



External Assessment Report 2015

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

This was the final year for Care Practice Project Based Course at Higher level. In 2015 Care Practice Higher was offered along with the new Care Higher, which may account for the reduction in entries this year.

The Care Practice Higher Project Based Course has remained unchanged for a number of years. There have been no changes to the Project or to the Marking Guidelines from previous years. It remains a project where candidates show knowledge and skills through the process of Planning, Development and Evaluation of a chosen care activity.

It was disappointing to note that a very high number of candidates did not present good knowledge of Positive Care Practice, Scottish Social Services Codes of Practice, and National Care Standards. Many candidates adhered poorly to the rights of service users in relation to protection of confidentiality — for example, many candidates referred to reading care plans when they are in student role and are in attendance for a relatively short period of time. Other examples included the production of documentation such as copies of care plans that clearly identified the service user. Photographs were presented which identified the service user with no indication that permissions had been sought and/or gained.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Plan

- ◆ Some candidates did well at the planning stage where they assessed specific needs for an individual service user and highlighted benefits to them from the proposed activity.
- ◆ Some candidates used the working document well. It had a clear flow of tasks to be undertaken to complete the activity although this document was to continue to the completion of the project, which fewer candidates achieved.
- ◆ On the whole, planning and evaluation were 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.
- ◆ Good examples of actual evidence feedback in the form of questionnaires, letters of support from staff members, comments from supervisors.

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.

- ◆ On the whole, evaluation and planning were completed more effectively than the development stage of the project.

Areas which candidates found demanding

There were a high number of candidates who did not perform well this year with the project. The area that candidates found most demanding was the Development Section — a substantial number of candidates did not cover all of the evidence requirements for this section, tending to give a short summary of the activity as it happened without detail of the requirements of this section.

Plan

- ◆ A high number of candidates planned an 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 everyone and therefore were not needs led for the individual concerned.

Development

- ◆ A substantial number of candidates did not complete this section well. This was due to either evidence not being submitted or submitted work not meeting the standards to be credited higher marks. A large number of candidates only gave a narration of the activity or stated skills and qualities used. There was little or no reflection provided.
- ◆ In many cases there was not enough evidence of an actual relationship being built with service users or staff members prior to the activity taking place.
- ◆ Issues of confidentiality were raised as some candidates presented photographs with no evidence of permission being sought to allow them to do so. Many candidates talked about reading case notes, which would seem inappropriate given the temporary nature of their placement.
- ◆ Very little explanation of Legislation especially in relation to Positive Care Practice.
- ◆ Language used by a high number of candidates was inappropriate — such language as 'wheelchair bound', 'toileting' and 'sufferer', which goes against the value base of care practice.

Evaluation

- ◆ Candidates tended to recount what they had done rather than evaluate or offer constructive criticism of the process.
- ◆ Many candidates who offered criticism did so in relation to the activity and not the project as a whole.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

This was the last year of the Higher Care Practice Course. If centres wish to present candidates for the new Higher Care Course in future years, they should familiarise

themselves with all appropriate SQA documentation to enable them to support their candidates effectively. There will be guidance provided in the 2015 Course Report for the new Higher Care course.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	145
Number of resulted entries in 2015	118

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	11.9%	11.9%	14	140
B	25.4%	37.3%	30	120
C	28.0%	65.3%	33	100
D	6.8%	72.0%	8	90
No award	28.0%	-	33	-

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.