

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Travel and Tourism

Qualification area:

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

Tourism: Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	55
Pre appeal	
Post appeal	55

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	50

General comments re entry numbers

Entries down for second year in succession. Two centres presented candidates for the first time, but three centres that presented candidates in previous years appear to have withdrawn the course or withdrawn all candidates this year.

A number of FE Colleges are opting to exclude both the examination and project based assessments from their programmes at this level as higher performance indicators can be achieved by excluding all forms of external assessment. Until the future of non-advanced group awards is determined this trend is likely to continue.

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

Total marks achievable 120

Grade	Minimum Mark
A	84
B	72
C	60

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

The format for the examination was changed in 2003. The examination is no longer based on a previously seen case study. However the content remained unchanged. Markers feel that in general the standard of candidature for this examination is increasingly average and that poor results should not affect the pass mark. Given the unchanged content, average candidature and distribution of results, *a priori* scores were applied.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Marker comments on candidature varied from satisfactory to poor. Although there is one upper A pass this year, in general there has been a slide from B to C.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Question 2: Good, candidates answered this question well.
Question 8: Some very good responses to this question.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Question 2(a): Some candidates did not understand 'roles'.
Question 3(a): Some candidates did not understand 'feasibility'.
Question 3(b): Generally candidates failed to note the number of marks allocated to this question and consequently responses were inadequate.
Question 4(b): Some candidates did not understand 'qualitative'.
Question 4(d): Responses were too general with many candidates simply itemising what SWOT is.
Question 4(e): Many candidates defined marketing mix without answering the question.
Question 5(d): Candidates failed to cover sufficient points to gain 8 marks and often confused **criteria** with the **methods** required to answer question 5 (e).
Question 5(e): See above
Question 8: Although there were some very good responses, there were also some extremely poor itineraries.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

In general the performance in the 2003 examination did not meet with expectations. There were some good candidates who performed well in the following areas and centres are to be commended for their general preparedness:

- ◆ Knowledge of the structure of the industry and its interrelatedness
- ◆ Terminology used in the industry
- ◆ General knowledge of the Scottish tourism product
- ◆ Planning touring itineraries of Scotland

However the good performances were more than outweighed by average and poor performances. There were several areas where candidate knowledge was lacking:

- ◆ Key responsibilities and job titles of staff working in the tourism industry
- ◆ Application of SWOT analysis
- ◆ Application of the marketing mix
- ◆ Criteria for measuring the quality of customer service in travel and tourism as opposed to methods used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of customer care programmes
- ◆ Specific local knowledge of the Scottish tourism product, eg hotels names, visitor attractions

Centres should review procedures for determining estimates. In general estimates were extremely generous.