



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Urdu
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

Generally, the candidates performed very well in both papers.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Most candidates were able to answer the questions in the Reading and Listening components of the paper well.

There was an improvement in short essay writing in both papers, with some candidates producing essays of a very high standard.

There was an improvement in performance of candidates, many of whom had been well prepared for exam techniques.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Generally the range of questions discriminated well.

- ◆ Q5a) Reading and Directed Writing: A minority of candidates answered from the introductory two sentences not from the full text and lost marks. Those who referred to the full text did well.
- ◆ Some candidates showed a lack of awareness of exam techniques as their errors included answering on only part of the passage and attempting only the first and last words of the translation section.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- ◆ Teachers must remind candidates to use the line numbers, which prompt where answers can be found.
- ◆ Candidates should be reminded to translate the full passage, not just the opening and closing sentences.
- ◆ Candidates should answer the Reading and Listening sections components in English.
- ◆ Centres are reminded to follow the guidelines and emphasise the importance of exam techniques to candidates.
- ◆ Transliteration is not acceptable at Higher level.
- ◆ Candidates should be reminded to write in pen in the exam

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	66
Number of resulted entries in 2013	109

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	72.5%	72.5%	79	70
B	9.2%	81.7%	10	60
C	9.2%	90.8%	10	50
D	2.8%	93.6%	3	45
No award	6.4%	100.0%	7	-

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.