



## External Assessment Report 2009

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Subject	Graphic Communication
Level	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 examination responses indicated that there were a number of candidates that had been very well prepared for the examination while others were not fully prepared for the Design Elements and Design Principles examined this year.

As 2008, it was clear from the responses that many of the candidates did not read the questions carefully and did not give both a sketch and a clear explanation when asked to do so in Questions 2 and 4.

In general the drawing questions were answered better than the written questions, which is the reverse of 2008. Within the written questions only a few responses were in-depth, mature, gave good detail and were carefully written while others were very basic and demonstrated only a limited knowledge of the subject matter. The creative ability expected in the redesign of the promotional leaflet was not clearly evident. Many candidates did not take the time to apply colour and on several occasions no attempt was made to redesign the leaflet. Within the drawing questions it was very clear that many candidates did not take the time to draw the solutions to the questions accurately or have a clear understanding of “true lengths”.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

The questions within the written section where candidates performed reasonably were Questions 2 and 4, however the depth of answer required to achieve maximum marks was not given by the candidates.

An example of the depth of answer required is given below for part (c) which would be accompanied by the appropriate sketch.

### Question 2

- (c) **Definition:** When any image or element on a page touches the edge of the page, extending beyond the trim edge, leaving no margin it is said to **bleed**. It may bleed or extend off one or more sides. Photos, rules, clip art, and decorative text elements can bleed off the page.

### Question 4

The majority of candidates would have been able to construct the given object but not necessarily by the most efficient method.

Questions 6 and 8(a) were the questions that the candidates performed well within the drawing section

### Question 6

Overall the candidates' responses to the question were very favourable. A number of candidates had difficulty finding the height of the square pyramid.

### Question 8

The Plan in this question was exceptionally well done by the majority of candidates, however many candidates did not find the true lengths or demonstrate a clear understanding that they were dealing with an oblique cone.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

Generally candidates did not appear to have the ability to formulate an in-depth answer to a written question.

**Question 1 and Question 5(b)** - It was clear from the responses from the candidates that they did not have a clear understanding of the differences between a Design Element and a Design Principle.

**Question 3** - A large number of candidates appeared to find it difficult to demonstrate their creative skills under the pressure of an examination.

**Question 5** – A number of candidates mixed up “a Screen dump” with “Screen Printing”.

**Question 8** – A large percentage of candidates demonstrated by their responses that they did fully understand the importance of true lengths and the method of transferring the dimensions accurately to construct the development.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

### Written Questions

As in previous years centres may wish to stress to candidates at the beginning of the Course that this is Advanced Higher Graphic Communication and that the quality, depth and accuracy of answers required for full marks is very high.

There is a need for the candidates to have a more in-depth knowledge of Design Elements and Design Principles if they are going answer successfully questions that require them to produce a more extended answer. Centres may wish to consider reviewing the learning and teaching of “Design Elements and Principles” due to the continual poor response in this area.

Centres may wish to spend time teaching the importance of answering the written questions with very clear sketches and a very good description as a separate topic, if they wish their candidates to gain full marks at this level.

As in 2008 centres may wish to stress to candidates the importance of reading the question before formulating their answer .If the question asks for a sketch to be included, they must include a relevant quality sketch in their answer, along with the appropriate text, if they wish to gain full marks. The use of colour should be encouraged where it is relevant and appropriate to do so.

### Drawing Questions

The overall quality of draughtsmanship is poor and inaccurate.

Centres may wish to stress the importance of true lengths and the need for accurate transfer of dimensions from the orthographic view to the development.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	720
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	773
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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	37.8%	37.8%	292	148
B	34.5%	72.3%	267	127
C	17.2%	89.5%	133	107
D	3.4%	92.9%	26	97
No award	7.1%	100.0%	55	-

## 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.