



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Graphic Communication
Level(s)	Advanced 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

The overall standard of response of the candidates was varied. The question paper responses indicated that there were a number of candidates who had been very well prepared for the examination, while others were not fully prepared. This was particularly evident in poor responses to the Printing Terms, Computer Aided 3 D Lighting, Design Element and Design Principle questions this year.

It was evident from the responses that many of the candidates did not read the questions carefully. Some candidates did not give both a sketch and a clear explanation when asked to do so in Question 7.

In general, the drawing questions were answered well, excluding questions 8 and 9. In the drawing questions it was very clear that some candidates did not take the time to draw the solutions accurately and lost marks as a consequence.

In the written questions, as in previous years, only a few responses were in-depth, with good detail and carefully written. Others were very basic and demonstrated only a limited knowledge of the subject matter, losing vital marks.

To address the large shift in the 2012 Grade Boundaries, the Marking Instructions for this year's question paper were reviewed, and as a result the Grade Boundaries were raised across all grades. Centres are reminded that these Marking Instructions can be found on SQA's website, and are encouraged to refer to them.

Areas in which candidates performed well

- ◆ Question 3: Most candidates demonstrated that they knew two types of balance, symmetrical and asymmetrical. Sketches were of a very high quality and clearly reflected the type of balance. Very few mentioned Radial Balance.
- ◆ Question 5: Most candidates responded well to this question reflecting good learning and teaching of the topic within the centres.
- ◆ Question: 7a) and c) Most candidates had a very good understanding of these 3D modelling techniques.
- ◆ Question 10: Most candidates had a good idea of the process. However some of the candidates lacked the accuracy to gain full marks.
- ◆ Question 11: Most candidates had a very good idea of the process required to construct a measured perspective drawing. However, as in question 10, a significant number of candidates lacked the accuracy required to gain full marks.

Areas which candidates found demanding

- ◆ Questions 1 and 2: Although most candidates could name a design principle or element, their description, relative to the given document, lacked detail and depth of knowledge.

There is evidence that candidates need to be more aware that a one-word or a very short sentence answer will not gain them full marks.

- ◆ Question 4: This was a challenging question for most candidates, with a poor response received in most areas. 'Spot,' was answered well, but 'Distant and Ambient light' received a poorer response.
- ◆ Question 6: The responses from the candidates clearly indicated that they continued to not fully understand the printing terms or methods. Responses were in many instances one word, and prevented candidates gaining marks in this question. Centres may be advised to encourage candidates to research printing terms and methods and create a self-study document.
- ◆ Question 8: The majority of candidates found the right cone very challenging, with the average mark being 34% of the total mark. The question was, however, valid and relative to the Course. Centres may be advised to encourage candidates to revise all topics in the Course thoroughly.
- ◆ Question 9: The majority of candidates demonstrated that they found the intersection of the semi-cylinder and triangular prism challenging. The average mark for this question was 36% of the total mark. The question was fair and relative to the Course.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

There is some evidence that centres are taking on board some of the advice given in previous years. Unfortunately this is not the case with regard to printing terminology and 3D lighting. Centres are reminded that there are four drawing questions and that this will continue until the final exam in 2015. However, it would be helpful to centres to note the following:

- ◆ Centres should examine the latest question paper and marking instructions to ensure that they are aware of the standard required for the examination. This will also help with the creation of a prelim paper.
- ◆ Questions 1 and 2 were standard questions. Ensure that candidates answer the question with a detailed related response to achieve maximum marks.
- ◆ Centres should also encourage candidates to use the appropriate terminology when answering the knowledge and interpretation questions throughout the question paper.
- ◆ Responses to Computer Aided and Printing topics still require improvement. These topics will continue to be examined and centres are advised to prepare candidates for these topics.
- ◆ Remind candidates to read each question very carefully and ensure that their response accurately answers the actual question asked. This is most important when they are asked to relate their response to a given document.
- ◆ Half marks no longer feature in the assessment of this Course. This should be reflected in prelims for the purpose of determining estimates and for absentee consideration. As advised in past Subject Update Letters: prelim papers produced with half marks will not be valid.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	1011
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	950
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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 200				
A	34.5%	34.5%	328	156
B	36.9%	71.5%	351	133
C	18.2%	89.7%	173	111
D	4.2%	93.9%	40	100
No award	6.1%	100.0%	58	-

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.