



Course Report 2016

Subject	Graphic Communication
Level	Advanced Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: project

At Advanced Higher the most popular option was for candidates to choose a technical graphics approach over the commercial and visual media graphics approach to their project, with very few centres opting for a combined approach.

Centres are advised that if candidates opt for the combined approach they must guard against candidates producing quantity over quality across the whole project (and not just at the graphic solution stage).

Whilst the project performed as expected, most of the centres verified were found to be marking too generously across all sections of the project.

This was usually towards the top end of the marks range, ie where the marking instructions may have been misinterpreted then there was a migration towards 'A' type marks — high 90's to the maximum of 120 marks.

Component 2: question paper

The question paper for the new Advanced Higher Graphic Communication consisted of two sections totalling 80 marks, and was structured in the same way as the specimen and exemplar question papers. It included both short and extended response questions, incorporating a good spread of topics which covered the main elements within the Course Assessment Specification.

There were a number of topics which were familiar from the predecessor course. However, these areas were not answered well in the question paper — particularly aspects of CAD and graphic technologies, where candidates were not using correct terminology when describing graphic techniques. New topics were also introduced this year — whilst some of these were not answered well, candidates showed a high level of understanding in the desktop publishing (DTP), brand identity and intellectual property rights areas.

The question paper was deemed to be fair and accessible for candidates in terms of course coverage and overall level of demand.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: project

The verification team identified a few centres where candidates were producing high quality CAD production drawings in response to their Technical Graphic brief, and similarly there

were instances of high quality responses to a Commercial and Visual Media Graphics brief and DTP components of the assignment.

There were instances where centres were too generous with their assessment decisions across the entirety of this instrument of assessment, rather than in any specific area.

Component 2: question paper

The performance by candidates in some topic areas demonstrated that centres had worked hard to cover aspects of the course to sufficient depth in preparation for the examination.

Candidates showed a good level of understanding of the built environment questions and interpreted the information well from the graphics provided. However, the duplication of answers lost candidates marks as some focused on the same features or survey types within specific questions.

Question 1 (d): (Built Environment): Candidates understood the graphics well and showed a good level of understanding as to how these would be used by both the sales team and construction trades.

Question 1 (h)(i): Candidates responded well, with the majority identifying bump, texture mapping and applied lighting illustration techniques.

Question 2 (c)(d)(e) (Digital testing methods): Candidates performed well in these questions. The majority successfully identified the two testing methods, (d) identified the target market and (e) ascertained the appropriate information gathered from the rendered images.

Question 3 (a)(c): These questions were done well by the majority of candidates. Most were able to identify the difference between vector and raster images. They were also able to recognise graphics technologies such as paper weight, paper opacity or glossy print.

Question 4 (a)(b)(c): Candidates appeared to devote sufficient time to analysing the graphics, then showed good depth of knowledge, writing detailed responses to the three areas within their answers. Candidate performance in the desktop publishing questions proved particularly strong. It was pleasing to see the level of understanding demonstrated by candidates related to the new topic areas — brand identity and intellectual property rights.

Candidates must pay particular attention to CAD terms and terminology given in the Course Assessment Specification. Candidates who used these correctly in Question 5 accessed a large number of marks and performed particularly well. Candidates who performed well in this question often supported their written responses with detailed annotated sketches.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: project

Analysis of the graphic brief and initial research

Candidates should specify their target audience clearly — not doing so will make it difficult to create an effective specification and/or a graphic solution. Some initial research did not focus sufficiently on the graphical requirements and had little relevance to the needs of the target audience.

Producing a graphic specification

Many of the specifications created by candidates were lists of tasks that they would complete. A valid specification should detail the particular graphics that will be created for the audience and any specific features required.

Some were not founded on any documented research, and others were found to be too vague to develop any meaningful graphic solution and there was no development of the specification to narrow down the solution achieved.

