



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Russian
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Candidates generally displayed a competent performance this year. A wider range of marks was evident in Reading, though some unexpectedly fell short in Listening. Some Bullet Points in Directed Writing were not fully addressed, and there was some lack of breadth of expression in the Essay.

Areas in which candidates performed well

In the Reading Comprehension, with the exception of Qs 1(b) and 2(a), candidates performed well. Some Essays were very good, and both this paper and the Directed Writing showed some candidates' abilities to advantage,

Areas which candidates found demanding

In the Reading Comprehension, some candidates gave too few details for Qs 1(b) and 2(a). There was a lack of detail in some Listening Comprehension answers. Markers found some candidates' command of English poor in Paper I. Handwriting proved difficult in some cases.

In the Essay, some candidates showed an inability to form verbs successfully, and some were prone to inappropriate phonetic spelling.

Generally in the Directed Writing, many candidates lost marks due to their failure to address all Bullet Points, or to address them fully enough to gain the available marks. .

Some reasonably straightforward vocabulary caused candidates some problems.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres must ensure that **all** candidates know **fully** what the requirements of the papers will demand of them. In particular, all Bullet Points must be **fully** prepared for.

In the Directed Writing, dictionary skills can be weak. Candidates should be reminded that answers should be legible at all times and in all papers.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	36
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	52
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	86.5%	86.5%	45	70
B	3.8%	90.4%	2	60
C	3.8%	94.2%	2	50
D	3.8%	98.1%	2	45
No award	1.9%	-	1	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). 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 management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ 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, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this 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.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.