

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Financial Services and Accounting

Qualification area

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

Accounting and Finance – Int 2

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	597

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	594

General comments re entry numbers

Uptake steady: with only a very slight fall of 3.

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

C	40
B	48
A	57
All out of 80	

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

Grade Boundaries have been increased by 3 to 4 marks. Question Paper was slightly easier than last year — with very high marks scored in questions 4 and 7.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Candidates performed better than last year. They seemed better prepared and fewer marks were lost due to poor layout and missing headings.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Company Accounts
Manufacturing Account
Ratios
Overhead Analysis
Wages

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Decision making was not as well done as might have been expected
Break-even
Theory

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

In the vast majority of cases, theory questions are poorly done at this level and it is suspected that the average mark is probably less than 50%.

A number of candidates seemed totally unprepared for this exam, well over 100 candidates scoring less than 30/80: might some of these have been better entered for Int 1?

Overall however a better performance than in 2002, especially at the upper end and a resulting significant improvement in the overall pass rate.