

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Art and Design

Qualification area

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

**Art and Design, Research and Appreciation,
Advanced Higher**

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	23
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Number of entries in 2004	26
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General comments re entry numbers

This is the fourth year of the examination and numbers doubled in that period.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

While no candidate received an “Upper A” (85+%), six candidates were graded ‘A’ (75–84%) and the relatively high number achieving a ‘B’ grade (12 = 48%) meant that 72% of presentations gained at least a ‘B’ grade. 16% were graded ‘C’ (48+%) and only two candidates fell below this standard.

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

It is interesting to note the generally high grades (A and B combined) with a drop in the % of candidates gaining a ‘C’ or below.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	23.1	23.1	6	75
B	46.2	69.3	12	60
C	15.4	84.7	4	48
D	7.7	92.4	2	40
No award	7.7	100.0	2	

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

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Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Overall candidate performance was good this year. Although no candidate achieved an Upper A, the number of candidates who gained a B grade demonstrated a worthy and commendable effort. This showed an increase in standard on previous years.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

A good choice of subject usually results in a decently written presentation. This year, choices of subject included 'Orkney Jewellery' and also the popular theme of 'Picasso'. Most presentations were well-handled, showing good research work, in both the range of sources and methods used.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Poor choice of subject — often with difficulties in accessing research material or, alternatively, with too much secondary source material of a clichéd nature too often resulted in poorish efforts.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

It is recommended that candidates access the Advanced Higher Research and Appreciation exemplar material available on the SQA secure website.

Candidates should ensure that the 'Visual Presentation' is well-designed and of published quality both in typography and illustration. Also, ensure that the Visual Presentation is relevant and aimed at a specific audience.