

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

**Business Services**

**Qualification area**

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

**Administration – Intermediate 1**

## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	987

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	1046

## General comments re entry numbers

Additional 59 candidates presented – a 5.9% increase. Number of candidates presented stabilising as Standard Grade Administration is now established in centres.

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

MARK (lowest)

UPPER A  
90

LOWER A  
80

B  
67

C  
54

### 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

Upper A – 80% of marks can be achieved in practical tasks. Candidates would have to score at least 50% of possible knowledge and understanding marks to achieve an upper A.

C – As a result of the potential for accumulating marks due to the process based nature of the question paper, candidates can reasonably be expected to score more than half marks to achieve a pass.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

Candidates performed very well with 77.3% of candidates achieving a pass at A or B. Practical tasks were well done by the majority of candidates and there was a notable improvement in written responses.

### **Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well**

The database task was particularly well done by the majority of candidates and written responses were good.

### **Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty**

Very few candidates understood what was meant by the instruction to transpose text in the Notice in Task 1 and a fair number of candidates omitted the apostrophe in this task. A significant number of candidates misunderstood what was required of them in the Memo in Task 1. The questions in Task 4 which posed most difficulty for candidates were questions 3 and 4 referring to the security of files and equipment and questions 5 and 6 referring to meetings.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

Candidates were, in the main, very well prepared for this examination. Candidates should be encouraged to take time to read questions and instructions with particular reference to completion of forms. There was a marked improvement in written responses to knowledge and understanding questions and the majority performed very well in practical tasks. Some candidates could perhaps have been presented at Intermediate 2 level.

Some centres are not including printouts of prepared files in each return envelope and these are required for marking scripts. An increasing number of candidates are submitting printouts without their name displayed. Clear instructions are given to candidates in the examination paper to display their name on all work submitted and to key in their name on each printout.