External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Russian
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

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

There were 12 candidates from three centres. The majority of candidates passed at A grade.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Most candidates performed well in Reading questions 1, 2 and 3.

In Listening, questions 1 to 7 were mostly answered correctly.

Areas which candidates found demanding

In Reading, candidates found question 4 more demanding. Several candidates made no response to some of the questions.

In Listening, some candidates found question 8, 9(b) and 10(b) demanding because of vocabulary difficulties.

Writing proved too demanding for some candidates. They were unable to form Russian letters correctly and used phonetic spelling. Some scripts were almost unintelligible, due to a combination if this and bad handwriting. In addition, some candidates showed a lack of understanding of what was expected in the Writing exam, and failed to complete the sections correctly.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres should make sure that candidates are aware of the format of the exam and what is expected of them.

Centres should also ensure that candidates are assessed regarding their ability to write in Russian before they are presented.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	17

Number of resulted entries in 2014	12

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	41.7%	41.7%	5	70
B	16.7%	58.3%	2	60
C	16.7%	75.0%	2	50
D	0.0%	75.0%	0	45
No award	25.0%	-	3	-

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.