External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	**Graphic Communication**
Level	**Advanced 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

Centres are experienced in the delivery of Advanced Higher Graphic Communication and this is reflected in the strong performance produced by the candidates this year. Candidates are well prepared for the drawing aspects of the course and there is some evidence that centres are acting on advice from previous years' reports. However, the majority of candidates have great difficulty answering the Graphic Knowledge element of the question paper.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Question 2 was well attempted. Centres are reminded that candidates should be made familiar with the terms used in the Arrangements Document published by SQA, as no alternatives will be accepted.

Question 5 was well attempted; however some candidates did not set out their answers in a clear and logical way which could be easily followed.

Question 7 was well attempted by most candidates. Although the circles were drawn more accurately, a large number of candidates had difficulty with the accuracy required for the door and canopy. Some candidates used thick pencils which detracted from the accuracy of their drawing.

Question 9: the plan and the true shape of Face X were well drawn by the candidates who attempted and understood what was required in this question.

Areas which candidates found demanding

As in previous years, the performance of most candidates was poor in Section 1:

- Question 1: Many candidates did not have a working knowledge and understanding of the Design Elements and Design Principles.
- Question 3: There was a very poor response from candidates. Very few candidates gained full marks for this question with most gaining 2 or less marks. There was a clear indication that the candidates were unable to answer most areas of this question.
- Question 4: This question received a mixed response from the candidates. Many of the candidates did not understand the command words and gave the same answer for part (a) and (b).
- Question 6: This was a challenging question for most candidates with a poor response received in most areas. 'Distant, spot and intensity' were answered well, however, 'Ambient light' received a poorer response.

The performance of candidates in the drawing questions was generally good, however there is a requirement for greater accuracy from candidates in order to achieve more marks.

Markers reported that many centres handle the ‘command’ words in questions poorly. In particular, ‘explain and describe’. If these words had been handled better the more able candidates may have achieved higher marks. Less able candidates found difficulty providing appropriate responses to questions which used these command words, although they were still able to access some of the marks.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres have taken on board much of the advice given in previous years. However, it would be helpful to centres to note the following:

- Centres should make full use of the Arrangements Document which clearly outlines the Course content. This document is referred to when constructing question papers.
- Centres should encourage candidates to see the links between the Graphic Presentation and 3D Modelling Presentation and the question paper with regard to how they respond to questions and how to gain marks.
- Centres should encourage candidates to use the appropriate terminology when answering the knowledge and understanding questions especially on Design Principles and Design Elements.
- Candidates should be made aware of the correct use of the ‘command’ words and be shown how to handle these appropriately in order to gain the marks allocated to the question. Marking instructions for question papers from SQA’s website and the Understanding Standards website can be useful to support candidates’ knowledge of the ‘command’ words.
- Candidates should write in sufficient depth to address the ‘command’ words. Particular care should be taken when using bullet points as lists do not provide responses of a standard that attract full marks.
- Candidates must read the question and answer in the context of the question.
- Candidates must read each question very carefully and ensure that their response accurately answers what has been asked and that they have not misinterpreted the question. Candidates should be encouraged to re-read a question immediately after writing their answer.
- Most candidates would benefit from more practice in writing descriptions and explanations. They must be more careful with the detail and precision of the language used in their descriptions and explanations when answering questions on 3D CAD operations, Design Principles and Design Elements.
- Candidates must take care to label each answer to match the correct part of a question. Although Markers will always endeavour to award marks to candidates, an incorrectly labelled response can result in no marks being achieved.
- Candidates must provide only one response to any question. If they have made more than one attempt at a response, any work which they wish a Marker to ignore must be scored through.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	773
Number of resulted entries in 2010	797

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	40.7%	40.7%	324	148
B	30.5%	71.1%	243	127
C	19.2%	90.3%	153	107
D	3.5%	93.9%	28	97
No award	6.1%	100.0%	49	—

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.