



External Assessment Report 2012

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, candidate performance was very satisfactory in both papers, and especially in Reading and Directed Writing.

Markers were pleased to see that the majority of candidates performed well in the external assessment.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Performance in the Directed Writing element is good. Markers were encouraged by some very good pieces of writing this year, covering all bullet points.

The Writing element of the Listening/Writing paper was also well done. Topics were well handled by the majority of candidates.

The Speaking results show clearly that candidates are being well prepared, with increased exposure to Urdu television and radio. The adult learner cohort of candidates performed particularly well in Speaking, while the candidate group as a whole demonstrated good development of the skills of Reading/Listening/Writing.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Overall the texts were fair and appropriately discriminating.

Listening/Writing

Q1 (a): a small number of candidates did not translate accurately the Urdu word for 'director' (of films). This question was worth one mark, and did not affect these candidates' overall performance in this paper.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres are advised to select carefully the appropriate level of presentation for their candidates.

Centres should ensure candidates are adequately prepared for the exam content and paperwork. In a few cases this year, candidates wrote on the question booklet for the Writing element, instead of using the lined answer booklet for their Writing response.

Candidates should also be encouraged to use the back pages of the question booklet to make notes during the Listening part of the paper, and then transfer their final answers to the answer booklet.

Candidates should be encouraged to write their answers as clearly as possible in the spaces provided.

Candidates should be reminded to write in pen in the exam.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2011	92
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	66
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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	87.9%	87.9%	58	70
B	7.6%	95.5%	5	60
C	1.5%	97.0%	1	50
D	0.0%	97.0%	0	45
No award	3.0%	100.0%	2	-

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.