

Principal Assessor Report 2005

Assessment Panel:

Construction

Qualification area

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

Building Services Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of resulted entries in 2004	6
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	10
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General comments re resulted entry numbers

Only one centre entered candidates for the examination, a slight increase on the 2004 examination. 10 out of 14 entered candidates sat the examination.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 100	-	-	-	-
A	20.0	20.0	2	70
B	10.0	30.0	1	60
C	0.0	30.0	0	50
D	10.0	40.0	1	45
No award	60.0	100.0	6	-

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 arrangements evolve and change.

Comments on any significant changes in distribution of awards/grade boundaries

The distribution shows a wide range of ability within the candidates entered. The standard of assessment and approximate numbers of candidates remain unchanged.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Some candidates were unable to tackle the required number of Section B questions, an indicator that a proportion of candidates had not prepared adequately for the pressures of an examination. Writing skills of some candidates presented additional obstacles in answering specific questions.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Those candidates who performed well, scored highly in Section B questions.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Section A questions were poorly answered. Some candidates failing to tackle the question set. Q2 (b) on extraction rates highlighted most candidates inability to manipulate mathematical equations.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Candidates should be encouraged to develop sound question answering techniques. Centres should ensure that candidates entered for the examination have the necessary underpinning mathematical skills. As in previous years many candidates were inadequately prepared for answering examination papers.