Typically, candidates did not include technical specifications that would be relevant to the development of a graphical solution. These technical specifications should have been identified in the initial research. Not including required technical specifications makes it challenging for candidates to proceed with the project.

Project planning

For many candidates, the project planning made no reference to intermediate target setting. The candidate must demonstrate key targets and demonstrate how they will help achieve the requirements of the target specification, and also specify the resources that would be required at each stage.

The project plans were limited to a range of graphics candidates intended to produce, but these were not justified against the specification, or time taken.

Project plans had been created, but some candidates had not made any justification for varying or detouring from the plan. Varying from the plan is acceptable. However, candidates should make a record of why they had to do so. Candidates may record this within the project or their record-of-progress, which was all too often missing or not evident.

Carrying out and using ongoing research

Many candidates' ongoing research did not support the development of the graphic solution; there was insufficient justification for the research conducted and how it contributed to the project. Some had little relevance to the needs of the target audience and did not reference their sources within the research materials, and/or it was insufficiently detailed to achieve the development of a graphic solution.

In some cases, no information or conclusions impacting the graphic solution could be drawn from the research.

Using preliminary graphic techniques to communicate ideas

In a high number of cases the preliminary graphic techniques were valid for creating a graphic solution; but the quality was substantially lower and showed more limited skill than would be expected at Advanced Higher level and for the mark awarded.

Producing a range of graphic ideas or concepts

Some candidates did not demonstrate a range of possible graphic solutions to satisfy the needs of their chosen target audience(s), and others did not show any development of their idea — linked to ongoing research — that would allow the creation of a valid graphical solution or solutions.

Most candidates had not shown a range of ideas, or developed their initial proposal in a manner which would warrant the marks awarded.

Producing a graphic solution

Centres are reminded that for a combined approach they must assess the strongest element of the graphic solution — technical graphics or commercial and visual media graphics — rather than combining the two marks. It cannot be an aggregate of the marks for each approach.

Generally, the technical graphic solutions lacked significant details in terms of dimensions, scale, tolerances, and view types, required for the target audience.

The application of drawing standards was weak for this level of presentation.

For commercial and visual media, graphics solutions lacked significant details in terms of screen resolution, paper size, file types, colour palettes, bleed, crop or registration information. The target audience would require this information to produce this graphic type.

Some graphic solutions did not address the brief or specification, and the overall quality of the graphical solution was insufficient to warrant the mark awarded for Advanced Higher level.

Planning a client presentation

Typically, the planning for the presentation did not reference how the graphic solution would be suitable for the target audience, and in many cases it was a presentation of the candidate's journey through the project — which would only have been suitable for the teacher and would have been of little interest to the audience initially identified.

Some planning for the presentation did not reference the type of presentation that would be created: verbal, audio/video, public display or electronic or reference the equipment or the

resources required to produce and present the presentation. This is a crucial decision during the planning process and should be recorded.

Producing a client presentation

Some presentations did not address the needs of the target audience. The candidate presented information that would have little relevance for the audience, such as slides of the progress through the project.

Some presentations lacked focus. A client presentation should address the specific requirements of that client and how the candidate has generated a solution.

Evaluating the solution and the process

Typically, the evaluation did not reference how the graphic solution achieved the requirements of the target audience and did not evaluate the choices made and processes used during the project to create the graphic solution.

Some evaluations only described the tasks and process carried out by the candidate, not their effectiveness in delivering the desired outcome

Component 2: question paper

Question 1 (b) Some candidates picked up marks for describing an aspect of 'visualisation', but most neglected to make reference to how the graphics could achieve a 'positive public image'.

Question 1 (h)(ii): Candidates responded well with the majority identifying either Image Based Lighting/High Dynamic Range Imagery (IBL/HDRI) or final render in a realistic environment, although some candidates could not acknowledge both.

Question 2 (a): Few candidates achieved full marks for this question. Most identified the STL file, and some made reference to a specialist piece of software connected to a 3D printer.

