

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

Care

**Qualification area:**

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

Early Years Care and Education Higher

## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	124

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	271

### General comments re entry numbers

There was a significant increase in entry numbers this year. Individual centres that had entered candidates last year presented more candidates this year. There were also twice as many centres presenting candidates this year.

New lecturers involved in preparing candidates for this examination face a challenge in the change of emphasis for the course.

Colleges with previous experience seemed to have gained confidence in the Higher examination.

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

Report subject to Early Years Care and Education Higher.

Lowest mark to achieve Grade C = 54/100

Lowest mark to achieve Grade B = 64/100

Lowest mark to achieve Grade Lower A = 74/100

Lowest mark to achieve Grade Upper A = 88/100

### 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

The grade boundaries set for 2003 are consistent with those set in 2002. This reflects that the standard of the examination was unchanged.

Candidates who achieved less than 54/100 marks had not shown an acceptable level of Knowledge and Understanding of the subject and/or had not completed the question paper.

Grades C and B performed at an increasingly competent level.

The relatively small number of candidates who achieved Grade Lower A gave some very good answers to the questions.

The candidate who achieved Grade Upper A gave a consistently high standard of response which was outstanding.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

The majority of candidates answered all questions well. Candidates provided evidence of having been well taught and well prepared for the examination.

The overall standard of written English was high.

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

Candidates showed very good Knowledge and Understanding of the application of theories of basic health needs to the health needs of children. They also showed good Knowledge and Understanding of factors affecting the health of children.

Candidates also showed good Knowledge and Understanding of relevant influences on children's cognitive and personal, social and emotional development and behaviour.

There was some very good knowledge and understanding of language and communication demonstrated. Candidates also showed their ability to relate theory to practice in the promotion of children's language and communication skills.

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

Candidates had difficulty in describing naturalistic observation of children, its methods and procedures and the benefits of naturalistic observation.

Many candidates had difficulty in comparing fine and gross motor skills in children of different ages.

Many candidates had difficulty in relating theory to practice in relation to theories of social development.

Some candidates had difficulty in identifying agencies that contribute to the promotion of child health and in describing the agencies' roles. Candidates also had difficulty in identifying relevant professionals who contribute to the promotion of child health.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

Candidates should ensure they read questions carefully, especially when they are required to relate their knowledge to specific points in the question.

Candidates must ensure that they have in-depth knowledge of child development and behaviour across the age range covered by the question paper and that they can identify significant developmental stages.

Candidates should be encouraged to relate their knowledge of child development and behaviour to the practice of promoting children's development and learning.

Candidates should be able to identify relevant and appropriate agencies that contribute to the promotion of child health. Candidates should also be able to relate specific professional to agencies.

Some candidates need more knowledge of examination technique, particularly when deciding the order in which to answer questions.