

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Technical Education

Qualification area

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

Intermediate 2 – Graphic Communication

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003 (Pre Appeal)	1061
--	------

Number of entries in 2004 (Pre Appeal)	1137
--	------

General comments re entry numbers

There was a small increase in the uptake of the number of candidates being presented this year at Intermediate 2, with 231 centres presenting. A number of schools appear to be 'Fast Tracking' their more able candidates, and instead of presenting them at Credit level, they are being put forward at Intermediate 2. As in previous years, some schools are opting for Intermediate 2 instead of Standard Grade.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

A	32.4%
B	25.8%
C	18.6%
D	5.9%
No Award	17.4%

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

The distribution of awards seems to indicate that candidates performed better this year than in previous years. There was a rise in the number of candidates obtaining A and B passes. At the lower end, fewer candidates achieved no award but there are still too many candidates performing very badly. This could be due to a number of factors:-

- Candidates were poorly prepared for the exam. This is indicated by the number of poor responses observed when marking the knowledge and understanding questions.
- Candidates were presented for an exam that was not at the correct level for them.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	32.4	32.4	368	74
B	25.8	58.2	293	63
C	18.6	76.8	211	52
D	5.9	82.7	67	46
No Award	17.4	100	198	

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 arrangements evolve and change.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

For the past three years the pass mark for a C award has been either 47 or 48 marks. This year the paper was intentionally made less demanding. The 2 point perspective question was removed and was replaced with an orthographic drawing with a true shape. This type of question was not as demanding, especially for lower ability candidates. Similarly Question 6 (planometric) and question 7 (cookie cutter) was not as demanding, with candidates being able to pick up a high percentage of the marks available. Taking all these factors into consideration, it was therefore necessary to raise the pass mark boundaries for C, B and A Grades by 5 marks, and the upper A by 4 marks, to maintain standards.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

It was noted by the majority of the markers that the overall quality of the responses to the drawing questions was better this year with fewer 'blank' pages than previous years. The poorest response, as in previous years, came from the knowledge and understanding questions. Candidates failed to read the questions correctly or misinterpreted what was being asked of them. It is clear that schools are concentrating on the drawing abilities part of the course and neglecting the knowledge and understanding. There are still candidates being presented at this level where Standard Grade Foundation or Intermediate 1 (if available) would be more appropriate.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

The main areas where the majority of the candidates performed well were the planometric and the octagonal prism. The planometric, although time consuming, was done very well, with the majority of the candidates gaining 75% of the available marks and above. Candidates were able to pick up a lot of marks in the octagonal prism question without actually having to draw the Plan view. A number of candidates are still finding it very difficult drawing a basic octagon.

The orthographic Card Reader question was fairly well done, but a lot of the candidates missed out the hidden detail and the lesser able ones did not attempt the true shape.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

As in previous years, it was disappointing to see the number of candidates who did not perform well in the knowledge and understanding questions. Questions 1 and 4 (the CAD questions) were particularly poor with candidates misinterpreting what was being asked of them. In many cases the basic knowledge was lacking.

In Question 3 it was surprising how many people did not know what a gutter was, although most knew what columns were.

The sectional view (question 9) was very poorly attempted. Although a good number of candidates assembled the toothbrush holder correctly, very few succeeded in correctly sectioning the end elevation.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

The overall results indicate that a fair number of candidates presented for the Intermediate 2 Course are not fully prepared for the exam.

- Pupils are not being fully trained in how to interpret and answer the knowledge and understanding type questions.
- There is a general lack of knowledge concerning the use of CAD and CAD terms.
- Some pupils lack the basics in constructing geometric shapes. e.g. Octagons
- Candidates are continually under performing when attempting sectional views and assemblies.

It should be noted that the intermediate 2 course provides progression from Standard Grade, but it has been found to be too demanding for Foundation level candidates. Until such a time that Intermediate 1 Graphic Communication becomes available, centres should consider whether to put forward these candidates at this level.