



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	RMPS
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 was the last year of presentation for this paper, with only eight candidates presented for Intermediate 1. Markers stated that the quality of response from candidates was very good with 7 out of the 8 candidates achieving an A-C pass. Candidates were obviously well prepared for the exam.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Candidates responded well to all aspects of the paper.

Areas which candidates found demanding

There were no areas which caused concern.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Although this is the last RMPS Intermediate 1 exam, the following advice is useful for preparing candidates for other RMPS assessments.

As stressed each year in previous reports, it is important that candidates are taught specific viewpoints and can write about the viewpoints they have studied such as Humanism, Utilitarianism, Feminism etc. Candidates giving generic answers when a specific response is required will only penalise themselves. The marking instructions (and the section in the Arrangements document 'Guidance on the Content and Context for this Unit') published on the SQA website can help to direct centres to some recognised and acceptable viewpoints. While the Marking Instructions do not provide full or conclusive answers to all the exam questions, they can be a useful resource for teachers in preparing their own marking instructions and as a guide to the kind of responses expected from candidates in the exam. This is a resource that centres should use to their benefit.

Centres should also remind candidates of the importance of noting the number of reasons asked for in a question and the number of marks allocated to each reason. Where there is no number of reasons specified, candidates can choose to present several brief reasons or to give fewer extended reasons. Questions beginning 'Describe' or 'Explain' require more information, eg identifying an item and then adding a fuller description. Centres should also remind candidates of the time restraints on them in the external exam and teach them how to give sufficient time to providing detailed answers to those questions worth more marks.

Centres will benefit from spending time helping candidates to develop analytical and evaluative skills. This can be achieved by helping candidates compare/contrast arguments in an issue, recognise the difference between making a statement and presenting a viewpoint supported with valid reasons, and teaching them how to judge the value of an argument and

present a valid conclusion. The latter is a skill candidates need to develop if they are to progress on to study other RMPS courses.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	79
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	8
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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 - 60				
A	50.0%	50.0%	4	42
B	25.0%	75.0%	2	36
C	12.5%	87.5%	1	30
D	0.0%	87.5%	0	27
No award	12.5%	-	1	-

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.