



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Hospitality: Professional Cookery
Level(s)	Intermediate 2 and 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 has been another successful year for Intermediate 2 and Higher Professional Cookery. Standards have generally been high in terms of candidate performance in the external assessment and reflected by results produced for certification. Similar to previous years, both practical and written assessments demonstrated excellent technological skills and abilities, and knowledge and understanding. It is evident that centres are becoming more familiar with the expectations of the question papers at both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels and candidates' responses are demonstrating improved performances.

Practical performance at both levels is evidently a great strength of the courses, and many candidates perform at levels above the course entry. Visiting verifiers commented on the very high standard of lecturers' understanding of national standards, and commend them for the professional way in which they host the events.

Lecturers involved with the delivery of both levels should be commended for their efforts.

As a key indicator for 2014, it is recommended for all centres to continue to allocate time throughout the year for the dissemination of examination techniques. The integral approach has proved beneficial to develop the student's confidence and abilities to be fully prepared for the final theory external assessments. The option is available to contact SQA to plan a development session for the delivery team.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Hospitality Professional Cookery Intermediate 2

- ◆ The majority of candidates performed well in the practical activity.
- ◆ In the theory assessment, the majority of candidates' responses to food hygiene and Health & Safety were thorough. Also, the majority of candidates answered culinary terms, vegetable cuts and cookery processes well.

Hospitality Professional Cookery Higher

- ◆ The candidates' responses to menu planning, food costing, and the storage and quality of commodities were thorough.
- ◆ There was a consistent improvement in the microbiology, food hygiene practices and legislation/HACCP responses.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Hospitality Professional Cookery Intermediate 2

A high percentage of the candidates found it challenging to list processes involved in the preparation of Choux Pastry (Question 5).

Hospitality Professional Cookery Higher

- ◆ The feedback for the theory is similar to last year. Some candidates still find it demanding to be descriptive in responding, and omit detail, eg the descriptiveness required in the preparing and cooking of dishes from the menu in a recipe style.
- ◆ There was also continuing evidence of poor sentence structure, spelling and grammar.
- ◆ Other issues include candidates continuing to not align their responses to the menu, misinterpret questions and thereby unnecessarily losing marks.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- ◆ For Intermediate 2 and Higher it is advisable to continue to invest time with the candidates throughout the academic year to develop and practice examination techniques.
- ◆ Continue to contextualise the knowledge on health & safety, food calculations, food hygiene with specific attention to temperature control and HACCP with issuing worksheets in conjunction with practical activities.
- ◆ Particularly for Higher, continue to involve the candidates with research methodology. This helps the learning process in terms of menu creativity and achieving the appropriate level of skill.
- ◆ Continue to raise and apply the importance of core/soft skills to gain additional marks in the exam, and most importantly for employment and/or progression to a higher level.

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Intermediate 2**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	82
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	118
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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	22.0%	22.0%	26	77
B	32.2%	54.2%	38	66
C	29.7%	83.9%	35	55
D	6.8%	90.7%	8	49
No award	9.3%	100.0%	11	-

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Higher**

Number of resulted entries in 2012	84
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	82
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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	29.3%	29.3%	24	70
B	34.1%	63.4%	28	60
C	18.3%	81.7%	15	50
D	6.1%	87.8%	5	45
No award	12.2%	100.0%	10	-

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.