

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

**Technical Education**

**Qualification area**

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

**Intermediate 2 Graphic Communication**

## Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	984
Pre appeal	

Number of entries in 2003	1026
Pre appeal	

## General comments re entry numbers

There was only a small increase in candidates this year (4.1%). There would appear to be a move to introducing more Higher Still Courses in place of Standard Grade, part of this increase could be accounted for by the introduction of the Intermediate 2 Course in S4 in lieu of Standard Grade. However, it is interesting to notice that Standard Grade uptake has also increased (by 3.5%). The increased interest in the subject area is encouraging, however there are issues associated with understanding standards (there were 21 'new' centres this year) and inappropriate presentations (20% of candidates only gained between 35 and 47 marks) that have to be addressed.

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

Upper A	84
Lower A	69
B	58
C	47

### 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 Lowest mark for an Upper A has remained constant for the past three years indicating that the overall paper each year has been constructed with questions of very similar accessibility and degree of difficulty with regard to the A+ candidates. However, it was recognised that the 'pepper mill' question had a degree of difficulty that could be more challenging to the A, B and C candidates. Therefore A, B and C boundary grades were one mark lower than for 2002 and 2001.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

It was noted by the majority of markers that the responses from candidates were overall poorer than previous years. The poorest response coming from the knowledge and understanding questions. Some candidates' responses did not fully address the questions asked. Half of this years' Intermediate 2 candidates had no previous experience of Standard Grade Graphic Communication. It was clear that some candidates lacked the depth of knowledge required at this level and would have been better placed in at Standard Grade Foundation or in an Intermediate 1 course if it was available.

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

The main area where the majority of candidates scored above half marks was question 9 – sketching and rendering.

The Lip Balm question was fairly well done however, the degree of difficulty of this question meant that some students still found this question challenging. These students may be better suited to the Standard Grade Course (General level).

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

It was disappointing to see that many candidates were not fully aware of main stream British Standards with regard to line type. It was clear that the candidates had not fully understood the various lines used within the units. Candidates performed poorly with regard to British Standards in the 'line type' question (Q2).

Similarly, the pepper mill section proved to be very challenging to the candidates. Many candidates managed the section but failed to gain the marks allocated for the application of section lines according to British Standards.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

The overall results indicate that a fair number of candidates presented for the Intermediate 2 Course are not fully prepared for the challenge area of difficulty include:

- for knowledge and understanding it was apparent that a large number of students lacked the examination technique for answering theory type questions
- British Standards - candidates' continually poorly attempt this area
- building plans was fairly well done however candidates failed to identify the correct scale for the specific plans given.

It should be noted that the Intermediate 2 course provides progression from Standard Grade level, but it is too demanding for 'Foundation' level candidates. Candidates however performed well in Computer Aided Drawing, Computer Illustration and Desktop Publishing questions. This is an area that may be developed with the sketching question only appearing from time to time - further advice on this will be issued to centres.