

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

Drama

**Qualification area:**

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

Drama - Intermediate 1 & Intermediate 2

## Statistical information: update

	Intermediate 1	Intermediate 2
<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>		
<b>Pre appeal</b>	27	523

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>		
<b>Pre appeal</b>	42	553

### General comments re entry numbers

Increase in candidates at both levels is encouraging but particularly at Intermediate 1 level where larger numbers have meant more opportunities to see true Intermediate 1 performances at external exams.

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

Intermediate 1	A1	85
	A2	70
	B3	65
	B4	60
	C5	55
	C6	50
Intermediate 2	A1	88
	A2	76
	A3	70
	B4	64
	C5	58
	C6	52

### 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

Felt with changes to courses that grade boundaries would have to be moved to reflect the removal of practical aspect but this did not prove necessary.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

Candidates generally performed well across the two levels in both external components of the course and particularly well in Production. There was some excellent work produced by centres who had chosen a script well so that it was suited to Intermediate 2 candidates and prepared them well.

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

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

Some candidates at Intermediate 2 in particular were disadvantaged by poor planning and preparation in centres for the Production element. Some centres did not choose scripts wisely or merely linked pieces from Higher texts for Intermediate 2 candidates thereby not fulfilling a 'production' remit and leading to a disjointed and less than satisfactory performance.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

The Intermediate 2 production component should be a minimum of 20/25 minutes duration. It should be a one-act play (published) or a substantial extract from a full length play and should offer candidates challenging characters – preferably only one character.

The written exam, on the whole, was done well at both levels and candidates were prepared well. Centres should remind candidates to read questions thoroughly - they will change from year to year. Also centres should be reminded that the written exam for Intermediate 2 should be answered on the EXTRACT provided by SQA only not on candidates wider knowledge of the play from which the extract comes. It is not necessary or recommended for centres to study the plays from which the extracts come but they should concentrate on practical exploration of the extracts.