

Principal Assessor Report 2005

Assessment Panel:

Travel and Tourism

Qualification area

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

Travel and Tourism Intermediate 1

Statistical information: update

Number of resulted entries in 2004	556
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	534
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General comments re resulted entry numbers

The number of entries has fallen by 22 from the numbers of 2004. This is within the bounds of the normal range of entries which has steadied around 550.

Interest demonstrated at the launch events for the NQ Review in Travel and Tourism leads me to be optimistic about a rise in examination entries from 2006.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 50	-	-	-	-
A	36.1	36.1	193	35
B	18.0	54.1	96	30
C	18.5	72.7	99	25
D	4.3	77.0	23	22
No award	23.0	100.0	123	-

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 grade boundaries are 'a priori'. They are exactly on the normal range. It was felt that the 2005 examination was a very effective method for assessing candidates and distributing awards. This distribution of awards is the same as in previous years.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The examination produced a good spread of marks with the majority of candidates passing the paper well. All questions were answered reasonably well although the option questions (6 and 7) appeared more difficult. This might be a reflection on the length of the examination. It is a long examination and markers commented that candidates struggle to finish it in one hour. In a few papers candidates had not attempted questions 5 and 6 or 7.

Generally, the paper was answered well with most candidates answering all five compulsory questions and only one of the options.

(The time for the examination will be extended to 75 minutes in 2006)

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Most candidates were well prepared for the examination with few fails. Markers felt that in general it was a better performance than 2004.

Question 1 was a very straightforward introduction to the paper. This was a deliberate part of the setting strategy which was hoped would generate confidence in candidates and set the tone for the whole paper. This appears to have been successful.

Markers felt that candidates had a great deal of reference material to cope with, particularly in questions 2 and 3, which led some to think that it appeared quite difficult in relation to other papers. This view was not supported by the results the candidates achieved – as most candidates appeared to do really well in these areas.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Markers felt that the Geography based questions were done poorly by some – despite the confirmed use of an atlas by candidates. Related to this is the fact that questions 4 and 5 are fairly predictable, given that they are based on remembering essential classwork that has to be completed in units of the course - and yet many candidates are poorly prepared to answer them.

Only a small proportion of candidates were familiar with the working of a Roll-on Roll-off (RO-RO) Ferry. (Question 1e i)

Some candidates are still having difficulty with the conversion of currency and yet this also is fairly predictable and an essential part of course work.

The completion of the booking form and the selection of figures from tables of data to insert into it are fundamental to holiday planning. Questions containing this type of skill are a common feature of this examination and thus when they are tackled badly indicate a lack of candidate preparation in some centres.

Question 6a and Question 7c were both found to be difficult by candidates. Both were 2 mark parts of the option questions and therefore were well-matched headroom questions.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Some time should be spent just before the exam period exploring recent past papers. Centres should look carefully at the Specimen paper published as a result of the NQ Review in Travel and Tourism as there are significant changes in the structure of the examination in 2006.

When centres are preparing candidates for this examination they should ensure that the candidates have adequate knowledge of the following skills and are practised in the retention of selected information:

- Use of a calculator to convert Sterling to other currencies and back to Sterling
- The completion of a booking form and the selection of figures from tables of data to insert into it
- Use of an atlas to recognise locations
- Use of an atlas to accurately plot locations
- Familiarity with the project destinations they have researched in Holidays at Home
- Familiarity with the project destinations they have researched in Holidays Abroad

Many of the items in the above list appear as feedback every year.