



External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	Care Practice
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

Over the year a few amendments to the wording in the project were made to ensure clarity of the Evidence Requirements. These have been reflected in the External Assessment Document (dated November 2009 — 3rd Edition) which is the most up to date version of the Project Assessed Course documentation for Care Practice Higher. A training day was offered through Scotland's Colleges at SFEU in February 2010 to discuss these amendments, and also for any teachers/lecturers to raise any issues/concerns. However, the training day was poorly attended by centres delivering the Care Practice Higher. This was disappointing especially given the rise in candidate numbers presented this year.

There is good news as there is a slight increase of 'A' candidates this year. These candidates had followed the project requirements and provided evidence for each section. They also chose a complex activity which was appropriate for the service user following very clear assessment of need for that individual. Too many candidates are still engaging in routine group activities which are usually delivered in the care environment. When this occurs there tends to be much less assessment of individual needs and a tendency to assess generally. A number of candidates planned an activity and then sought out service users 'who wanted to take part'. This resulted in much lower marks being allocated by the Central Markers than had been given by centre assessors. This is reflected in a percentage drop for B, C and D candidates with a slight rise in candidates who received no award.

The majority of centres used the SQA assessment documentation pack and this led to well ordered projects which ensured the various elements were presented, for example pre-planning activities and the working document. However, although most candidates provided this evidence, the content of them for a high number of candidates was poor.

Authentication of the activity was, on the whole, very good. However, a number of candidates provided reflective accounts which were not authenticated by the observing supervisor. Some candidates did have the reflective account signed by the supervisor but it was obvious from the candidate write up, that they undertook the activity without supervision. This resulted in much lower marks being allocated by the Central Markers than had been given by centre assessors.

There is good evidence to suggest this current external project is assisting candidates to achieve positive results when they keep to the requirements and provide good evidence for each stage. Tutor support and direction is key to this process by ensuring candidates are guided to complex activities and away from routine group activities. The type of placement is also essential to ensure the candidate can achieve a good grade. The vast majority of centres are using appropriate care environments. However, there are still some candidates being presented where the placement is inappropriate, for example nursery provision, where they are unable to display the necessary requirements of care planning.

Please note that all of the Evidence Requirements for this assessment must be presented in the project documentation. Evidence from log books and the team working project, if used, must be cross referenced and be relevant to the specific activity and service user.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Plan

- ◆ Some candidates did well at the planning stage where they assessed specific needs for an individual service user and highlighted benefits to them from the proposed activity.
- ◆ Some candidates used the working document well by completing it with a clear flow of tasks to be completed, although, in general, the working document was not used to its full potential.
- ◆ On the whole, planning and evaluation were completed more effectively than the development stage of the project.

Development

- ◆ Some candidates made very effective use of their updated working document submitted in this stage by highlighting and explaining changes and adding new activities.
- ◆ Most of the activities presented had been observed and authenticated by the same individual.

Evaluation

- ◆ Candidates tended to do well in highlighting what was successful or not within the project and were able to say how things could have been improved.
- ◆ Most candidates were able to say what they learned from the project but a number did not relate this to their practical and interpersonal skills.
- ◆ On the whole, evaluation and planning were completed more effectively than the development stage of the project.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Plan

- ◆ A substantial number of candidates did not undertake a complex activity. A routine activity which is part of the general placement setting was often used. A number of candidates planned an activity and then sought service users 'who wanted to join in'. These activities were ineffective for assessment of individual need.
- ◆ There was very little evidence of research of the individual need of the service user and an explanation of why the activity was therefore appropriate.
- ◆ A number of candidates did not submit preparation activities before the plan. These are discussed under Appendix A, page 25.

Development

- ◆ A substantial number of candidates did not complete this section well. This was due to either evidence not being submitted or submitted work not meeting the standards to warrant allocation of higher marks. A number of candidates only gave a narration of the activity.
- ◆ A high number of candidates did not present an updated working document at this stage and therefore lost the potential for 20 marks.
- ◆ A number of reflective accounts were not authenticated. Some were signed but from the candidates written account, it was evident the activity was not supervised/observed.

- ◆ A high number of candidates presented little or no actual evidence of feedback for the activity. Many only commented it had gone well.
- ◆ Issues of confidentiality were raised as some candidates presented photographs with no evidence of permission being sought to allow them to do so.
- ◆ Very little legislation explained in the reflective account.
- ◆ Language used by a number of candidates was inappropriate. Such language as 'wheelchair bound', 'toileting' and 'sufferer' goes against the value base of care practice.

Evaluation

- ◆ Candidates tended to recount what they had done rather than evaluate or offer constructive criticism of the process.
- ◆ Candidates evaluated their role in the activity poorly again saying what they had done rather than evaluate the effectiveness of their role. In many cases, candidates did not discuss the role of other team members.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- ◆ Centres should ensure they are using the most up to date assessment as highlighted at the beginning of this report.
- ◆ Make use of SQA documentation as this allows for fewer areas to be missed and the layout to be clearer.
- ◆ Ensure candidates undertake a complex activity. Making use of routine activities encourages candidates to concentrate on assessing needs of one particular service user. More usefully, encourage candidates to undertake an activity specific to one service user.
- ◆ Ensure preparation activities are included to inform the plan.
- ◆ Provide a working document for the plan and include an amended and updated copy of this within the development stage.
- ◆ Ensure the candidate reflects on all areas as per the marking guideline and does not only narrate issues.
- ◆ The activity must be observed and authenticated by the member of staff witnessing it by signing the actual reflective account.
- ◆ Candidates must provide actual evidence of feedback as it is not enough only for the candidate to say things went well. Examples of evidence could include evaluation forms, headed letter from staff within the organisation, photographs (with appropriate evidence of permissions given) and written notification from family and/or the service user (if appropriate).
- ◆ Encourage candidates to make more effective use of theoretical knowledge and legislation in the reflective account.
- ◆ Ensure appropriate language used when describing and engaging with service users.
- ◆ Ensure candidates are able to be evaluative.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	213
Number of resulted entries in 2010	310

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	16.8%	16.8%	52	140
B	25.8%	42.6%	80	120
C	34.2%	76.8%	106	100
D	6.1%	82.9%	19	90
No award	17.1%	100.0%	53	—

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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.