

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

**Media Studies**

**Qualification area**

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

**Media Studies (Intermediate 1)**

### **Statistical information: update**

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	130
<b>Pre appeal</b>	109

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	210
<b>Pre appeal</b>	192

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

At Pre-appeals stage the number had risen by 83 over the previous year. This large rise indicates the popularity of the subject among students. There has been a big increase in presentations at S4 level.

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

### Maximum mark 40

#### Minimum mark required for:

Upper A	34
A	28
B	24
C	20

### 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 for 2002 have been retained for 2003 because it was felt that the external examination was of a comparable standard with previous years.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

In general terms, candidates did better in the Analysis Section than the Production Section of the question paper. The text chosen was one which was calculated to appeal to candidates at this level and to demonstrate the characteristics of tabloid newspapers. It seems that most candidates understood the tone of the piece and were unaware of the conventions of newspapers.

Where candidates did not do well in the Production Section, it was mainly because they had attempted to answer all questions, or did not spend enough time and thought on justifying their choices.

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

The Analysis Section was done best by candidates. The questions were worded appropriately and the text accessible to candidates at their level. It seems that centres had prepared their students well in conventions of tabloid journalism.

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

Candidates did not fare so well in the Production Section of the paper. Often this was because they spent too much time drawing or otherwise describing their 'ideal' media product and not enough time justifying the choices they had made.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

Centres should stress to candidates that in the Production Section, they should attempt only one question and that they should leave plenty of time for justification and not spend too much time on the creative process.