

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Travel and Tourism

Qualification area

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

Travel and Tourism: Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	671
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Number of entries in 2004	680
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General comments re entry numbers

No significant change in entry numbers. Annual entry appears to have stabilised at just fewer than 700 per annum.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards (pre appeal)

Grade	No. of candidates	Percentage of candidates	Cumulative percentage of candidates
A	149	21.9	21.9
B	139	20.4	42.3
C	145	21.4	63.7
Total A – C	433	63.7	-
D	45	6.6	70.3
No Award	202	29.7	100.0

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

The results indicate an improvement on 2003 with a significant increase in the pass rate and candidates achieving Grade A.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	21.9	21.9	149	42
B	20.4	42.3	139	36
C	21.4	63.7	145	30
D	6.6	70.3	45	27
No award	29.7	100.0	202	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

The distribution curve for the award is normal. Format and content of the examination was similar and the standard was generally considered to be about the same as 2003. Feedback received from centres and markers indicates that it was a very good paper which covered the course content equitably. Straight *a priori* cut off scores were therefore applied.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The general feeling amongst markers was that the standard rose this year with candidates showing a better grasp of key concepts. This is reflected in improved percentiles as well as the previously mentioned pass rates. There also appeared to be a much more uniform pattern of responses. If a candidate was very good they were very good throughout. Likewise if poor, they were poor throughout. There was no discernable difference between performance in sections B, C and D. As always there were a minority who had obviously not prepared for the exam.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Candidates scored consistently high marks in Questions 1 (a) and (c). Mapping skills seem to be improving - Questions 4 (a) and 6 (a). Very few candidates failed to obtain full marks in questions where answers could be extracted from the materials provided e.g. 3 (c) 4 (b) and 7 (a). Several markers were prompted to comment that question 7 (a) was too easy.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Question 1 (b) Corporate entertainment was not understood.
Question 1 (d) This question on incentive travel, which has been highlighted as an area of weakness in the past, was either very well covered or very poorly answered. This seemed to be dependent on the presenting centre and some are clearly not covering this properly. Special features identified were insufficiently exclusive.
Question 2 (e) Public sector was poorly explained.
Question 3 (b) Methods of promotion were often too vague with candidates not thinking about why.
Question 3 (f) Definitions of green tourism focused almost exclusively on the natural environment.
Question 6 (b) Candidates had difficulty in differentiating between cultural and historical attractions.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Centre should be advised that the pass rate has improved and that candidates were particularly well prepared in the following areas:

- ◆ General knowledge of industry terminology and definitions
- ◆ Basic knowledge of industry development
- ◆ Environmental issues

Map work has also improved considerably. Some presenting centres have obviously taught this section of the course well.

Candidates could be better prepared in the following areas:

- ◆ Definitions and examples of Incentive Travel, Corporate Entertainment and Public Sector
- ◆ Green Tourism – centres need to ensure that candidates are aware of community issues as well as the natural environment. Centres should familiarise themselves with the Green Tourism Business Scheme and Awards.
- ◆ Why and when to use specific methods of promotion
- ◆ IT systems - inability to give specific answers regarding the use of IT systems in Travel and Tourism premises. Centres are advised to refer to the original Higher Still support notes and note that only definitions in the unit and support notes will be accepted.
- ◆ Some candidates are still referring to the Scottish Tourist Board.

Spelling and grammar continue to give cause for concern although it is appreciated this is not the fault of travel and tourism teachers/lecturers.

Teacher estimates have improved but are still non-aligned with centres generally overestimating by 2% on average.