



## External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	History
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

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**

This year, the last for this for presentation at this level, saw a marked reduction in the number of candidates. Almost all the candidates were entered at the correct level.

Markers noted that the standard of candidates was better than in previous years. They also commented that there was very little copying of sources.

## **Areas in which candidates performed well**

Candidates did well in selecting information from sources. Most candidates introduced their answers well by using the question as a stem. They were also more adept at recognising — and avoiding — distracters.

There was evidence of improvement in the ‘How useful is the source’ questions, with candidates often gaining marks for origin and content as well as some providing information regarding authorship. It was also encouraging to see an improvement in the use of recalled information in many answers.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

In the ‘How useful’ question, relatively few candidates attempted to comment on purpose or content omission. Secondary sources were often evaluated poorly with candidates assuming a secondary source was not useful. There was some improvement in dealing with these sources this year.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	670
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	57
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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 - 45				
A	35.1%	35.1%	20	31
B	40.4%	75.4%	23	25
C	21.1%	96.5%	12	20
D	0.0%	96.5%	0	17
No award	3.5%	-	2	-

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.