



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Practical Cookery
Level	Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2

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

Intermediate 1

- The majority of candidates did not weigh vegetables after preparation
- The majority of candidates served both dishes in the time allowed
- Candidates displayed a good knowledge of food hygiene and safety and the majority refrigerated where necessary.

Intermediate 2

- A few candidates were presented at the wrong level
- There was an improvement in the detail given in the 'Service Details' this year
- Weighing of vegetables after preparation was carried out by the majority of candidates. This was an improvement on last year
- The majority of candidates managed to serve all three courses in the time allowed.

Areas in which candidates performed well

- 'Clean as you go' was evident in most centres and had been incorporated into time plans
- At Intermediate 1 candidates had been well trained in the correct use of cooks knives and vegetable cuts were commensurate with the level required
- Good use of disposable containers during preparation time
- Candidates made good use of preparation time to weigh and measure all ingredients
- Where Candidates tasted food it was done in a hygienic manner
- Most candidates made good use of refrigeration throughout for storing and chilling of perishable foods
- At Intermediate 2 there was an improvement in the knife skills and more candidates anchored chopping boards.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Intermediate 1

- Some candidates did not anchor chopping boards
- Removing the flan ring from the cheesecake to leave a smooth, neat finished edge
- Whipping the cream to the correct consistency for piping
- Tasting and seasoning food before presentation was not carried out by the majority of candidates meaning dishes were under seasoned and lacked flavour
- The majority of candidates did not skim the meat sauce before serving.
- In some Centres knife skills were poor
- The majority of candidates had unrealistic time slots for vegetable preparation in their time plans.

Intermediate 2

- Working to the time plans they had written
- The majority of candidates had unrealistic time slots for vegetable preparation in their time plans
- Making pastry to the correct consistency
- Rolling pastry and lining a flan ring
- Many candidates did not understand the relevance of resting pastry and trimmed the pastry before resting
- Cutting vegetables to the correct size and shape
- Portioning Koftas equally
- Cooking of rice
- Peeling and segmenting of the orange
- Cooker control when simmering
- Tasting food before presentation was not carried out by the majority of candidates meaning dishes were under seasoned and lacked flavour.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- Candidates must have a workable time plan that will allow dishes to be served at the correct time before starting the practical element of the assignment
- A Centre time plan must be given to candidates who do not manage to produce a workable time plan
- Where marks have been allocated, they must be fully identified on the marks page of the planning booklet.
- Preparation time must not be included in the time plan
- Start time must be the start of the assignment and not the start of the preparation time
- Time slots do not need to be at regular intervals but must be realistic and allow the identified task/tasks to be completed. The minimum time block should ideally be 10 minutes
- Time plans should act as a prompt with short statements and must not be a full rewrite of the recipe
- Time plans must include a 'clean as you go' approach, hand washing at the start and at appropriate times throughout the assignment and the heating of serving plates were appropriate.
- Testing for readiness and correct service time should be included in the time plan.
- Chilling of prepared food and changes of oven temperature, where necessary, should be included in the time plan.
- Tasting and seasoning of food should be highlighted in the time plans to prompt candidates.
- Time plans could include 'lid on' or 'lid off' as a prompt
- Planning booklets must be marked to reflect where guidance has been given
- Disposable containers or bags can be used during preparation time to help reduce the amount of washing up
- All ingredients can be weighed and measured during the preparation time
- Garnish and decoration can be prepared during preparation time unless marks are being awarded for this, and then preparation of garnish must be completed in the assignment time
- All perishable ingredients must be kept refrigerated until required
- Candidates must hand wash at the start of the assignment
- Jewellery and nail varnish must be removed in line with current legislation
- For safety reasons chopping boards must be secured with damp paper towels, a damp dish towel or non-slip matting
- Candidates must be encouraged to clear their chopping boards of one vegetable before starting to prepare the next.
- Candidates must use different boards for vegetable preparation and raw meat to avoid cross contamination
- Candidates must use the correct knife for the task
- Serving dishes should be appropriate for the food being served

- Adequate refrigeration should be present in the kitchen being used to prevent candidates wasting time accessing refrigeration in other areas
- All ingredients must be used. Candidates cannot pick and chose the ingredients they want to use from the recipe
- Candidates must be encouraged to taste food throughout the year to enable them to have the confidence necessary to produce well flavoured and well seasoned dishes during the final assignment.

Hospitality – Practical Cookery Intermediate 1

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	5116
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	5684
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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 - 70				
A	76.7%	76.7%	4358	49
B	10.6%	87.3%	602	44
C	5.5%	92.8%	314	40
D	1.6%	94.4%	90	38
No award	5.6%	100.0%	320	-

Hospitality – Practical Cookery Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	4322
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	4875
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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	44.9%	44.9%	2187	79
B	33.6%	78.5%	1639	66
C	14.1%	92.6%	688	54
D	2.4%	95.0%	119	48
No award	5.0%	100.0%	242	-

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.