Question 2 (f)(g): Candidates lacked knowledge of VRML. Few were able to correctly describe its use and advantages over other graphic media files.

Candidates need to show a broader understanding of printing technologies and techniques. The level of knowledge provided in candidate responses to Question 3 were limited and lacked depth.

Question 3 (b): (Colour match systems) most candidates acknowledged 'CMYK' and 'Pantone', but not how it is universally understood. The use of the 'dropper tool' is specific to a software package and not the appropriate way to get an exact colour match.

Question 3 (d): Few candidates gave a full explanation of the process 'offset lithography' and the steps undertaken to produce the flyer.

Question 5 (a), (b) and (c): (3D modelling) Overall, candidate performance was poor. Candidates were unable to access marks appropriately by sketching alone as they lacked detailed explanation of the steps and techniques required to produce the component parts. Candidates who performed better generally produced answers that were extended responses accompanied by a sketch or annotation. Inconsistencies were evident where candidates interpreted dimensions wrongly and lacked specific terminology and appropriate use of it. Terminology specific to software packages cannot be used, and marks were awarded only for terms given in the Course Assessment Specification.

Question 5 (d): Some candidates did not use the correct terms 'centre axis' or 'mate'. As with all areas described within Question 5, centres must make it clear to candidates what the accepted CAD terms are, as detailed within the Course Assessment Specification, and only use these terms.

Candidates should pay particular attention to command words and must read questions carefully. Some candidates did not fully access marks due to lack of detail or description where an extended response was expected. Centres are reminded to reinforce the importance of **Describe**, **Explain** and **Justify** command words and how a candidate should respond to these types of questions.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: project

Centres should be mindful of the assessment conditions set out in the Course Assessment Specification.

The project will be carried out under open book conditions, but supervised to ensure that the work presented is the candidate's own work.

Whilst the assessor may give candidates support and guidance, where any significant amount of support is provided, this should be reflected in the marks awarded. The candidate may be provided with feedback to help them move onto the next stage of the project, but they cannot be re-assessed on stages already completed to improve their mark.

The project is designed to discriminate between candidates, and therefore would be expected to provide a wide range of marks. Stronger candidates should be able to complete the project successfully with minimal support and guidance. Weaker candidates may not be able to complete all aspects of the project within a reasonable time, or may require significant assistance, and so would achieve a lower total mark.

Once the assignment has been completed and assessed, it cannot be returned to the candidate for further work to improve their mark.

Centres are advised that the Marking Instructions have been revised to add clarity and guidance, and that these must be used for candidates presented for Advanced Higher in session 2016–17.

Component 2: question paper

To prepare for next year's exam, centres are advised to make sure candidates are aware of the correct Graphic Communication terms as given in the Course Assessment Specification. It was clear that candidates understood the steps they may undertake to produce their Graphic Communications; however, they were not mindful of the specific terminology and consequently used incorrect generic terms or used the command from the specific software package they used. No marks are awarded for any term not given in the Course Assessment Specification.

When producing an explanation of CAD techniques, centres should encourage candidates to use a sketch to support their answer — this often helps articulate the written response given by the candidate. Candidates should also clearly define any final sketches.

Where more space is required for a response, candidates can make use of the additional sheets supplied within the question paper. Where candidates wrote over margins and into the next question, this caused confusion and difficulty in interpreting their answers.

Centres must make sure all candidates are aware of all topic areas within the Course Assessment Specification and that they familiarise themselves with each area of these Graphic Communications (such as Motion Tweening and VRML).

Candidates should read all questions carefully and interpret the command words appropriately.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	0
Number of resulted entries in 2016	671

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	11.0%	11.0%	74	150
B	23.4%	34.4%	157	130
C	31.1%	65.6%	209	110
D	11.6%	77.2%	78	100
No award	22.8%	-	153	0

Decision Making Record Statement:

The overall demand of the course assessment was lower than intended and so all grade boundaries were set higher than intended.

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.