

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Travel and Tourism

Qualification area

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

Travel and Tourism Intermediate 1

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	538
Post appeal	539

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	599

General comments re entry numbers

This is an increase of 61 candidates for 2003, which is an 11.3% improvement over the figures for 2002. There has been a steady increase in the number of candidates every year since 2000 (198) and 2001 (460). It is very pleasing to see this trend.

The distribution of candidate responses seems to indicate that the candidate cohort has been more carefully selected this year. Centres appear to be presenting the appropriate candidates for this level of Travel and Tourism. Fewer candidates who would more appropriately have been presented for Intermediate 2 sat this examination this year. If this is the case, the increase in appropriate candidates may be greater than the 61 indicated above.

One change that was noted this year was that some candidates were being presented from S4 – presumably after the delivery of a two-year course offered as an alternative to standard grade provision.

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

The grade boundaries this year are set at ‘a priori’ levels for an examination of 50 marks.
i.e.

A: 35
B: 30
C: 25

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 feeling of the markers was that the examination was set at a level, which was fair and appropriate for the level of the subject. It was also felt that the standards of ability required by candidates for each grade were on a par with equivalent SQA subjects. It was therefore felt that it was not necessary to adjust grade boundaries in any direction to compensate for any imbalances due to these factors.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The range of marks was from 4 (2 candidates) to 49 (2 candidates) out of a maximum of 50 marks. This indicates that it was a test that allowed the ablest candidates to do well. At the same time, the distribution of candidates marks showed that there was a reasonably equal spread of results through grades A, B and C. This indicates that the paper was able to sort the candidates through the full range of pass marks. The paper seems to have successfully carried out the two main tasks required of it – given that the candidate group in this exam more closely reflected the appropriate candidate ability level.

The marking team felt that there was a good response over all but with fewer candidates scoring very high marks this year. The range of marks reflected that the candidate group was mostly at “the correct level”.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

The marking team felt that the following questions were done well:

- ◆ Question 2a: Choosing accommodation options
This question was very well done by the majority of candidates – demonstrating good exam preparation.
- ◆ Question 3a and b:
This section dealing with foreign currency and money options was very well done in general.
- ◆ Question 4c:
Question 5c:
Candidates demonstrated that they were able to use examples from their coursework to answer these destination questions.
- ◆ Question 6: Dealing with Holiday Problems, and
Question 7: Impact of Tourism and Tourists
Both were done very well this year but the responses to Q6 may have been of a higher standard

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

The marking team felt that the following questions were not done well:

- ◆ Question 1a:
Difficulties with Road-map interpretation encountered by the majority of candidates
- ◆ Questions 2b and d:
Some answers were not related to the questions. Definitions of “self-catering” and “half-board” poorly expressed.
Almost total confusion about the meaning of “Table d’hote” and “a la carte”.
- ◆ Question 3c:
Confusion about why tourists take travel insurance documents on holiday with them.
The difference between the use of an E111 document and holiday medical insurance was not made clear in many cases.
- ◆ Question 4a and b:
Question 5a and b:
Many candidates did not attempt these answers, which should be relatively easy if taught well and if an atlas is provided.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

The following areas of the course content, which were examined this year, were not done well by a significant proportion of candidates;

- ◆ Using road maps for route planning and the significance of Motorway and primary routes.
- ◆ Catering and menu options
- ◆ The significance of the contents of the holiday insurance document and the difference between it and the E111 in EU countries.
- ◆ Identification of places on maps and the plotting of places on a map – using an atlas. The plotting of places on the maps in Q4 and Q5 is very demanding particularly because of the availability of the atlas.

There is evidence that many candidates did not have or did not use atlases for questions 1c, 4a and b and 5a and b. Some candidates (a few) did not attempt the currency conversion questions and some also did not use a calculator. Centres should ensure that atlases and calculators are available and that candidates are aware that they may use them for any question.