



## External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Retail Travel
Level(s)	Higher

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, once again, only one centre presented candidates for Retail Travel Higher.

All candidates' submissions were of an acceptable standard. Projects were presented with flysheet covers completed with student signatures to confirm that the projects were the students' own work. Summary marking sheets for each candidate along with evidence of marking was included within the projects. There was evidence of cross marking of a fifty percent sample on an internal form.

Evidence of the management of the project was supported by a comprehensive 'Master Pack' along with a delivery schedule and lesson plan.

Detailed checklists were utilised to support the marks allocation although, some adjustment of marks was required to align to national standards.

Information gathered by candidates through internet research was on the whole good, although it is recommended that this should be an appendix rather than in the body of the project, which should present evidence in the candidates' own words.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

All candidates tackled the Development stage in an organised manner with good use of Internet research and trade reference sources, including a range of tour operators' brochures to select appropriate products for clients' requirements. Recommended product choices were justified reasonably well and in most cases this was conveyed in a letter to the client, which was good practice.

Administration and Travel documentation were generally done to a good standard and supplementary information provided was reasonably good.

Preparation for the Evaluation stage was evidenced by the inclusion of candidates' A4 notes

## Areas which candidates found demanding

The Planning Stage could have been tackled better by all candidates. When considering the Aims and Objectives of the project, the approach was mostly to simply list the tasks the candidates would have to undertake, rather than setting SMART objectives to meet the aims of the project.

While it is considered beneficial to engage the assistance of Core Skills staff in preparation for the project and perhaps utilise the opportunity for cross assessing, clear guidelines have to be set by the Project Tutor in order that the demands of the project are satisfied.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

Since this is the final presentation for this qualification no advice is required for future candidates.

Changes in working practices due in no small way to the impact of interactive technology has necessitated updated qualifications with appropriate instruments of assessment.

However, it should be noted that those candidates who successfully completed this project over the years, to a good standard, will have found that the skills and knowledge gained, assisted them greatly in tackling the HN Qualification Graded Unit. Additionally, the project afforded those seeking employment a much better understanding of the customer care, retail, administrative and organisational skills that are required of those working in the travel industry.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	19
Number of resulted entries in 2015	9

## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 200				
A	0.0%	0.0%	0	140
B	77.8%	77.8%	7	120
C	22.2%	100.0%	2	100
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	90
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

The assessment functioned as intended. Therefore no adjustment to the 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.