



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Art and Design
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

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 the first time since the introduction of National Qualifications, the numbers presented at Intermediate 1 dropped slightly. With the introduction of the new National Courses in 2014, this trend may continue, with centres possibly presenting at National 4/5 over the next two years.

The hard work of teachers and candidates was well rewarded with the largest percentage of upper A's gained since 2010. The overall quality of work from candidates at this level was of a high standard. Art and Design teachers and students are to be commended for their efforts in producing Units that display a wide range of approaches in both Expressive and Design.

Still life remains the most popular area of study in the Expressive Units; Portraiture and the Natural Environment show an increase in presentations. In Design: Jewellery, Fashion and Graphics continue to be the most popular choices.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Expressive

The work submitted in this area was exciting and frequently completed to a higher standard than required at Intermediate 1. A number of candidates choosing paint displayed competence in using this medium. There were strong themes in both Still Life and Portraiture displaying the candidates' enjoyment in their work.

Candidates reducing the scale of their work on the Investigation sheet allowed for more drawings and therefore they had more impact.

It was noted that candidates produced quality studies in a wide range of media. This included pencil, colour pencil and pastel.

Most Expressive Units showed continuity, relevance to the chosen theme and a considered final outcome.

Design

Design was, in the main, well done. Most candidates were able to follow a clear, straightforward design process. This relied on a Design Brief being clear and uncomplicated, allowing candidates choice in their Market Research and Theme, and teachers being able to advise on the suitability of chosen materials.

Candidates engaged well with 3-D design, particularly Jewellery. Also worthy of mention is Menu Cover design, using artists/architects as an influence (eg Gaudi), allowing for the use of bright, bold shapes.

Markers noted an improvement in the use of repeat pattern and textile design in candidates' work. There was more development and selection by the candidates, rather than a series of colour printouts from computer with one of the many colourways chosen as the final design.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Expressive

Very few markers commented on candidates having real difficulties in the Expressive area. The comments that were made regarding this were similar to those made in previous years: centres demanding too much of candidates at this level, adopting a formulaic approach for all candidates, or all candidates pursuing Portraiture. Some candidates are just not able to cope with this approach.

The Expressive Unit gains higher marks than the Design Unit. It appears that the vast majority of centres have a clear understanding of the requirements for this element of the course. There are very few centres submitting work where candidates use limited media, only do two compositions on the development sheet, or the final piece has no link with the previous work.

Centres should be aware of the competence of their candidates and school them in media that are most suited to their abilities.

Design

Comments made by Markers that were included in last year's report are still being repeated. For example:

- ◆ Centres demanding too much from candidates from Design Briefs that are too vague or too complicated.
- ◆ Centres allowing candidates to think they are doing fashion design when, in most cases, they are doing fashion illustration with no attempt at addressing fashion design issues like fastenings, pattern making, or sewing.

Similar comments to those made last year were made regarding candidates doing Graphics, CD covers, Games covers or Posters in that, candidates rely on the overuse of Photoshop to do the designing for them. Selecting one of many colourways is not seen as development.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Expressive

- ◆ Set candidates achievable targets and realistic first hand sources to work from.
- ◆ Expressive projects should relate clearly to a candidate's ability. Project areas like Portraiture and the Natural Environment can be too demanding for Intermediate 1 candidates.
- ◆ Incomplete folios, for example one sheet of drawings or a development sheet, should not be submitted as a Unit.
- ◆ An issue still occurring is centres using the same objects for a number of candidates in Still Life. This can only disadvantage candidates, as no personal choice is offered for their theme.

Design

- ◆ Set candidates achievable design products through a good brief relative to their abilities.

- ◆ The Development Sheet should display a clear layout with relevant links to the Research Sheet and the Solution.
- ◆ More 3D development explored for a 3D Solution.
- ◆ Centres should try and make Design projects more engaging and inspiring.
- ◆ Take the age of the candidate into consideration when creating briefs, ensuring they are appropriate and have a source of inspiration in Design.
- ◆ Discourage candidates from exploring disturbing and/or violent topics.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2012	3740
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	3651
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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 160				
A	56.8%	56.8%	2073	117
B	22.3%	79.1%	815	101
C	12.8%	91.9%	469	85
D	2.7%	94.6%	97	77
No award	5.4%	100.0%	197	-

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.