded that when a chordal guitar programme is presented, the Visiting Assessor must be provided with a melody line to set the performance in a musical context.

A number of referrals to Principal Assessor continue to reflect practical programmes that are significantly short of time. Centres must make greater effort to meet the requirements of four minutes playing time (three minutes sampled) at these levels.

Central marking remains the assessment type for candidates who opt for performing with Technology (X233), and this is where centres send folio submissions to SQA for marking. In some cases, the recording quality of CDs of performances for some fell short of the standard that might be expected from centres specialising in Sound Engineering and MIDI. Centres must also make clear to the marker which line of music or part is being performed by the candidate. This is particularly important when two instruments of a similar timbre are performing.

## **Statistical information: update on Courses – Intermediate 2**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2013</b>	3852
---	------

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2014</b>	1479
---	------

## **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	52.2%	52.2%	772	70
B	25.4%	77.6%	375	60
C	14.8%	92.4%	219	50
D	2.8%	95.1%	41	45
No award	4.9%	-	72	-

## **Statistical information: update on Courses – Intermediate 1**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2013</b>	758
---	-----

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2014</b>	100
---	-----

## **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	33.0%	33.0%	33	70
B	26.0%	59.0%	26	60
C	17.0%	76.0%	17	50
D	7.0%	83.0%	7	45
No award	17.0%	-	17	-

## 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.