

## Principal Assessor Report 2004

**Assessment Panel:**

**Physics**

**Qualification area**

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

**Applied Practical Electronics Intermediate 1**

### **Statistical information: update**

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	N/A
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<b>Number of entries in 2004</b>	30
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### **General comments re entry numbers**

The course ran for the first time this session. It is hoped that the number of candidates entered for the award (30 this session), increases in coming sessions.

### **General comments**

The course proved very popular with candidates due to its practical nature and the number of candidates taking individual course units was approximately double the number of candidates entered for the entire course.

## **Statistical Information: Performance of candidates**

### **Distribution of awards**

Upper A – 10.0% - 3 candidates  
Lower A – 6.7% - 2 candidates  
B – 30.0% - 9 candidates  
C – 30.0% - 9 candidates  
D – 6.7% - 2 candidates  
No Award – 16.7% - 5 candidates

### **Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards**

Due to the practical nature of the course it is anticipated that the majority of candidates entered should be able to achieve some award and the above figures reflect this.

## Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	16.7	16.7	5	70
B	30.0	46.7	9	60
C	30.0	76.7	9	50
D	6.7	83.4	2	45
No award	16.7	100	5	

### 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 were set at the *a priori* values of 70, 60, 50.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

In order to view the artefacts produced by the candidates, this course was subject to external moderation and all centres reported that candidates enjoyed the practical nature of the course.

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

The practical elements of the course were carried out to a good standard.

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

The design stage of the project proved difficult since the one available project requires knowledge of logic families, which is not present in the course units. This is being rectified for next session.

### **Areas of common misunderstanding**

There were no real areas of common misunderstanding.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

The main area of concern for centres is the problem with the course project and centres need to be informed of a timescale for rectifying this problem as soon as possible.