External Assessment Report 201 2   Intermediate 1 Mandarin/Cantonese

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Number of entries in 2012: 56
Question papers contained a range of well-selected texts, with which candidates engaged very well, on the whole.
Overall performance was very good, and candidates had been well prepared. Generally, grades awarded greatly exceeded centres'estimate grades.

Candidate performance in Reading and advice to centres
- Candidates identified with the variety of topics and themes in the texts.
- Texts 1-3 were well handled.
- Performance in text 4 was varied, and candidates did not give sufficient detail. (E.g. A hospital instead of a large hospital)
- Centres should ensure that candidates are given opportunities to handle longer texts.
- Candidates must be encouraged to pay closer attention to grammar points.
  (E.g. use of particle 了), and be more precise when answering questions.

Candidate performance in Listening and advice to centres
- Listening was well done on the whole, particularly in areas relating to food and drink.
- Some candidates found the topics of transport and directions challenging.
- Some responses were excellent and some were disappointing. It is important that they do not presume the context of what they hear and avoid guesswork.
- Candidates should read the rubric. (E.g. some candidates chose one correct answer when they were asked to tick two boxes)

Candidate performance in Writing and advice to centres
- There were many outstanding responses in writing and many candidates wrote with flair using a good range of vocabulary and expressions, at times exceeding requirements
- There were a small number of disappointing responses where candidates simply did not respond to the task. One or two candidates wrote very little.
- Centres should ensure that candidates make a response in each of the sections
- Some candidates spent too much time completing the opening section and failed to write anything in the remaining sections.
- Candidates should have a clear understanding of SQA pegged mark descriptors and how these criteria are applied.
- Centres must reinforce the need for candidates to attempt ALL sections rather than focusing on perfecting one or two sections.
- Candidates should be aware of overusing 'to have' and literal translation. They should try to vary verbs to add variety to sentence structures
- Candidates should avoid over reliance on dictionaries.