

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Travel and Tourism

Qualification area:

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

Travel and Tourism: Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	729
Pre appeal	729
Post appeal	731

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	643

General comments re entry numbers

After three years of growth candidate entries fell by almost 12%. FE entry figures are similar to 2002 but School entries have declined. More centres offer at both Intermediate 1 and 2 and some may have streamed candidates more appropriately to Intermediate 1 level. Increased entries at Intermediate 1 would seem to bear this out. A significant percentage of FE Colleges offering courses at this level still do not present candidates for the examination.

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

Total mark achievable 60

Grade	Minimum Mark
A	42
B	36
C	30

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 and content of the examination was unchanged. The standard was considered to be about the same as the previous year. All markers commented that it was a very fair paper and covered course content equitably. Therefore straight *a priori* cut off scores have been applied.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Although performance improved quite markedly on 2002, several markers commented that the candidature was poorer overall than in previous years, whereas others noted that the standard was quite variable.

As always Section C (European and Mediterranean Tourist Destinations) was by far the most popular option.

Markers once again commented on the very poor standard of written English in many scripts. In several cases this prevented candidates from getting better marks since explanations were unclear.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Question 3, 4(b) and 6(b) scored consistently higher than others, but generally there were no outstanding sections of the paper.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Question 1(b):	Very few candidates demonstrated knowledge of the link required .
Question 2(b) (i):	Very few candidates were able to identify the employment opportunities.
Question 4 and 6:	Mapping sections were generally poor.
Question 7:	Named attractions often not known, other than the most obvious.
Question 8(d):	'Taking messages' was not generally understood to mean taking down a message in writing. Many candidates referred to the manner of speaking to the person on the telephone.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Centres should be advised that although the pass rate has improved candidates could be better prepared for the paper, particularly in the following areas:

- ◆ The relationship between travel agents and tour operators
- ◆ The employment opportunities available in tour operating
- ◆ Mapping — plotting and identifying tourist destinations

Other areas of weakness included:

- ◆ Knowledge of charter airline operations
- ◆ Eco-tourism. Centres need to emphasize that this is not just about the environment.
- ◆ Knowledge of named tourist attractions in destination countries
- ◆ Customer rights with regard to trades description and consumer protection; Knowledge of relevant acts of parliament.

There was a slight improvement in estimating particularly with higher graded students. However the majority of estimates were again non-aligned with most centres being lenient and discordant, despite the advice given in 2002.