



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Mental Health Care
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

As with previous years, all presenting centres chose the Dementia option for the Mental Health Care Higher Project. During this last year of the qualification there were substantially fewer submissions than in previous years.

Centre estimates varied in consistency, highlighting the need for Internal Verification where more than one member of staff is delivering an externally-assessed project. Several projects were not marked prior to submission. More than a few centres had not imposed the word limit on candidates.

There was evidence of candidates being guided, which resulted in several candidates producing almost identical pieces of work. Unfortunately these candidates had also been misdirected, and this was reflected in their overall results.

Areas in which candidates performed well

In general the standard of the written work was at an appropriate level for SCQF Level 6.

The majority of the candidates passed the planning part of the project, which indicates that centres were not allowing them to progress without a workable plan.

The research based report also acknowledged recent policy and legislation changes that were relevant to the case study scenario.

Candidates evaluated their performance effectively.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Most submissions were outwith the word limit.

Plan

Whilst the majority of the plans were well thought out, a number of candidates did not implement the plan when it came to completing their project, missing out key information in parts.

Research Based Report

Some candidates missed out pieces of key legislation. Whilst they provided accurate and relevant descriptions of the legislation, they omitted to link it to the case study family. Candidates continue to struggle with the changes in service provision and the impact of the changing models of mental health.

Case Study Report

The needs section of the project continues to be poorly completed, with candidates still not clearly identifying individual needs. Candidates wrote about how to assess needs and how to meet needs, but failed to state clearly what the needs were. Candidates also found it difficult to accurately write from the viewpoint of the Community Psychiatric Nurse.

Conclusions and recommendations

Recommendations were generally relevant and appropriate, but candidates struggled to draw conclusions and this was generally poorly completed.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	183
Number of resulted entries in 2015	132

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	2.3%	2.3%	3	140
B	17.4%	19.7%	23	120
C	37.1%	56.8%	49	100
D	16.7%	73.5%	22	90
No award	26.5%	-	35	-

The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to 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.