

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

**Media Studies**

**Qualification area**

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

**Media Studies (Advanced Higher)**

### **Statistical information: update**

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	10
<b>Pre appeal</b>	10

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	15
<b>Pre appeal</b>	14

### **General comments re entry numbers**

The number of entries rose from 2002 by 5; which represents a rise of 50%, as the numbers are very small. This suggests that candidates, having passed their Higher, are keen to pursue the subject in the later stages of their school career (candidates are from schools only).

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

### Maximum mark 60

#### Minimum mark required for:

Upper A	50
A	42
B	36
C	30

### 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 grade boundaries remained the same as for 2002 because the examination paper was set at a comparable level with previous years.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

In general terms, candidates did slightly better in the examination over 2002, but fared slightly worse in the Dissertation.

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

Where candidates followed the advice regarding the Dissertation, ie to outline their method of investigation and acknowledge and evaluate their sources, candidates did well. Similarly in the examination paper, where candidates evaluated their method of analysis, they did best.

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

Those candidates who in the Dissertation did not follow advice to outline their method of investigation and evaluate their sources, fared less well than candidates who did follow this advice.

One candidate who tackled Section 1 fared badly because of not answering the question as set. This section carries a large proportion of the marks.

In the Analysis Section, candidates who did not evaluate their chosen method of analysis, but simply applied it, did not do well.

In the Production Section only one candidate tackled the scenario question, Question 2. Most candidates chose Question 1, but did not do well because they merely described what they did in the Production Unit, rather than evaluating the medium which best communicated with the target audience. One candidate ignored the wording of the question completely and repeated a response to previous Higher production questions.

Throughout the paper, candidates had difficulty if they reproduced prepared responses, instead of answering the questions asked. Some candidates are inclined to 'top-and-tail' their answers in response to the wording of the question, but the main part of the answer strays away from the point because it is fundamentally a learned response to the wording of a different question, recognisably from a past paper.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

Centres should advise candidates that in the Dissertation they should not write ‘all-there-is-to-know’ about a media topic. Candidates, as required by the Investigation Unit, must outline their methods of investigation and acknowledge and evaluate their sources of information.

Centres should also advise their candidates that Section 1 carries a large proportion of the marks for the external assessment.

Candidates should be advised that in questions about production, whether in Section 1 or 2, markers are looking for knowledge and understanding of production processes, as learnt in the Production Unit.

Candidates should be also advised that it is very important to answer the chosen question as set, to answer very part of it and that learned responses answering questions from previous years’ examinations will not gain them good marks.