



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Travel and Tourism
Level	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

Examiners and markers felt the paper was fair and accessible overall.

The number of centres presenting remained at five. However, two of the established centres (one school and one FE college) dropped the course in 2011. These were replaced by two schools presenting for the first time. There was one more candidate than last year.

Disappointingly, there was a marked decline in performance in the 2011 examination. The percentage number of candidates achieving Grades A–C dropped to an alarming 32.9 per cent. The corresponding increase in no awards was mainly due to FE candidates performing poorly. FE candidates continue to provide minimal responses where more discursive commentary is required. Without doubt they were not sufficiently well prepared for this examination.

A detailed analysis of the examination paper and candidate responses was carried out, and two questions were deemed not to have functioned well. Grade boundaries were adjusted to make allowances for these.

Areas in which candidates performed well

None of the markers were able to identify areas where results justify special mention. However the detailed analysis did highlight some successful areas.

- Question 1 (a) (iii): Most candidates were able to define 'incentive travel'.
- (c) (i): Most candidates were able to name two low cost airlines.
- Question 3 (a) and (b): A majority of candidates were able explain why Westlands Farm Park had a market orientation, and to explain the benefits of joining the Visitscotland quality assurance scheme.
- Question 4 (a): The majority of candidates were able to suggest appropriate methods of promotion.
- Question 5 (b): Half the candidates choosing this question were able to locate tourist destinations on the blank map of Scotland.
- (c): Good candidates were able to name locations of specified attractions in Scotland.

Areas which candidates found demanding

- Question 1 (a) (iv): Most candidates were unable to define 'tourism' correctly. Not only is this very poor, but also quite surprising as many of the candidates had progressed from the Intermediate 2 Course in which there is intensive teaching of definitions and terminology.
- (b) (ii) Most candidates were unable to explain one service provided by Scottish Natural Heritage.
- Question 2 (a): A very high percentage of candidates were unable to link the needs of tourists to the chain of distribution. Most of the more able candidates wrote lengthy responses to this question. It was clear that they understood the chain of distribution as applied to travel and tourism, but did not understand what was being asked of them in this question. This is one of the questions that was deemed not to have functioned well and for which allowances were made in determining grade boundaries.
- Question 3 (d): Candidates were generally unable to apply SWOT analysis in context. However, markers also found it difficult to allocate the two additional marks as instructed in the marking instructions. Very few candidates met the requirement for the additional marks. Due to the uncertainty arising from the marking instruction for this question, further allowances were made in determining the grade boundaries.
- Question 4 (d): The majority of candidates found it difficult to set objectives. Very few were familiar with SMART targets.
- Question 6 (a) (iv): Very few candidates were able to devise a touring itinerary within Scotland. Feasibility and routing of itineraries was generally poor, and many could not cope with the request to start the tour from Perth.
- (b) (ii) and (iii): Few candidates were able to name a coastal path or industrial heritage sites in Central Scotland.
- Question 7 (a) Candidates' attempts to identify tourist destinations on a world map were very poor.
- Question 8 (a) (iii): Most candidates were unable to provide the time difference between Japan or India and the UK.
- (a) (vi): Very few candidates were able to name an event attraction in Japan or India.
- (b) (iv) Most candidates were unable to name the main gateway airport to New Zealand and provide the time difference between New Zealand and the UK.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

The more able candidates were once again satisfactorily prepared in the following areas:

- ◆ General travel and tourism industry knowledge
- ◆ Scottish tourism product knowledge, apart from itinerary planning

Centres should maintain the high standard of teaching in these areas.

There were many areas in which candidates' knowledge and skills were lacking:

- ◆ Application of the chain of distribution to the travel and tourism industry.
- ◆ Application of concepts of marketing and customer service to given case studies eg application of SWOT analysis, the Promotions mix, and the application of SMART targets in context.
- ◆ Laying out of touring itineraries of Scotland in accordance with industry practice.
- ◆ Development of a good broad knowledge of international tourist destinations.

Centres must use some of the additional 40 hours allocated within the Course to prepare and advise candidates on how to:

- ◆ read questions carefully and pay particular attention to the marks value of each question
- ◆ learn and develop detailed responses to the level expected at Higher

The desire expressed in previous years to encourage discursive writing is reiterated more strongly than ever. Weaker candidates must receive guidance on reading examination questions properly, ie careful reading of rubrics to avoid writing inappropriate responses. Centres are again encouraged to scrutinise the marking instructions provided on the SQA website for examples of the type of extended response required, particularly in 'headroom' questions.

The very high level of no awards is cause for concern. Centres must ensure that they are aware of the recommended entry requirements for the Course and adhere to them where possible.

Where less able candidates are given the opportunity to sit the examination, it is absolutely paramount that extra support is built into delivery programmes. This is particularly relevant to FE colleges that offer open access to Higher courses and programmes such as Travel and Tourism. This policy is not being criticised, but unless candidates are fully prepared for the examination, the result will always be a lower pass rate in comparison to other Highers taken predominantly by school pupils.

Centre estimates were not a reliable indicator of candidate performance.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Higher

Number of resulted entries in 2010	78
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	78
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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	6.4%	6.4%	5	63
B	9.0%	15.4%	7	53
C	16.7%	32.1%	13	44
D	10.3%	42.3%	8	39
No award	57.7%	100.0%	45	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that 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, though, very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Each year, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.