

## Principal Assessor Report 2004

**Assessment Panel:**

**Travel and Tourism**

**Qualification area**

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

**Tourism Higher**

## Statistical information: update

<b>Resulted entries in 2003 (final)</b>	51
<b>(Pass mark stage)</b>	50

<b>Resulted entries in 2004 (Course awards – pre appeal)</b>	66
<b>(Pass mark stage)</b>	53

## General comments re entry numbers

There has been an increase in entries.  
Two more Schools entered candidates for the first time, but numbers from established centres have dwindled.  
One FE centre which entered candidates in previous years appears to have withdrawn the course from its portfolio.

## Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

### Pass mark data

Grade	No. of candidates	Percentage of candidates	Cumulative % of candidates
A	1	2	2
B	5	9	11
C	12	23	34
<b>Total A-C</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>34</b>
D	3	6	40
No Award	32	60	100

### Course Award Data

Grade	No. of candidates	Percentage of candidates	Cumulative % of candidates
A	1	2	2
B	4	6	8
C	11	16	24
<b>Total A-C</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
D	3	5	29
No award	47	71	100

### Explanation of difference between Pass Mark data and Course Award data

To achieve a course award, candidates must pass the course assessment and pass all unit assessments. Any difference in the data between Pass Mark data and Course Award data is influenced mainly by the achievement of Unit assessments not being notified to SQA.

### Comment on performance at pass mark stage

Given the relatively low uptake and the increase in numbers presented in 2004 it is difficult to make sound judgements about changes in performance.

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

Distribution of awards (pass mark data)	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	2	2	1	80
B	9	11	5	67
C	23	34	12	55
D	6	40	3	49
No award	60	100	32	0

### 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 fixed at five marks below the normal levels. In previous years *a priori* scores were applied but this year it was felt necessary to adjust the boundaries in light of difficulties experienced by candidates in interpreting questions 1(b)(i) and 2 (d).

## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

Responses were generally poor. Markers noted that with a few exceptions where the responses were well covered, this was not a good cohort. Candidates on the whole gave unsophisticated, factual answers. Very little evaluation.

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

Nothing particularly stood out. Of all the questions, possibly Question 2 (except (d)) and Question 4 were best answered by candidates.

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

Question 1(a)(i) Some candidates were unable to identify ASVA  
Question 1(b)(i) Seasonality was poorly understood  
Question 1(c) Little attempt at evaluation. Candidates tended to state only one or two things that VisitBritain does.  
Question 1 (d) Attractions sector - Less well answered than in previous years.  
Question 2 (c) (ii) Disappointingly few candidates identified AWT as an inbound tour operator.  
Question 2 (d) Genealogy was not understood by the majority of candidates  
Question 3 The question dealing with product mix was poorly covered and generally not related to the case study.  
Question 4 (c) Customer service as a marketing issue was badly answered. Almost all only referred to good customer service leading to repeat visits and recommendations.  
Question 5 (a) Benchmarking was poorly understood.  
Question 5 (b) 'Problem solving culture' may have been a barrier for many candidates. This question was poorly answered with many candidates treating as a routine 'customer care' question.  
Question 6 (c) Focus groups poorly understood.  
Question 7. On the whole product knowledge was poor.  
Question 8 One or two good responses. Some responses were very formulaic and did not make best use of the length of stay. Some totally unrealistic ideas in terms of what can be done in a day and some wild zigzagging up/down and across Scotland

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

There were very few good performances this year. The pass rate in the examination is very low and whilst centres are to be applauded for promoting tourism, care must be taken in future when thinking about the entrance experience. Higher Tourism is not any easier than other subjects and centres should be giving candidates maximum support in preparing for examinations.

Some very poor grammar and spelling was evident in many papers which raises questions about the candidature and certainly highlights the need for extra support.

Areas which were answered reasonably well related to:

- ◆ The structure of the industry and the interdependence of the various sectors.
- ◆ SWOT analysis

Centres should advise candidates to pay particular attention to questions based on case studies and to relate responses to the content.

There were several areas in which candidate knowledge and skills were lacking:

- ◆ Genealogy- identified in the Scottish Executive's Tourism Strategy as one of Scotland's niche markets.
- ◆ The ability to differentiate between marketing, promotion and advertising
- ◆ An understanding of market segmentation
- ◆ The role of customer service in marketing.
- ◆ Knowledge of Scottish Tourist Destinations
- ◆ The ability to plan feasible touring itineraries