



## External Assessment Report 2009

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Subject	Fabrication and Welding Engineering
Level	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**

It was obvious that all candidates had been very well prepared for this year's examination with centres paying more attention to previous years reports.

Candidates were prepared, in many cases, to offer supplementary evidence in response to questions which allowed markers to award better marks – this is the first year that this has been displayed. Perhaps a more mature level of candidate is now attempting this examination.

Many candidates displayed a more in-depth and integrated knowledge of the subject matter and as a result were awarded higher grades.

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

The question regarding the calculation of a Carbon Equivalent was particularly well answered by the majority of candidates.

In addition, the successful design and completion of a planning operations sheet allowed most candidates to be awarded enhanced marks compared to previous years – centres are now aware of the marks allocation of this question and seem to be spending increased time on the teaching of this subject.

### **Areas which candidates found demanding**

Many candidates did not receive full marks in relation to the determination of the Pre- Heat temperature question by not supplying the method of determination in their response.

The question on the use of different components in the welding process (MAG) was surprisingly poorly answered. This area of the course is usually well answered.

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

The determination of a Pre-heat temperature involves using information from the resource pack supplied and candidates should be made aware that this process should be documented in their response. This year, many candidates only supplied a final answer with no evidence of how this was determined – only 1 mark is awarded for the correct final answer.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	16
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	10
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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	30.0%	30.0%	3	70
B	20.0%	50.0%	2	60
C	20.0%	70.0%	2	50
D	20.0%	90.0%	2	45
No award	10.0%	100.0%	1	-

## 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.