



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Accounting
Level(s)	Intermediate 2

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

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

Candidates appeared to be very well prepared for the exam. Layouts were well followed and labels were in the correct place for all questions.

Performance in all questions has continued to improve on previous years. Problem solving parts of the questions were well handled.

In Section A of the paper — the Financial Section — Question 1 (the compulsory question) was based on the final accounts of a manufacturing public limited company. This question was reasonably well done. In the choice of practical questions in this section, the majority of candidates choose question 2. Theory in both questions was done reasonably well but not as well handled as the computational questions.

In Section B of the paper — the Management Section — Question 4 (the compulsory question) based on Decision Making. This question was handled well. The majority of candidates chose question 5 and performed very well in this question. Candidates also did well on the theory for the management section.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Question 1 – manufacturing plc accounts was generally well handled.

Question 2 – Partnership Accounts was very well done.

Question 3 – Club Accounts was handled far better than in previous years

Question 4 - This Decision Making question was very well attempted by the majority of candidates, better than in previous years.

Question 5 – Cash Budget was very well done as was the theory

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question 1

Part (a) – Some candidates forgot to include some labels. The double adjustment for Insurance was sometimes poorly handled

Part (c) – a number of candidates lost marks leaving out a couple of current liabilities. Candidates still do not include the number or value of shares and therefore cannot gain the maximum marks for this section.

Question 2

PART A

Part (b) – calculation of the appropriation was poorly handled by some candidates.

PART B

Candidates found Theory difficult, however some candidates did get a mark for naming the accounts but very few candidates could explain the meaning of the errors or purpose of a Trial Balance.

Question 3

Part B - the Bank Reconciliation was not very well handled.

Part C – Candidates found ratios theory difficult.

Question 4

Some candidates had difficulty explaining the reason for the order of priority.

The calculation of machine hours allotted to each toy and the number of units required to maximise profits proved difficult for some candidates.

Question 5

No problems with the question

Question 6

Part A

Some candidates found the service costing statement particularly the initial calculations prior to the statement difficult.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

When delivering the course centres should check the special instructions for specific actions regarding errors which are frequently made by candidates, eg headings, extraneous items and labels.

Time should be spent ensuring that candidates learn their layouts as this is crucial for success.

Time should be spent on theory as candidates are losing what should be straightforward marks as they appear unprepared for these questions. In particular candidates should be giving accounting answers when asked about software packages. In addition they should be able to explain simple terminology that they use in accounting statements.

Candidates should be trained to do questions in the time allocated to certain questions eg for this paper all questions have a 30 minute allocation therefore candidates should be given a timed mock exam for practice questions to ensure that they can do the exam paper in the time given.

Teachers should share advice given in this report and previous reports with candidates prior to the exam.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	191
Number of resulted entries in 2015	37

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 160				
A	54.1%	54.1%	20	107
B	16.2%	70.3%	6	91
C	16.2%	86.5%	6	75
D	5.4%	91.9%	2	67
No award	8.1%	-	3	-

For this Course, grade boundaries have been stable for a number of years and the intention was to set similar grade boundaries to previous years. The Course

assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

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.