



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Health and Food Technology
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

Average marks for both components — the dissertation and question paper — have risen from the previous year.

Dissertation

The standard of work was better overall this year, and a more diverse choice of dissertation topics was evident. An increasing number of candidates produced well researched dissertations.

All candidates followed the steps of the dissertation logically, with the steps Methodology and Conclusion causing the most difficulty.

Question paper

Candidates responded well to the Question paper in comparison to previous years. Overall, candidates provided more depth in responses and demonstrated an improved level of knowledge. There were some very good candidates whose work showed a real understanding of the course content.

Some candidates did not provide a sufficient number of responses so could not achieve the full mark range. Some answers were very limited and vague, which is not appropriate for AH level.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Dissertations

Introductions

- ◆ Overall introductions showed evidence of wide reading, with the best candidates referencing work well.
- ◆ All candidates provided three appropriate objectives with justification.

Methodology

- ◆ Suitable methods of research were chosen by all candidates.
- ◆ Candidates piloted their questionnaires with an appropriate target group

Results

Results were generally depicted in graphs. These were usually clear and in colour with easy-to-interpret results.

Question Paper

Section A

Section A was generally well addressed by most candidates

- a The majority of candidates were able to read and outline accurately the main issues of the report and achieved the five marks. Most candidates gave six responses. This often benefited candidates and is a good practice to continue. However, there are still a minority of candidates who provided an excessive amount of answers, and who 'lifted' the answers exactly from the report and did not express them in their own words.
- c A good overall response to this question by the majority of candidates. A wide range of detailed answers were provided, showing how food labelling influences consumer choice of food.

Section B

- 1a Most candidates were able to state the Scottish dietary targets in detail and gave valid reasons linking their contribution to a reduction in obesity levels. However, a few candidates either did not state the dietary targets or give them accurately, thereby losing marks. Less able candidates did not link the targets to the reduction in obesity.

A few candidates displayed a lack of basic subject knowledge, for example

- salt consumption causes obesity
- obesity can be reduced by eating oily fish
- cholesterol / high blood pressure causes obesity

- 1b Most candidates gave very good responses linking the role of parents to preventing childhood obesity. Less able candidates did not always relate their answers clearly to obesity. Some candidates did not have sufficient knowledge to give 15 points, therefore did not access the full marks.

Q2 Candidates who selected this question scored very highly. The stages involved in the product development process were discussed in detail by many candidates, who demonstrated sound subject knowledge. Most discussed the stages of product development in a systematic and logical order.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Dissertation

Methodology

This is still an area where candidates do not access full marks.

Some methodologies lacked detail and were too short — a one-page methodology is insufficient, and will not provide sufficient detail to allow the research to be replicated.

There was a lack of justification and supporting references for the choice of research selected. Some questionnaires were very long, and often questions were not relevant to the objectives.

Results

Some candidates discussed all the results under the chart/graph rather than highlighting the key results only.

Conclusions

Some candidates are still providing statements that are not supported by research or evidence. Many candidates omitted limitations and recommendations for further research.

Where limitations were provided they were often not appropriate — candidates tended to focus on time and their skills. These are not valid limitations as they are common to all candidates.

Question Paper

Section A

- b Candidates tended to give information on all additives with no link to the role of additives in the prevention of food waste. Some candidates displayed limited knowledge and made very little attempt to do more than a few bullet points as answers.

Section B

Q3 Overall answers showed a lack of in-depth knowledge of the range of antioxidants and their link to the health of individuals. Answers were very limited and inaccurate in some cases. Candidates at Advanced Higher level are expected to know the individual names of the carotenoid group.

Q4 The overall response to this question was disappointing. Some candidates' answers were very repetitive and lacking in terms of depth of knowledge. In many instances, responses were not related to either the media or teenagers.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Dissertation

- ◆ The Guidance Notes for Candidates issued by SQA should be followed. Candidates should:
 - keep within the word limit of approximately 3500 words excluding results, appendices and reference lists
 - use double line spacing
 - avoid the use of personal pronouns
 - check spelling before submission
 - ensure all pages of the dissertation are included in the submission.

- ◆ Candidates should check the title and objectives after they have undertaken the research and make changes if necessary so that the dissertation title reflects the research undertaken
- ◆ Dissertations must be proofread before submission to check spelling, grammar and sentence structure.
- ◆ Reference lists should be organised alphabetically by author; dates and publishers should be stated. The date when an online reference was accessed should be included. The Guidance Notes for Candidates should be followed to ensure correct referencing of sources.
- ◆ Candidates should include credible, academic resources such as books, reports, journals and avoid the use of too many online resources. Blogs are not an appropriate reference source.

Methodology

- ◆ Candidates should ensure that, if they use a questionnaire, all questions help prove or disprove the objectives. They should avoid questions that are not relevant to the objectives.
- ◆ Care should be taken when writing questions that they do not 'lead' respondents to a particular answer.
- ◆ The choice of research method should be justified and supported by appropriate references.
- ◆ Candidates must provide sufficient detail in their methodology to allow the research to be replicated. Include the reasons for the selection of the chosen methodology, details about the selection of the target group and how the methodology was carried out.

Results

- ◆ If possible results should be printed in colour for ease of interpretation.
- ◆ Ensure that only the main points of the results are highlighted.
- ◆ The results of some answers should be collated in a more concise format. For example, rather than separate bar charts for each age group, they could all be collated into one set of results which would be easier to interpret.

Conclusions

- ◆ There is a need to develop the conclusion more fully ensuring that the skills of analysis and evaluation are evident. Both the results of secondary and primary research should be included in the conclusion.
- ◆ More able candidates should try to look at the results section overall and where appropriate try to cross reference and link results from the questionnaire to give more depth to the conclusion.
- ◆ Candidates should show a clear understanding of the limitations encountered during the research. The limitations should be pertinent to the dissertation and could include, for example, any problems arising from the choice of methodology/target group. Limitations should not focus on time, number of words or candidates skills.
- ◆ Recommendations for further research should be based on any area the candidates have researched and which could merit further investigation or expansion.

Question Paper

General

Candidates must provide sufficient answers within each question to allow them to access the available marks. At Advanced Higher level it is expected that answers should provide good discussion and detailed explanations.

Exam preparation

- ◆ In Section A candidates should not copy directly from the report — they are expected to put the answers into their own words. No more than five or six answers should be provided.
- ◆ If a question is linked to Scottish dietary targets, candidates are expected to include accurate dietary targets in their responses.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to develop greater discussion skills within responses, and link to the key words of the question eg obesity, teenagers.
- ◆ The use of headings/sub-headings may allow candidates to give more focus to their answers.
- ◆ The vast majority of candidates use bullet points when answering, and this practice should be continued.
- ◆ Mind-mapping or making rough headings before starting to answer a question could help prevent repetition of answers.
- ◆ Use of past marking instructions will help candidates to be aware of the points they should include in their responses.
- ◆ Centres should provide opportunities for 'timed' question to be completed. This will allow for good time management during the examination.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	35
---	----

Number of resulted entries in 2013	36
---	----

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	16.7%	16.7%	6	140
B	13.9%	30.6%	5	120
C	61.1%	91.7%	22	100
D	0.0%	91.7%	0	90
No award	8.3%	100.0%	3	-

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.