



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Care Practice
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

Entries for this award have fallen for the third consecutive. This could be because of the reduction in centres presenting — there were only seven presenting centres, compared to eight in 2013 and 12 in 2012.

Authentication of the activity continues, on the whole, to be appropriately managed. This is to be commended given the pressures on centre, candidates and particularly placement providers.

Authentication is essential for the safety of service-users and candidates. Some candidates provided reflective accounts that were not authenticated by the observing supervisor. Some candidates did have the reflective account signed by the supervisor but it was obvious from the candidate write-up that the activity was carried out without supervision. This year a number of malpractice cases were notified by markers.

There is good evidence to suggest this current external project is assisting candidates to achieve positive results when they keep to the requirements and provide good evidence for each stage. Tutor support and direction is key to this process by ensuring candidates are guided to complex activities and away from routine group activities.

In recent years, centres have been using appropriate care environments. This year there has been a slight rise in the number of candidates presenting projects that are not care-based despite the environment offering the opportunity to do so.

Centres should ensure they are using the Tutor Marking Scheme to ensure that Tutors/Lecturers are marking to the same criteria as external Markers.

Areas in which candidates performed well

The comments here remain the same as those noted in the 2013 EAR Report.

Plan

- ◆ Some candidates did well at the planning stage where they assessed specific need for an individual service-user and highlighted benefits to them from the proposed activity.
- ◆ On the whole planning was completed more effectively than the development stage of the project.

Development

- ◆ Some candidates made very effective use of their updated working document submitted in this stage by highlighting and explaining changes and adding new activities.
- ◆ Most of the activities presented had been observed and authenticated by the same individual.

- ◆ Some of the better candidates were able to choose a very individual activity to suit the assessed needs of the service-user — these activities appeared to have a hugely positive impact on the service-user and the candidate.

Evaluation

- ◆ Candidates tended to do well in highlighting what was successful or not within the project, and were able to say how things could have been improved.
- ◆ Most candidates were able to say what they learned from the project.
- ◆ On the whole evaluation was completed more effectively than the development stage of the project.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Plan

- ◆ Similarly to previous years, many candidates planned a routine activity which is completed as part of placement routine. A number of candidates planned this activity and then sought service-users 'who wanted to join in'. These activities were ineffective for assessment of individual need.
- ◆ There was very little evidence of research of the individual need of the service-user and an explanation of why the activity was therefore appropriate. A high number of candidates assessed needs that were general to any individual and therefore were not needs-led for the individual concerned. This led to lower mark allocations for Research Assessed Needs of Service User (6 marks) and Expected Benefits to Service User (8 marks).
- ◆ The Working Document was very poorly completed. This document is to cover the planning for the **project** and not solely for the **activity**. Very few candidates completed this in relation to the project.

Development

- ◆ This section was poorly completed by a reasonable number of candidates. This was due to evidence not being submitted or to submitted work not meeting the standards. The working documents, on the whole, did not clearly show where updates and explanations of additions and amendments had been made.
- ◆ In many cases there was not enough evidence of an actual relationship being built with service-users or staff members. A number of candidates only discussed building a relationship with the service-user during the activity, which is not acceptable.
- ◆ A high number of candidates presented little or no actual evidence of feedback for the activity. Many only commented in their write-up that it had gone well.
- ◆ Some candidates presented photographs with no evidence of permission being sought to allow them to do so and/or whether appropriate to do so. Many candidates talked about reading case notes, which would seem inappropriate given the nature of their placement.
- ◆ Issues of confidentiality presented serious concerns this year at central marking with some candidates presenting information which clearly identified the service-user. This included presentation of parts of actual placement care plans, and information within the signing of consent forms and feedback forms for the activity. SSSC Codes of Practice are therefore not being applied effectively in practice.

- ◆ Language issues from a number of candidates remains high, as in previous years. This language such as 'wheelchair bound', 'toileting' and 'sufferer' is not reflective of the value standards of SSSC Codes of Practice.
- ◆ A high number of candidates did not effectively present the ability to **reflect** their practice, presenting a description which does not meet the standard expected at Higher.

Evaluation

- ◆ A high number of candidates repeated/narrated what they had done and therefore Evaluation and Constructive Criticism skills were not presented well.
- ◆ Constructive Criticism (8 marks) is for the **project** and not only the activity.
- ◆ Identification of Strengths and Weaknesses is for the planned **activity**. Many candidates identified these in relation to self.
- ◆ Few candidates presented information on the **impact** of Practical and Interpersonal Skills.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- ◆ Ensure you are using the most up-to-date Marker Guide 2014.
- ◆ Ensure candidates undertake a complex **care** activity. If making use of routine activities, encourage the candidate to concentrate on assessing the specific needs of one particular service-user. More usefully, encourage the candidate to undertake an activity specific to one service-user.
- ◆ Direct candidates to understand the difference between the **project** and the activity.
- ◆ Provide a working document for the plan and include an amended and updated copy of this within the development stage. This document should include key tasks to be undertaken that will lead to the completion of the **project** — not just the activity.
- ◆ Ensure candidates **apply** the SSSC Codes of Conduct in relation to the appropriate value base and maintenance of confidentiality.
- ◆ The activity must be observed and authenticated by the member of the care staff who witnessed it by signing the actual reflective account. SQA documentation has a signature box at the bottom of each page. If typing up the activity, candidates should include the signature box as a footer.
- ◆ Candidates must provide actual evidence of feedback — it is not enough only for the candidate to say things went well.
- ◆ Ensure candidates use reflection and evaluation through the development of these skills.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	190
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	145
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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 100				
A	12.4%	12.4%	18	140
B	31.7%	44.1%	46	120
C	36.6%	80.7%	53	100
D	6.9%	87.6%	10	90
No award	12.4%	-	18	-

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.