



## External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	<b>Care</b>
Level	<b>Higher</b>

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**

Feedback from centres indicates that the 2011 exam covered a broad range of areas from the Course and was fair and straightforward with clear wording.

The exam performed better this year and there are a number of possible reasons for this. For the 2011 paper, the setting team looked at ways of widening the opportunities for candidates to access marks and tried to ensure that the widest possible range of the Course was covered, and that Course content was not sampled as specifically as it has been in the past.

This is the fourth year of the Course and so centres are more familiar with the Course. Centres have perhaps reflected on advice and guidance about preparing candidates given in previous external assessment reports. Candidates seemed to have been better prepared, in that most candidates attempted all questions, whereas in previous years some candidates did not attempt some questions. However, there were still a number of candidates who received no marks for some questions and single-figure marks for each section.

Since the first year of the revised Course in 2008, the question paper has exemplified various ways of interpreting the Course Assessment Specification. For instance, only one small case study was included in the paper this year, so there was less material in the paper to read and for candidates to process than there has been in previous years. This may have resulted in candidates having more time to read the question paper and to consider their answers.

The Principal Assessor received a number of queries from centres throughout the year about what legislation should be taught. The health and social care sector is constantly changing and teaching should reflect this. The Care Higher Arrangements document (page 39) refers to 'relevant legislation' as 'legislation that is currently in use' and provides a list of legislation that was relevant at the time of writing the document. Centres should always teach the most up-to-date legislation — that which is 'currently in use' — but candidates will not be penalised for referring to previous legislation in the first year or two of a new Act being introduced, as it takes time for centres to introduce the new Act into teaching notes, VLEs etc. A question specifically on a new piece of legislation would never be asked in the exam for this reason. It is the responsibility of each centre to update any notes and handouts they provide to learners.

## **Areas in which candidates performed well**

Question 1 (c): Most candidates answered this question well, as there was a full choice of theorists to choose from. However, in some cases candidates referred to key features of more than one theorist and did not relate the theory to an older adult moving into a care home.

Question 1 (d): Many candidates answered this question well and picked out relevant defence mechanisms from the short case study. This question sampled quite a detailed aspect of the Course and so it was good to see that so many candidates had been well prepared to this level. A number of candidates wrote about the psychodynamic approach in general, but they did not gain marks for this unless it was related to the question by linking back to a discussion on defence mechanisms.

Question 2 (a): This question has been used in past papers and it was heartening to see that it was much better answered on this occasion.

Question 2 (d): Candidates responded well to this question on the reasons why it is important to demand equal rights for women. They managed to answer it in a variety of interesting ways, rather than just repeating all they knew about the feminist approach.

Question 3 (a): There was a range of relevant answers given to this question and it was good to see candidates able to discuss and justify their choices. The four Knowledge and Understanding (KU) marks available for this question could be split 3:1 if one of the two aspects chosen was written about very well and the other was less well developed. However, the answer for one aspect would have to be very strong and developed to gain 3 marks.

Question 3 (b): Although this question was very well answered in general, a number of candidates did not read the question properly and chose to write about other principles underpinning the National Care Standards, rather than the two that were specifically asked for. Consequently, they did not gain marks for their answers.

Question 4 (a) (i): The integration question was answered better than it has been in previous years. The majority of candidates made an attempt to answer the question and some answers were of a very high standard. The candidates who followed the structure set out in the question — answering each bullet point separately — tended to get better marks, perhaps because they could see more clearly how much they had written for each point.

Question 4 (a) (ii) This question was very well answered, despite the fact it was the last question in the section. Candidates displayed a breadth and depth of knowledge in the variety of ways they answered this question and it allowed them to demonstrate learning from throughout the Course.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

Question 1 (a): Most candidates attempted this question, but it was slightly disappointing that more were not able to gain higher marks for a very straightforward introductory question. Some candidates gained marks from writing about relevant individual theorists, if their work included key features of the approach as a whole. Although only two key features were asked for in the question, some candidates wrote about more than two. In these circumstances, they are only marked on two of the features they discussed. Candidates should be encouraged to read each question carefully, so they can maximise their chances of gaining all available marks.

Question 1 (b): Candidates gave a variety of interesting answers to this question, but many were unable to do more than give definitions of nature and nurture, and so did not access the Analysis, Evaluation and Application (AE/App) marks.

Question 2 (e): As is often the case with the last question in a paper, this question wasn't answered as well as others in the Sociology for Care section. There were a number of points that candidates could make to discuss the role of legislation in addressing inequality, but many candidates did not manage to give more than a brief definition of inequality and a description of a piece of legislation. Candidates did not have to refer to specific pieces of legislation to gain full marks in this question, but those who did only gained marks if they

linked features of the legislation to how they addressed inequality. A description of a piece of legislation in itself was not enough to gain marks.

