



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Graphic Communication
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

Candidate performance was poorer than last year even though the Question Paper was reasonably straightforward.

With the exception of Questions 2 and 4, all questions were accessible for the majority of candidates. This was the second year that no half marks were allowed in the marking scheme. Once again some candidates are being presented at Higher level, where the more appropriate level would be Intermediate 2. There was an even balance of candidates choosing between Question 12 and 13, but those who chose the isometric performed far better.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Section A

Question 1- 3 Ps

This proved to be a very good first question as it was answered extremely well.

Question 3 (a) and (b) – Building/architectural plans

There was an improvement on the performance seen in previous years even though there were a number of candidates who mixed up the scales.

Question 6 – DTP terms

This was very well answered. This was expected, as this is now being consistently well answered. Candidates answered part (b) well.

Section B

Question 8 – Measured perspective

This was answered well but not as well as previous years. This was one of the more straightforward questions of this type but a large number of candidates got the heights incorrect although most candidates still managed to achieve most of the marks.

Question 8 (b) - Auxiliary view

This is usually one of the weaker topics but it was answered exceptionally well this year.

Question 9– Stepped section

For the second year this was very well answered for a sectional assembly. Unfortunately the thread detail, when it was drawn was a problem area again. Also, hatching was erratic but a large number of candidates hatched the correct areas this time.

Question 11 – Interpenetration and development

There were some candidates who could not manage the development but in general performance in this topic was better than in previous years. Some candidates do not take enough points to draw the curves but most were getting it nearly correct

Question 12 – Isometric

This was very well done, as usual, although a number of candidates found the curves difficult. Selecting an appropriate number of points to draw the curve remains an issue.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Section A

Question 2 – BS conventions

Candidates performed poorly in this question, with many failing to achieve any marks. This was surprising for part (a) as this is a common question that has been asked many times before. It is not always well answered but there has been improvement up until this year. Parts (b), (c) and (d) were expected to differentiate between candidates but very few knew any of the items. It is appreciated that these are less common but are within the Arrangements. BS conventions are usually poorly done but will continue to be a feature of section A.

Question 4 – DTP stages

Candidates did not know of “thumbnail sketches” even though they would have done them as part of their thematic presentation.

Question 7

An understanding of autotracing continues to be a problem. In addition candidates are still confusing tonal fill and a colour gradient.

Section B

Question 10– Tangency

- This has been answered well in previous years but was not the case this year. Problems included:
- Extremely poor draughtmanship. Some candidates sketched it freehand after constructing the shape.
- Lines or curves did not meet
- Tails were evident on most curves
- Centres not found.

Question 13 – Planometric

Performance in this topic is normally extremely good from Standard Grade but on this occasion it was extremely poor. There was the rare exception. A significant number of candidates were not aware that the curves could be drawn with a compass. Poor draughtmanship resulted in poor quality or inaccurate curves. There were a large number of candidates who drew an oblique instead. In some cases the whole cohort from a centre. Candidates must read the question.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

Candidates continue to be well prepared for the majority (in particular, Pictorial views) of drawing topics. BS Conventions are a major concern as candidates can lose 10 – 15 marks across section A and B. This is an ongoing concern that would make a significant impact on performance if it could be rectified. BS conventions will continue to be examined so it is for the benefit of candidates that they are prepared for this.

Section A

The change to only accepting the correct BS term was not an issue this year but it must be noted for future years. In particular this will have a major affect on any question with symbols related to architectural plans.

BS conventions, in particular sections need to be addressed.

Section B

Transferring curves between views and drawing an isometric circle, the number of points taken must be considered. A minimum of 12 points is required for a complete circle (the quadrant points plus intermediate points).

The overall quality of draughtsmanship is still poor and was even poorer this year, even though the following was highlighted last year:

- There must be a clear difference between construction and completed outlines.
- Candidates must draw in outline to be awarded the marks.
- Even when outlines are drawn, they often extend beyond the point where they should end, resulting in no marks being awarded for that line.
- Tangent lines are also poorly drawn.
- In addition the quality of hidden and centre lines is poor.
- This alone could result in improved performance for 50% or more candidates.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	3486
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	3694
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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	22.1%	22.1%	818	137
B	24.5%	46.6%	905	117
C	26.1%	72.8%	965	97
D	10.0%	82.7%	368	87
No award	17.3%	100.0%	638	-

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.