

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Business Education

Qualification area

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

Administration Intermediate 1

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	1,048
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Number of entries in 2004	1,031
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General comments re entry numbers

Decrease in presentations which could, in part, be due to centres presenting candidates at Intermediate 2 instead.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

	% of Candidates
A	37
B	34
C	15
D	2.8
No Award	11.2

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Reduction in A awards, especially Upper A could be due in part to candidates previously presented at Intermediate 1 now being presented at Intermediate 2.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Minimum mark
A	37	37	381	80
B	34	71	350	67
C	15.0	86	153	55
D	2.8	88.8	29	49
No award	11.2	100	118	

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

No significant change to grade boundaries. Grade C boundary is 55 marks — such candidates can reasonably be expected to score more than half marks for the paper because of the potential for accumulating marks resulting from the process based nature of the question paper.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

As in previous years candidates performed better in IT section than in knowledge and understanding section.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

The notice (Task 1) was well done by the majority of candidates.

The database (Task 2) was generally well done.

Completion of forms (Task 3) was well done by the majority of candidates — particularly where tables were used for templates.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

The letter (Task 1) posed difficulty for some candidates who appeared to be unsure of letter layout — in particular with regard to the position of the subject heading.

The database sort (Task 2) was poorly done by some candidates with several candidates not attempting the sort at all.

Knowledge and understanding (Task 4) is still proving difficult for many candidates. Questions 1 and 2 in particular were poorly answered by many candidates. Many candidates could not name an Itinerary in Question 4a and some had difficulty with Question 7 relating to the use of the Internet.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Performance in IT tasks is generally good and continues to outstrip performance in the knowledge and understanding task.

The following practical issues still need to be addressed by some centres:

- ◆ some centres not returning printouts of templates in return envelopes — these are required for marking scripts
- ◆ where centres use two different systems printouts of templates for both systems must be included in the return envelopes or candidates may be penalised for alteration to template