

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

**Engineering**

**Qualification area**

**Subject(s) and Level(s)  
Included in this report**

**Electronics Higher**

## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	21
<b>Pre appeal</b>	21

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	6
<b>Pre appeal</b>	6

## General comments re entry numbers

At first reading, it may seem disappointing that the entry numbers were low this year. Perhaps this will be a good thing in the long term as more candidates are fed into Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 instead of straight in at Higher level.

If this is the case then this is exactly what has been suggested in previous PA's reports.

## Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

Upper A:	85%
A:	70%
B:	60%
C:	50%
No award:	

### General commentary on passmarks and grade boundaries

- While SQA aims to set examinations and create mark schemes which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum 50% of the available marks (notional passmark) and a very well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70%, it is almost impossible to get the standard absolutely on target every year, in every subject and level
- Each year we therefore hold a passmark meeting for each subject at each level where we bring together all the information available (statistical and judgmental). 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 senior management team at SQA
- We adjust the passmark downwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly more demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- We adjust the passmark upwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly less demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- Where the standard appears to be very similar to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries
- 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 are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. And just because SQA has altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry 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
- Our main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain standards across the years, even as syllabuses evolve and change

### Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Standardised 'a priori' Boundary Grades were applied.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

As this year's cohort was so low (6) it was felt that any analysis of the performance would provide little of use for comparison with previous years. This was discussed at length at the marking meeting.

### **Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well**

No particular areas.

### **Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty**

No particular areas.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

Yet again, I would like to commend those involved in teaching this course. It is a difficult course to 'time' and involves a very broad range of teaching ability - keep up the good work.

Only a single centre presented candidates this year. This is the first time candidates have been presented from this centre and as the cohort number was low, it is very difficult to make any useful/constructive comment on performance.

I hope that the this centre has learned from it's experiences this year and will continue to offer this course as part of it's catalogue in the future.