



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Building Construction
Level(s)	Higher

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

This was the first presentation for this Course since 2010.

There have been no changes to the Course content or structure in recent years and the marking criteria and standards remain the same as in previous years.

Candidate performance this year was poor.

Project

The candidate work was generally sub-standard. Centres are reminded that there is information within the project brief which is the candidate's responsibility to research, make choices on and justify these choices. Within this year's cohort, candidates chose to draw details which were out-of-date.

The research was basic and the general standard of drawings was very poor.

Question Paper

The Question Paper was set to the same standard as previous years, however the candidate responses were poor and well below the standard of candidate responses in previous years.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Question 5: Most candidates answered this question well.

Areas which candidates found demanding

There was no question in particular that proved to be more demanding, and with no candidate achieving a mark greater than 50%, the candidate performance overall was poor.

The worksheets, which relate to the sketching of construction details, were completed to an inadequate standard and may indicate a lack of suitable preparation for the examination.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

The project brief must be open allowing the candidates to select a form of construction suitable for the location of the building. They must justify their selection and complete the project on their own within a specified realistic timescale.

Construction details produced as sketches or project drawings should be current. Many changes have taken place in recent years which relate to energy conservation, prevention of cold bridges, etc. and teachers/lecturers should ensure that they keep up to date with current building standards.

The Scottish Government publish accredited details and these are available on their website under Building Standards.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	-
Number of resulted entries in 2013	11

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	0.0%	0.0%	0	140
B	0.0%	0.0%	0	120
C	72.7%	72.7%	8	100
D	9.1%	81.8%	1	90
No award	18.2%	100.0%	2	-

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.