



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Russian
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

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

12 candidates were presented for Intermediate 1 Russian in 2012. The results were mixed, ranging from excellent to very poor.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Overall, candidates performed best in Listening — only one candidate scored less than half marks. Questions 1 and 2, as well as the supported questions 4a and 5, were well done by most candidates.

Areas which candidates found demanding

In Listening candidates found questions 8a, 9a and 9b difficult. Basic vocabulary was not known. Candidates did not recognise points of the compass, types of transport, or common vocabulary such as 'ice cream' or 'lake'. Candidates often lost marks because their answers lacked sufficient detail to gain all the points.

Some candidates also found the Reading paper challenging. Many of the questions were not attempted by those candidates who did badly.

Most disappointing was the Writing paper, where many of the candidates were badly prepared and did not seem to know what was required of them. Sections of the Writing were incomplete, the Russian alphabet was sometimes not used or was incorrectly used, and there was interference from other East European languages on occasion. Knowledge of verbs was insecure in most of the scripts.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres which prepared their candidates well produced some excellent results and are to be congratulated. However there was evidence of several candidates who seemed to lack support in preparation, which was evident in how they tackled the examination.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2011	7
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	12
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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	25.0%	25.0%	3	70
B	25.0%	50.0%	3	60
C	8.3%	58.3%	1	50
D	8.3%	66.7%	1	45
No award	33.3%	100.0%	4	-

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.