

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Business Services

Qualification area:

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

Administration — Advanced Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	1
Pre appeal	

Number of entries in 2003	10
Pre appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

Although more candidates are now sitting Advanced Higher, it is disappointing that the entries are low. Hopefully the numbers will continue to increase.

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

C = 49
B = 59
A = 69

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 pre-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 set grade boundaries just fell short of standardised 'a priori': this accounts for the effect of the internally assessed component.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Report

Candidates did not perform as well in this part of the course in relation to the others.

Case Study – Part A

Candidates performed well in the case study questions in Part A with most candidates achieving their best marks here.

Extended Answers – Part B

Candidates in general performed less well in this part of the course with candidates not answering the questions fully and not answering in the depth required at Advanced Higher level.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Candidates performed well in the case study questions in Part A with most candidates achieving their best marks here.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Report

Candidates must realise that the report should be a business report and not just a report on how the ICT task was carried out. The report must have a recognised structure and the candidates must analyse the three hypotheses.

Centres must ensure that candidates have a copy of the **Guidance on compilation of report** (NAB/D012 13/001 page 51) which sets out clearly what is required in the report. It was clear a number of candidates had not had access to this and this clearly affected their marks.

External Examination

Part A

In general this part of the exam was completed well.

Part B

Question 2 — Candidates concentrated on the effect of the employees of change not on groups and organisations.

Question 3 — It should be noted that management does not just mean top management but also supervisors etc — a number of candidates concentrated on only very senior managers.

Question 4 — Candidates need to compare and contrast different structures not just list the attributes of each type of structure.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

The following points emerged from the 2003 diet:

- ◆ Candidates must realise that the report should be a business report and not just a report on how the ICT task was carried out. The report must have a recognised structure and the candidates must analyse the three hypotheses and look at and comment on the answers which the ICT has helped them achieve.
- ◆ Centres must ensure that candidates have a copy of the **Guidance on compilation of report** (NAB/D012 13/001 page 51) which sets out clearly what is required in the report. It was clear a number of candidates had not had access to this and this clearly affected their marks.
- ◆ Candidates must answer the questions fully and answer in the depth which is required at Advanced Higher level.