

## Principal Assessor Report 2005

**Assessment Panel:**

**Engineering**

**Qualification area**

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

**Fabrication & Welding Engineering: Higher**

### **Statistical information: update**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2004</b>	29
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<b>Number of resulted entries in 2005</b>	28
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### **General comments re resulted entry numbers**

One less candidate than last year. Again only two centres entered candidates.

## Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 100	-	-	-	-
A	17.9	17.9	5	70
B	21.4	39.3	6	60
C	17.9	57.1	5	50
D	0.0	57.1	0	45
No award	42.9	100	12	-

### 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 spread of those who passed the exam almost identically mirrors that for previous years. There is a slight reduction in those who gained a C pass with a subsequent rise in those not gaining an award.

## **Comments on candidate performance**

### **General comments**

The paper covered all parts of the course as specified in the arrangements document. The candidates seemed more aware this year of the detail of the document regarding the weighting of the external assessment.

Candidates who took the time to read through the paper and correctly interpret the drawing generally performed well.

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

Candidates had been well prepared for a question on the calculation of carbon equivalent and this was generally well answered.

The question on Non Destructive Testing was also very well answered by the majority of candidates.

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

The question on surface preparation using Hot Dip Galvanising was poorly answered with more than half the candidates being awarded less than half marks.

As in previous years some candidates had difficulty in interpreting what was a simple drawing and consequently those candidates performed poorly in the question on a planning operations sheet.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

The quality of sketches, diagrams and the layout of the operations sheets showed a marked improvement over previous years.

Again the interpretation of graphical information requires improvement and candidates lose unnecessary marks by not understanding the detail in what in reality is a simple, straightforward drawing.

Candidates lose marks by not following the instruction to show all steps in obtaining answers by calculation – those who give only the correct final answer will gain only about half the marks available whilst those who give a wrong final response will not gain any marks. In this respect they may have been awarded some marks for correct preparation.