



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Travel & Tourism
Level(s)	Higher

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

It was stated last year how heartening it was to see an increase in both presentation numbers and awards in relation to previous years. Although there has been a slight drop in both areas compared to last year, the overall trend is positive. The total number of candidates presented was slightly less than 2012. There was one new centre, giving a total of seven centres, one fewer than last year. There were no returning centres.

The percentage of candidates achieving Grade A–C was down on last year, but still significantly more than 2010 and 2011. Grade D and No Awards saw an increase, indeed the number of Grade Ds was the highest in the last four years, which was disappointing to see. No candidate achieved an Upper A, and there was a slight decrease in those gaining a Lower A Grade compared to last year. On a positive note there was an increase in the number of candidates achieving a B Grade.

Echoing last year's comment, praise has to be given to centres for once again preparing candidates for the exam. There are areas however that centres need to focus on to enable candidates to improve their attainment.

Areas in which candidates performed well

The examination elicited some very good responses.

Section A

- ◆ Q1a — most of the definitions were answered well, particularly 1a)iv).
- ◆ Q1c)i) and 1c)iii).
- ◆ Overall Q2 was answered very well and in particular d), e) and f). The 'Structure' diagram Q2g) was also done well, but one would expect a higher average mark.
- ◆ Of particular note for Q3 were part a) and e).

Section B

On the whole Q5 was answered well among the 63% of candidates who attempted the question — a), b) and d)ii) are worthy of particular mention.

Section C

- ◆ For Q7 part a), b) and d) were answered well
- ◆ For Q8 only part a) scored more than half marks on average.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Section A

- ◆ Q1a)i): candidates confused 'tourism' with 'tourist'
- ◆ Q1b): once again 'role and function' questions proved difficult.

- ◆ Q1c)ii) and d): 'current trends/schemes' scored less than 30 and 40% respectively of the available marks.
- ◆ Q2g): the structure diagram was not annotated as well as one would have thought.
- ◆ Q3d): the 'place' element was not understood very well.
- ◆ Q4c)ii): was the weakest response in this question.

Section B

- ◆ Q5d)i): many candidates did not give a detailed and specific enough answer to gain both marks.
- ◆ Q6a)iii): sadly, once again the itinerary question was answered poorly.
- ◆ Q6b)i) and iii) scored lowly, once again reflecting a lack of knowledge on aspects of the Scottish Tourism Product.

Section C

- ◆ Q7: mapping section was not answered as well as expected.
- ◆ Q8: part b scored only 37% of the average mark.
- ◆ Q8c)iii): candidates confused time difference with flight time.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

It is evident that centres are delivering a high standard of teaching which covers the course arrangements. Candidates' responses demonstrate breadth and depth in teaching of the course, and this can be seen clearly in exam scripts.

However, throughout the exam, certain questions are answered poorly by candidates, and it is these areas that need addressed as they are a recurring issue. Outlined below are key aspects of the course that candidates should be targeting to raise their attainment in the final exam.

Section A

- ◆ The role and function of organisations is a standard question and appears every year. Candidates should be equipped with at least five main points covering the organisations laid out in the arrangements.
- ◆ A question involving current trends in the industry is also standard year on year.
- ◆ Candidates should be able to draw and answer related questions for the Structure and Chain diagrams.
- ◆ Marketing questions can be thoroughly prepared for, eg candidates are often asked about the marketing mix or aspects of it – comprehension of price, place, product and promotion is crucial. The same applies to SWOT analysis type questions. Marketing / market research / evaluation are all fairly standard questions to expect. Customer service is another area where candidates should be gaining good scores.

Sections B and C

- ◆ To gain good marks for the Scottish Tourism Product part of the exam, candidates need to have a good general overview for the whole of Scotland. The itinerary should focus on

key tourist areas/routes of Scotland. Many candidates are writing too much information, which is unnecessary.

- ◆ The same criteria can be applied for questions 7 and 8.
- ◆ A reminder to centres that past papers from the last 3 years will give a good indication to candidates on layout of paper and typical questions asked, eg Q1a will be 'definition' style questions as a lead into the exam.
- ◆ It was noted that some candidates answered Section B or C first, which can be a fruitful technique as:
 - candidates are a lot 'fresher' when they begin to answer these sections, which traditionally, are not done as well
 - their answers are of a higher quality as they are not rushed towards the end of the exam
 - as they work through the rest of the paper, their answers may trigger additional information for either Section B or C.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	97
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	86
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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 200				
A	12.8%	12.8%	11	70
B	23.3%	36.0%	20	60
C	25.6%	61.6%	22	50
D	15.1%	76.7%	13	45
No award	23.3%	100.0%	20	-

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.