

Principal Assessor Report 2005

Assessment Panel:

Media Studies

Qualification area

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

Advanced Higher Media Studies

Statistical information: update

Number of resulted entries in 2004	8
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	2
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General comments re resulted entry numbers

Continued reduction in entry numbers because of difficulty of current Arrangements. General knowledge within the profession of low success rates thus far. Revision of Arrangements should change this.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 60	-	-	-	-
A	0.0	0.0	0	42
B	100.0	100.0	2	36
C	0.0	100.0	0	30
D	0.0	100.0	0	27
No award	0.0	100.0	0	-

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

No failure to achieve this year, but statistical sample too small to be meaningful.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

No candidate chose Section 1 of the question paper, probably as sensibly advised by their centre.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

All areas coped with better than previous years, but statistical sample too small to be meaningful.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

As in previous years, candidates did not attempt, in the dissertation, to evaluate their chosen method(s) of analysis. This is the most difficult area of the current Arrangements, but as it is still a requirement, candidates should be advised to tackle it. Also no candidate criticised sources of information, again a requirement not only of the Arrangements, but of Media Studies in general.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Candidates must be advised to criticise their sources of information in the dissertation. Not only is this a requirement of the Arrangements, but it is also a fundamental concept of Media Studies. Candidates are tempted to write a dissertation as a well-constructed essay, rather than a demonstration of their knowledge and understanding of the key aspects of Media Studies. Centres must advise candidates that they are not marked on their ability to write a well-made essay (as might be required for AH English), but on their ability to analyse a text using the theories and concepts of Media Studies, and to evaluate their tools of analysis and their sources of information. Especially in the investigative dissertation, candidates are inclined to forget the key aspects of Media Studies in their eagerness to produce a beautifully written essay on their chosen topic.