Question 3 (c): Although a number of candidates answered this question on Egan's Skills Helper model well, some candidates wrote a generic answer which included all three stages, rather than focusing on one stage, as requested, and therefore did not tend to write enough about one stage to gain the available marks.

Question 3 (d): This was one of the most poorly answered questions and it was very disappointing to see that more candidates were not more familiar with this key piece of legislation.

Question 3 (e): A number of candidates misunderstood this question and wrote about organisations disciplining staff members, rather than about the role of a multi-disciplinary team. Those who did read the question properly often answered the question very well.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **General**

Centres appear to have prepared their candidates better for the 2011 exam than previous years, and so we would ask them to continue implementing the following suggestions in order to maintain this improved standard:

- ◆ Ensure candidates are entered at the correct level. As the Care Courses are hierarchical, centres should consider timetabling classes to facilitate the movement of candidates to Intermediate 2 level.
- ◆ Provide exam preparation classes. The Care Higher Unit (X241 12) has a nominal time allocation of 40 hours, and it is recommended that centres allocate class contact time to prepare candidates for the exam. Candidates will be inadequately prepared for the integrated Section 4 if centres do not allocate class contact time to properly prepare candidates for it. The section pulls together themes and topics from two of the three component Units, and it is essential for candidates to get preparation to answer this type of integrated question.
- ◆ Ensure that the full curriculum is covered. The list of what must be taught is covered in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards in each Unit Specification. It clearly outlines the mandatory content for each Unit. The external exam can sample from any of this content.

A number of new resources to support the teaching and assessment of Higher Care will soon be available from SQA through its TranSETT programme:

- ◆ Online web-based support materials are soon to be released to support learners for the external exam section of the NQ Care Higher (C241 12) Course. The online web-based support material called 'Care Higher Course' will help prepare the learner for the external examination. It will contain examples of marked candidate scripts showing good and poor candidate work, as well as providing hints and tips on how to navigate the Care Higher paper successfully. This e-guidance will be accessible from SQA's secure site and may be used to increase the learner's chance of passing the external exam, as well as improving their revision and exam skills.

- ◆ Online/DVD resources — At Care Intermediate 1, 2 and Higher, candidates do not undertake a placement and so over the past few months SQA has been working to create realistic scenarios which could be used by centres as support materials to help staff and candidates prepare for undertaking NABs and the external exams at these three levels.

These will complement the resources that already exist such as:

- ◆ SQA Understanding Standards website: Materials from the 2009 paper are available on the SQA Understanding Standards website. This enables teachers to read real scripts and to mark them. They can then compare their marks to the official guidance and read the rationales behind the marking decisions.
- ◆ TranSETT Solar Open Assessment: formative assessment materials for the Higher Care units are available. These enable centres to provide mini e-assessments on some of the Course content and provide a novel way of revising Course content and preparing for assessments.
- ◆ Scotland's Colleges Repository: Online learning materials for all three Higher Care Units, as well as other NC Health and Social Care Units are available for centres from this repository. The packages offer an opportunity for centres to provide an extended range of blended learning for their students. A password is required to access these materials. This can be provided by your college or by contacting Scotland's Colleges.

## **Appeals**

It is important that a robust prelim which samples across the curriculum is prepared. It is also important that the external exam and prelim exam at Higher level are not predictable, so that candidates cannot 'guess' which topics might come up. If the prelim only includes questions on topics that candidates are comfortable with, candidates will not gain a realistic view of their ability. Some centres have worked collaboratively to develop joint prelims. Centres working in this way must take adequate steps to ensure the security of their prelims.

Ensure that the NABs and prelim are marked rigorously. The Understanding Standards section of the SQA website gives detailed information about how to mark scripts. When processing candidate work for Appeals, it is often found that NABs and prelims have been marked too leniently. This gives deliverers and candidates an unrealistic impression of ability.

SQA would also like to encourage more lecturers and teachers to get involved in the central marking team. All appointees indicate how useful it is for CPD to be involved in the professional discussions and support that occur during the central marking process. Applications to register an interest in becoming involved in marking can be found on the appointee pages of SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2010	649
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	581
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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	16.0%	16.0%	93	65
B	25.5%	41.5%	148	55
C	20.1%	61.6%	117	45
D	8.1%	69.7%	47	40
No award	30.3%	100.0%	176	-

## **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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.