

## Principal Assessor Report 2004

**Assessment Panel:**

**Travel and Tourism**

**Qualification area**

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

**Travel and Tourism Intermediate 1**

## Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	599
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Number of entries in 2004	556
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### General comments re entry numbers

The number of entries has fallen by 43 from the peak reached in 2003. If the figure for 2003 is removed from the entries sequence for 2001 – 2004, there is a steady growth from 460 in 2001 and 538 in 2002 to this year's figure of 556. This underlying trend is reassuringly welcome.

Entries for the examination do not reflect the number of candidates who are entered for the course at the start of the academic year. This would be a better measure of the value of the curricular input of the subject and level. Travel and Tourism Intermediate 1 continues to be a valuable curricular choice for many students in S5 and S6 who are looking for a worthwhile life skills option. However, many students in this group do not complete the course for many reasons, for example because they are Christmas Leavers or to leave for college or to take up employment opportunities when they arise. Centres find that the large group of students who begin the course in August each year falls to a small group of candidates for the course assessment in June. Yet many students achieve unit assessments and derive a lot of satisfaction from the class work.

It has been suggested, this year, that the late date of the examination every year may reduce the number of entries. This year's date of 3rd June may contribute to a reduction in the number of candidates who sit the examination: S4 candidates have long-finished their standard grade examinations and have returned to normal classes to start their S5 curriculum, S5/6 candidates may be reacting to examination fatigue near the end of the exam diet.

## Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

### Pass mark data

Grade	No. of candidates	Percentage of candidates	Cumulative % of candidates
A	151	27.2	27.2
B	114	20.5	47.7
C	130	23.4	71.1
<b>Total A-C</b>	<b>395</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>71.1</b>
D	36	6.4	77.5
No Award	125	22.5	100.0

### Course Award Data

Grade	No. of candidates	Percentage of candidates	Cumulative % of candidates
A	145	26.1	26.1
B	99	17.8	43.9
C	107	19.2	63.1
<b>Total A-C</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>53.1</b>	-
D	34	6.1	69.2
No award	171	30.8	100.0

### 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.

### Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

At pass mark stage data for external assessment showed that  
A passes have fallen from 34.4% (2003) to 27.2% of entries  
B passes have remained at a similar percentage: from 21.2% (2003) to 20.5%  
C passes have risen a little: from 22.0% (2003) to 23.4%  
No awards have risen slightly from 22.4% (2003) to 22.5%. This excludes those awarded a D.

The general standard of candidates had gone down to some extent compared to last year. This accounts for the rise in the number of “no awards” to levels which are similar to those in examinations at Intermediate 1 level in the other Social Subjects.

In addition, centres may now have the opportunity and be more experienced in placing candidates into Intermediate 2 Travel and Tourism where in the past they were entered for Intermediate 1. There is, therefore, reason to expect that the client group may have changed.

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

### Pass mark data

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	27.2	27.2	151	35
B	20.5	47.7	114	30
C	23.4	71.1	130	25
D	6.4	77.5	36	22
No award	22.5	100	125	
			556	

### 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

There was a feeling expressed that the paper appeared more difficult than in previous years. This was accounted for in the agreed standards of the detailed marking instructions in the central marking procedures. The markers, as a group, were confident that the 'a priori' distribution of awards was appropriate.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

The markers felt that many of this year's group of candidates coped very well with the first part of the paper (Questions 1, 2 and 3) and were able to score very good marks in these questions. The second half of the paper was not done well (from Question 4) and this led to a general feeling among the markers that candidates were either running out of time or stamina. When this is added to the feeling that the candidates are generally less able as a group, it leads us to think that the candidates could be better prepared by centres so that they are able to tackle a resource based examination of this length.

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

The first part of the examination paper was done very well particularly Questions 1 and 3 – in this part of the examination candidates are dealing with resource based questions relating to the planning of holidays. Question 7 (The Impact of Tourism and Tourists) was also selected by some markers as being well done. Some markers commented that in some centres the candidates coped very well with the whole paper.

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

The majority of the markers felt that the section of the paper from question 4 to question 6 was not well done. Questions 4 and 5 are the atlas based questions which appear every year and vary little. Many candidates do not attempt these or score low marks. These questions should be relatively easy if the candidates are well taught and prepared for the examination. Candidates should be able to score well in these questions and a significant number do so.

Question 6 also seemed to present problems for candidates yet consisted of straight forward questions which asked for the candidate to recall a series of small parts of information from this unit (Dealing with Holiday Problems). A well prepared candidate should have found little difficulty.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

There is evidence from the candidate performance that many candidates were not expecting the demands of the paper. The paper was unexceptional this year and so the most important message from the examination is for centres to prepare candidates for the rigours they will face during the examination. Some time should be spent just before the exam period exploring recent past papers.

The second half of the paper is less resource based but relies more on the retention of knowledge and understanding. When centres are preparing candidates for this section they should ensure that the candidates have adequate knowledge of the following skills and are practised in the retention of selected information:

- Use of an atlas to recognise locations
- Use of an atlas to accurately plot locations
- Familiarity with the project destinations they have researched in Holidays at Home
- Familiarity with the project destinations they have researched in Holidays Abroad
- Revision of solutions to arising problems in Holiday Situations (If this option is chosen)

As always, there is the perennial pleading for centres to ensure that candidates are provided with an atlas and a calculator. We suspect that candidates just do not use the supplied atlas. In order to encourage this in future papers we are intending to ask them to name the publication on the cover of the exam book.