



External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	Creative Cake Production
Level	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

This has been a positive year for Creative Cake Production. The final number of centres presenting was 51, with a total of 649 candidates completing the Course.

Feedback from Visiting Assessors suggested the Course had been delivered to a high standard, and preparation for visiting assessment was well organised with all documentation being made available. Project pro formas were completed to a good standard and complied with the award criteria. Practical assignment pro formas provided evidence of a wide range of designs and techniques.

Skills development was clearly displayed through the final presentation of cakes, with the majority marked at an appropriate level. Variances between assessors' marks were discussed and agreement reached prior to the final mark being recorded. Standardisation procedures encouraged staff to cross mark assignments with other subject specialists in order to achieve better consistency in marking.

A number of new centres presented Creative Cake Production for the first time this year and Course Arrangements were clearly understood. Assessor judgement was accurate and a positive outcome achieved in terms of the standard of candidate skills.

Some innovative approaches were used in support of delivery, including centre-devised specific related information, recipe folios, and additional knowledge questions. Good use was made of Learning Teaching Scotland materials, and it is encouraging that centre staff are receptive to ideas and willingly share good practice.

A number of staff attended the SQA quality network event this session, where the event reviewed the Course structure and provided opportunities for questions. A selection of cakes was used by delegates to demonstrate examples of marking to achieve concurrence in the assignment criteria. This was followed by a skills workshop and practical demonstrations in which delegates could update and extend skills and knowledge. A plenary session provided excellent feedback on the day's activities. This event provided a good CPD opportunity.

The practical assignment exemplar provided by SQA has equipped candidates with a better understanding of the requirements for completion of the project pro forma. Guidelines on the breakdown of marks have been a useful tool for assessors.

The new e-version of the VA report has been well received by Visiting Assessors and centre staff.

Areas in which candidates performed well

The project pro forma evidenced planning and practical activity in conjunction with skills development and evaluation. All candidates had an opportunity to develop new and existing skills in design and application techniques.

There were also many examples where the range of skills and techniques exceeded the requirements of Intermediate 2.

In the project, some candidates gained high marks for their written work, which had a beneficial effect on their final mark.

Evaluations were generally of a good standard and candidates were encouraged to use evaluative comments and not broad statements.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Some candidates found the written work demanding and time consuming. Often these candidates do well in the practical assignment, gaining high marks, but achieve a lower grade, mainly due to poor communication and writing skills. Centres that encourage the use of ICT facilities enable candidates to produce work with fewer spelling and grammatical mistakes.

Other demanding areas were in the development and execution of techniques and chosen designs. Skills in cake design at Intermediate 2 were challenging and, in some instances, it was obvious more time was required for further development. Where untidy and poorly-finished pieces were produced, this was mainly through lack of time and opportunity to practise.

Candidates need to be more aware of the standards required for the practical assignment and should be encouraged to work to their strengths. This will assist in helping achieve a more balanced overall finish in both written and practical work.

The task of drawing designs to match the chosen brief proved difficult for some candidates, and was of poor quality with little detail. This task is an essential part of the planning and should be completed before the practical assignment, with any changes reflected in the evaluation of the end product.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centre staff deliver and present this Course to a high standard, and should continue to encourage candidates to embark on this exciting and challenging learning experience.

Learning the skill of cake production and decoration can be useful for future career opportunities in food-related employment or simply vocational interest. Transferable skills are also evident, with the fine motor skills developed being used for a grounding in a Course as diverse as Dentistry.

Presenting staff and assessors should have a good understanding of the Course Arrangements and resource requirements, and have time for successful delivery of the Course work.

Centres should also note the following information:

- ◆ The current version of the practical assignment documents must be used — this can be accessed through SQA's website.
- ◆ Candidates should have reached the required entry level if they intend to complete all Units and the practical assignment.
- ◆ Candidates should be aware of the standards expected to complete the practical assignment and written work. Meaningful note-taking during practical activities should be encouraged — this can often ease evaluative interpretation.
- ◆ Skill development requires practice; ensure that adequate time is allocated for this.
- ◆ Candidates need to be guided towards a project which they can manage with successful outcomes.
- ◆ Coursework should reflect a good standard at Intermediate 2.
- ◆ Application of techniques should be perfected to an acceptable commercial standard before the practical assignment.
- ◆ Staff should continue to extend and enhance existing skills, and continue networking and sharing good practice with colleagues and external subject specialists.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	502
Number of resulted entries in 2010	650

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	72.5%	72.5%	471	140
B	18.9%	91.4%	123	120
C	7.8%	99.2%	51	100
D	0.2%	99.4%	1	90
No award	0.6%	100.0%	4	—

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.