

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Business Education

Qualification area

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

Administration — Advanced Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	10
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Number of entries in 2004	17
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General comments re entry numbers

Although numbers are continuing to increase, it is disappointing that the entries are so low. Hopefully the numbers will continue to increase in coming years, especially with the introduction of the new revised Higher and Intermediate courses.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

	% of Candidates
A	23.5%
B	29.4%
C	11.8%
D	29.4%
No Award	5.9

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Candidate group too small to make informed comment.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	23.5	23.5	4	70
B	29.4	52.9	5	60
C	11.8	64.7	2	50
D	29.4	94.1	5	45
No award	5.9	100	1	

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 arrangements evolve and change.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

An international increase in demand allowed '*a priori*' boundary grades to be set this year.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Report

Candidates did not perform as well in this area of the course, although there was an improvement on previous years.

Case Study — Part A

This continues to be the area in which candidates achieve their best marks.

Extended Answers — Part B

Once again there was a wide range of responses ranging from excellent Advanced Higher type answers down to answers which would not be acceptable at Higher level.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Most candidates performed well in the case study — Part A.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Report

Candidates must realise that the report is a business report and not a report on how they carried out the task.

It was clear that a number of candidates had not seen the Guidance on compilation of report (NAB/D012 13/001 page 51) which sets out clearly what is required in the report. If this is not followed then it is extremely difficult for candidates to gain good marks.

Part B

Q1 — need more than just a list of office tasks.

Candidates must answer the questions fully and at the appropriate level for Advanced Higher.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

The following points emerged from the 2004 diet:

- ◆ Candidates must realise that the report must be a business report and not a report on how the ICT task was completed.
- ◆ Candidates must be given a copy of the Guidance on compilation of the report which sets out clearly what is required in the report.
- ◆ Candidates must answer the questions fully and answer in the depth which is required at Advanced Higher level.