

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Engineering

Qualification area

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

Electronics Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	6
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Number of entries in 2004	8
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General comments re entry numbers

Disappointing to see that a number of Centres have decided not to enter students or run the course this year. This reduced the number of presenting centres to one.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

A	25%
B	0%
C	25%
D	0%
No award	50%

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

No real changes here. Very difficult to scrutinize distributions with so few candidates.

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

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	25.0	25.0	2	70
B	0.0	25.0	0	60
C	25.0	50.0	2	50
D	0.0	50.0	0	45
No award	50.0	100.0	4	

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

Grade boundaries set exactly the same as 2003 – no change in level of demand.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Difficult to comment with such a small cohort, but candidates were felt to be generally better prepared than previous years.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

As above – difficult to comment with such a small cohort.
Candidates in Part A of the paper did well on questions 3, 5, and 10, they did reasonably well with questions 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 and 9, with question 6 posing the biggest problem. It was difficult because of the numbers involved to see why Q6 should have been a problem, this could be attributed to many different factors.
In Part B of the paper nobody attempted Q13.

It should be noted that the marks shown are average marks.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

As above – difficult to comment with such a small cohort.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Yet again, I would like to commend those involved in teaching this course. It is a difficult course to 'time' and involves a very broad range of teaching ability - keep up the good work.

Only a single centre presented candidates this year. This is only the second time candidates have been presented from this centre and they have done well in both this and previous exams.

I hope that this centre has learned from its experiences this year and its previous year and will continue to offer this course as part of its catalogue in the future.