

Principal Assessor Report 2005

Assessment Panel:

Travel and Tourism

Qualification area

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

Travel and Tourism: Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of resulted entries in 2004	680
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	604
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General comments re resulted entry numbers

Last year we stated that annual entry had stabilised at just fewer than 700 per annum. Surprisingly the number of candidates fell by approximately 11% in 2005. The reason for the drop in entries is not clear as the percentage split between schools and colleges is similar to previous years, although the percentage intake of S5 candidates is greater.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 60	-	-	-	-
A	14.6	14.6	88	42
B	15.1	29.6	91	36
C	24.2	53.8	146	30
D	7.3	61.1	44	27
No award	38.9	100.0	235	-

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 results indicate a decline in performance on 2004. This shift, which affects all grades boundaries, was predicted because the 2004 results, although achieving a good national rating, were slightly inflated to accommodate an easy question in one of the optional sections. The resultant distribution of marks for 2005 is roughly similar to 2003, which was expected.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Although there was no discernible change in the candidature, markers were generally of the impression that candidates performed less well than in previous years.
As in previous years, Section C was by far the most popular option choice.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Question 1 (b) It was pleasing to note that candidates are now much better briefed on the meaning of incentive travel.

Question 3 (b) (iii) Green tourism - some excellent examples given, although in the minority.

Question 6 was well answered on the whole with several markers reporting a continued improvement in mapping skills.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Question 1 (b) Very few candidates explained Destination Management Company correctly. In this question there was a choice of four from five terms so this shouldn't have prevented candidates from achieving full marks. However Charter Flights and No Frills Airlines, which have been covered in previous papers, were generally not well explained.

Question 2 was poorly answered, even by otherwise competent candidates. 2(d) was particularly poor mainly because candidates had not read the question properly. Many candidates gave definitions instead of a description of the role.

Question 3 (b) (i) The question stated 'with reference to specific activities' but this was rarely adhered to and consequently many candidates lost 2 marks.

Question 3 (b) (iii) Green tourism - although there were some excellent responses to this question, in general it was not well answered with few students picking up the full 2 marks.

Question 5 (a) The reference to 1000 delegates was not picked up by many candidates.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Centres should note that the general standard declined in 2005.

Candidates were well prepared in the following areas:

- European and Mediterranean Tourist Destinations

Map work has again improved.

Candidates could be better prepared in the following areas:

- Definitions and examples of destination management companies, no frills airlines, and charter airlines
- The roles of public, private and voluntary sector organisations in travel and tourism
- The development of the travel and tourism industry
- 'Green' issues in travel and tourism

Candidates should also receive guidance on reading examination questions properly

It is evident that some centres are still very reliant on the Higher Still teaching packs produced in the late 1990s. Centres are reminded that travel and tourism is a dynamic vocational area where changes and innovations are frequent. If qualifications are to have credibility and value outside the classroom, centres must keep up to date with industry developments and not be completely reliant on support packs which are certainly not exhaustive and are not updated every year.

Centres should also remember that the external assessment paper samples across the course. Therefore the same areas need not necessarily be examined every year.

Spelling and grammar continue to give cause for concern, especially with regard to future employability of candidates.

Teacher estimates are still non-aligned with centres generally overestimating.

Finally, in case any centre is unaware, new course arrangements commence in August 2005. The structure and content of the course have been changed and updated. The 2006 examination will reflect these changes and a new specimen examination paper is available on the SQA web site.