



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Music
Level	Intermediate 1 and 2

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

In both Intermediate 1 and 2 Music the majority of candidates continue to be presented for the Music with Performing option.

Responses to the Question Paper at Intermediate 1 level were similar to those of previous years, with the notation question providing an appropriate challenge and serving to differentiate candidates. Comparison with the previous two years provides a remarkably consistent performance, with 80% of candidates gaining an A–C award for the Course as a whole — almost exactly the same percentage as the past three years.

At Intermediate 2 level there were no significant changes in attainment in any of the Course components. The A–C pass rate remained at 94%, in line with that of the last three years. This consistency underlines not only judicious presentation by centres, but rigorous preparation of candidates for all aspects of the examination.

Answers to the Question Paper at Intermediate 2 level were very similar to those of previous years.

Markers reported that Questions 5 and 6 at both levels in the Question Papers continued to test candidates' abilities to answer questions without the support of multiple choice answers. However, overall, responses were felt to be generally more successful than previous years.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Candidates at both Intermediate 1 and 2 are performing well in the Question Papers. This was reflected in a very methodical approach to the varying demands of questions in the papers, and suggested that candidates had been exposed to past Question Papers to hone their skills.

Practical Performance on two instruments/voice remained a consistently secure area for the vast majority of candidates.

The sampling model used in the Performing component of the examination is well established, with centres and candidates now fully prepared for the approach adopted by Visiting Assessors. Candidates' responses in this area contributed to the consistency of attainment. This consistency with previous years owes as much to centres' preparation of candidates as it does to the professional approach of Visiting Assessors.

Areas which candidates found demanding

At both Intermediate 1 and 2, the last question, which demands some traditional notation, was not always well done. These questions remain a challenge for some candidates.

Technology candidates are required to submit a recording of their performing. The requirements for this and the marking approach (sampling) are identical to those assigned to Visiting Assessor situations. At Intermediate 1 level a number of recorded performances fell well below the standard required to pass.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

Many candidates are presented at Intermediate 1 and 2 with no requirement to perform from standard notation, eg drum kit, chordal guitar. Centres must bear in mind that the final question in the Question Papers at both levels demands a basic level of standard notation. The number of marks available for these questions is potentially accessible to all.

Referrals to Principal Assessor continue to reflect practical programmes which are significantly short of time. Visiting Assessors will sample three minutes of music, but centres are still required to prepare candidates for a performance lasting at least four minutes.

At Intermediate 1 level some candidates were clearly unable to meet the demands of the performing examination. Centres must consider whether this level of presentation is appropriate for certain candidates.

Candidates at both Intermediate 1 and 2 seemed to be well prepared generally, and centres are advised to continue to prepare candidates strictly in line with SQA's requirements to ensure their candidates maximise their potential.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2010	823
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	825
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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	17.8%	17.8%	147	70
B	31.4%	49.2%	259	60
C	27.0%	76.2%	223	50
D	7.2%	83.4%	59	45
No award	16.6%	100.0%	137	-

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2010	3620
Number of resulted entries in 2011	3663

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	53.5%	53.5%	1960	70
B	27.2%	80.7%	995	60
C	12.2%	92.8%	446	50
D	2.7%	95.6%	99	45
No award	4.4%	100.0%	163	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that 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, though, 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.