



## External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Mental Health Care
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

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

For a second year, all centres chose the Dementia option for the Mental Health Care Higher. Entries were slightly up on the 2012 figure, demonstrating the continuing popularity of this project based national course.

Many centres accurately estimated candidate performance. However, a few centres continue to present work that will get 'no award', which shows that candidates who are clearly not working at the standard required for SCQF level 6 are still being presented for this qualification.

A minority of centres are still not following the assessment conditions, which are clearly stated in the Mental Health Care External Assessment document. One centre appeared to use 'open book' conditions in the invigilated section of the project, where only 200 words of notes are permitted. Another centre appeared to have used invigilated conditions throughout the completion of the project for all sections. This clearly disadvantaged the candidates. Another centre only gave the candidates 3–5 weeks to complete the whole project, which clearly impacted on their achievement. At least two centres submitted projects that had not been marked prior to submission, again contrary to the guidance in the document.

There continues to be issues relating to the word-count and the project. Centres should ensure that the candidates adhere to the word-count set down in the project brief, and the word-count should be clearly stated on the submitted work. Where too few words are used candidates miss valuable opportunities to gain marks. Too many words often lead to a muddled, unfocused presentation of evidence.

Again, where more than one member of staff has been involved in the delivery and assessment of the project, there was clear evidence that no Internal Verification took place prior to submission, leading to some candidates from the same centre having very different marks.

It is preferable for work to be word-processed and organised. One centre submitted handwritten work that was barely legible. Another centre submitted work that was not clearly labelled and completely jumbled, which meant that central markers had to judge which sections related to which part of the project. Where work has to be handwritten, it would be preferable for it to be completed with black ink. One centre submitted work in a myriad of colours, including glitter pens, which were very difficult to read.

Some centres were overly prescriptive with their guidance, which meant that candidates all wrote virtually the same information in their project. As a result projects appeared to be plagiarised and due to poor guidance all the candidates performed poorly.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

In general the standard of written English was better than in previous years.

The majority of candidates looked at the development of care in the community in the last 25 years with very few going far back in time.

Candidates had clearly received more input in evaluative writing, and this was demonstrated in the marks awarded in the Evaluation section.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Plan**

As with previous years, candidates were allowed to continue with completion of the project having achieved 10 marks or less for the plan. It is clearly stated in the project brief that no learner should be permitted to progress beyond the planning stage without a workable plan.

Candidates found it difficult to differentiate between an aim and an objective and as a consequence performed poorly in the plan.

Candidates incorrectly identified legislation at the planning stage and this was not picked up on at this stage. The development stage was completed using this incorrect information and candidates lost marks as a result of this.

A number of candidates failed to include a timescale or sources and methods of research.

### **Research Based Report**

Legislation continues to be an issue for a significant number of candidates. Legislation should be **correctly** identified, dated and **relevant** to the case study.

Too much emphasis was placed on describing and explaining the models of mental health care rather than applying them and explaining their relevance.

### **Case Study Report**

Candidates struggle with the identification of needs. Many identify ways of meeting needs or rewrite the case study scenario without identifying what the needs are. Using a recognised model of needs assessment also proved detrimental for some candidates as they were unable to identify the needs using the chosen model.

Candidates also found it difficult to write from the CPN viewpoint with many providing a job description for a CPN without any application to the case study scenario.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Conclusions were generally poorly written with a limited demonstration of what could be concluded from the research based report and the case study scenario.

Candidates also seem to struggle to make realistic and reasonable recommendations for the individuals in the case study scenario.

# Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

## General

- ◆ Centres should direct candidates appropriately by being familiar with the project brief, External Assessment Report, the Arrangements document and any available exemplar material.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that no candidate proceeds to the development stage until they have produced a plan that is realistic and workable.
- ◆ Staff estimating grades should be familiar with the content of the underpinning units.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that internal verification takes place prior to submission of the candidate work.
- ◆ The 'Your coursework' document should be made available to all candidates. Centres should ensure that all candidates fully understand SQA's rules on plagiarism.
- ◆ Centres should adhere to the conditions of assessment as not all sections of the project need to be invigilated, and also some sections are not 'open book'.
- ◆ Candidates should be capable of working at SCQF level 6 before being entered for the qualification.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that every project is marked prior to submission.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that the flyleaf for the project is correctly completed on both sides and ensure that the EX6 is **not** completed by the centre prior to submission.
- ◆ It is preferable, but not essential, that candidates submit their work in typewritten form. Where work has to be hand written the preference is to use plain black ink.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that the projects are organised and submitted in order.
- ◆ Centres should give the candidates sufficient time to complete the project.

## Project-specific advice

### Plan

- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates are able to clearly identify what an aim is and what an objective is.
- ◆ No candidate should be allowed to progress past the planning stage without a workable plan, and centres should appropriately support the candidate at this stage to revise the plan and complete the project.

### Research Based Report

- ◆ The development of care in the community should focus on the last 25 years.
- ◆ Legislation should be **correctly** identified, dated and **relevant** to the case study.
- ◆ Candidates should consider how the legislation has impacted on the provision of mental health care.
- ◆ The models of mental health care should be discussed in the 'changes in service provision' section of the project.
- ◆ Candidates should use valid and reliable sources of data when considering changes in public attitudes. Centres should discourage candidates from developing their own surveys/questionnaires.
- ◆ Candidates should ensure that they link the research based report to the case study scenario.

### **Case Study Report**

- ◆ Candidates should be directed to write in the first person as the son and the CPN or the husband and the CPN.
- ◆ Candidates should avoid rewriting or embellishing the case study when completing the viewpoints.
- ◆ Needs should be clearly identified as requested in the project brief. No marks are allocated at the stage for identifying ways of meeting needs.
- ◆ Candidates' knowledge and understanding of the underpinning units should be clearly evidenced in this part of the project.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

- ◆ Conclusions should be based on both the research based report and the case study scenario.
- ◆ Candidates should make realistic and reasonable recommendations for the individuals in the case study scenario based on the needs they have identified.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	327
Number of resulted entries in 2013	336

## 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	2.7%	2.7%	9	140
B	11.9%	14.6%	40	120
C	33.9%	48.5%	114	100
D	14.6%	63.1%	49	90
No award	36.9%	100.0%	124	-

## 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.