



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Design PBNC
Level	Higher 2009

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 entries remained low for the PBNC Design Higher level and there were no submissions at Intermediate level 2 level.

The majority of the PBNC Design Higher candidates performed well and the overall standards were in line with the previous years. Candidates who had integrated their project based Units – Design in Context, Design Realisation and Design in Action performed to a high standard across all areas.

Areas in which candidates performed well

The best of the submissions were from candidates who produced well considered and imaginative design briefs.

There was evidence of good practice where candidates comprehensively demonstrated a clear understanding of the design process by exploring a wide range of design solutions, choosing a well considered solution and articulating their ideas into a well executed final design sheet(6).

In some cases the standard of design process was exceptional.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Candidates had some difficulty in addressing the context of the topic of historical research. Some candidates researched the history of the design specialism, some candidates researched the exhibition topic and other candidates researched the history of exhibitions. Centres are required to give clarity on the exact nature and purpose of the historical research and relevance this has on the design process.

As in previous years, some candidates continue to fall down on the quality of the final sheet (6) which is allocated a maximum of 40 marks. There was evidence that candidates did not allow enough time to complete this sheet. Consideration requires to be made on how candidates will tackle this sheet at an earlier stage of the practical assignment

Some candidates did not explore fully the target audience of the brief. The writing of 300 words explaining the selected visual theme, style and the appropriateness to the Target market was not evident in candidates' submissions.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

The PBNC Design Higher level course has now been removed from the catalogue. However, the Units will remain in the catalogue and can be delivered as free standing Units.

The PBNC Design at Intermediate 2 level will remain as a valid course until the end of diet 2010. After diet 2010 this course will be removed from the catalogue.

Recommendations and advice to centres for preparation for future candidates can only be made in this context.

Centres are reminded that the historical research requires clarity since some candidates research only the design specialism and others only the history of exhibitions. It is historical research in relation to design and

the impact that this may/could have on the design process that is required. Contextualising historical aspects of design to develop new solutions is an important part of the design process.

Centres must ensure that candidates address the target market element of the practical assignment. Clarity in the practical assignment is needed to identify exactly what is required from the target market element to ensure this part is embedded within the design process and that the design solution profits from this activity.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	25
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	16
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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	18.8%	18.8%	3	140
B	18.8%	37.5%	3	120
C	56.3%	93.8%	9	100
D	6.3%	100.0%	1	90
No award	0.0%	100.0%	0	-

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.