

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Media Studies

Qualification area

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

Media Studies (Advanced Higher)

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	15
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Number of entries in 2004	9
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General comments re entry numbers

Fewer candidates than previous year, which possibly reflects the difficulty of the course and the high failure rate.

Course arrangements need to be rewritten in order to make course more achievable and also to bring it into line with new arrangements at lower levels.

Candidates are from schools only. College students more likely to opt for vocational HN courses in this general area.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

More passes than in 2003 and very high achievement at top end.

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Where candidates achieve high marks, it is generally because they follow the requirements of the arrangements — criticising their sources and stating their methods of investigation — as well as showing sound knowledge and understanding of Media Studies concepts.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	37.5	37.5	3	42
B	0	37.5	0	36
C	0	37.5	0	30
D	0	37.5	0	-
No award	62.5	100.0	5	

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

Same as 2003.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Fewer candidates than 2003, but better achievement at top end. In one centre in particular, it seems that some candidates had enrolled on the course in order to learn about Media Production; such candidates displayed very little knowledge and understanding of analytical concepts.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

No particular areas in which candidates performed well. They did so if they answered the question closely, criticised their sources, and showed a secure knowledge and understanding of Media Studies concepts.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Candidates experienced difficulty in the analytical areas of the examination where they had clearly undertaken the course in order to learn about media production. Such candidates did not display the knowledge and understanding of Media Studies concepts required for Higher level, or in some cases, even Intermediate 2.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Centres should advise candidates that the requirements of the Dissertation mean that they should outline their method(s) of investigation and acknowledge and evaluate their sources of information.

Candidates should also be advised that it is very important to answer the chosen question as set, and to answer every part of it.

Candidates should also be advised that, where their interests lie in the technical side of media production, they should not attempt this course, as a deep knowledge and understanding of Media Studies analytical concepts is required. Centres should advise such candidates to enrol for a course in Media Production (eg HNC/D TV Production), if this is possible in a school situation.