



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Home Economics – Fashion and Textile Technology
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

Overall results

There has been an overall increase in the pass rate at each level with more candidates receiving very good passes. There has been a steady increase in the number of candidates entered for Fashion & Textile Technology. There were a number of new centres presenting for the first time and it was good to see a number of centres returning. Some centres present every alternate year as a way of obtaining sufficient numbers to maintain the subject in the timetable. A number of centres now present in more than one context and some even in all three contexts allowing an opportunity for progression within the subject area. The candidates that select Fashion and Textile Technology are often very artistic and produce some very creative highly skilled solutions for the technological projects.

A limited number of the candidates who study higher Fashion & Textile Technology progress from Standard Grade Home Economics (17%) and there are a significant number with no previous experience(47%). There is less evidence of candidates being presented at the wrong level but teachers should examine the breakdown of the component marks and investigate whether their candidates were above or below the average mark. This would give some indication if a particular area should be tackled. Attendance at Understanding Standards events has helped improve understanding of the Technological Project which has been reflected in improved average marks. The provision of a workshop for this context at the recent Understanding Standards event may have been a contributing factor to the improved pass rate. Staff should be praised for their contribution to this dramatic increase which now means that this context has the same pass rate as the others.

Technological Project

The majority of candidates selected the technological project with a fashionable textile item influenced by another culture. This session, there was clear evidence of an improved standard with an overall dramatic increase in the average marks awarded for the project (48/70). Most candidates made good use of the Guidance to Candidates when completing their project, which meant that they followed the guidance for the investigations and testing and so the marks improved.

Written paper

There is clear evidence that a number of candidates demonstrated excellent acquisition of knowledge and earned high marks when they implemented the guidance on answering technique. Answers were detailed and worthy of the higher. There was a significant increase in the average marks for the written paper to (41/80). A number of candidates appeared to make good use of the skills identified beside the question so that in a number of cases the candidates were providing all the stages in the evaluation answers.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Fashion & Textile Technology Technological Project

Candidates who made reference to the Candidate Guide throughout their project scored well as they provided all the information required to earn the top marks. The average marks of the Technological Project improved this session.	
Step 2.1 (Investigations) & Step 3.3 (Tests)	Candidates made good use of the guidance provided and scored well. Candidates should check the validity of their investigations / tests by making sure they identify the source of the information e.g. name/job title /organisation of person being interviewed, websites / textbooks use.
Step 2.2.	Some clear details of the textile item provided with sizes, colours and types of fabrics & notions so that the end result can be visualised. Some candidates have excellent sketching skills.
Step 4.1.	Evaluations which made reference to information provided by well planned and conducted tests score well.

Written Paper

Overall the candidates demonstrated good knowledge and good answering techniques, which meant there was an increase in the average mark for the written paper.

Section A

Most candidates appeared to be well prepared for Section A and as a result scored well. Over the years there is a clear improvement in this section.

Section B

A number of candidates were well prepared for the written examination by showing an in-depth knowledge of the course content and very good answering technique. The candidates are now more prepared for the areas that will be tested in Section B question 1.

Evaluation answers are now of a higher standard. Some centres taught their candidates to answer under the three headings – opinion, fact and consequence. These candidates tended to attempt all evaluation answers in the correct technique.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Fashion & Textile Technology Technological Project

Step 1	Candidates should check that they are providing explanations of key points, specification points and investigations. Some candidates fail to score marks as they provide statements or dictionary definitions. Candidates tended to provide more detailed explanations if they had a target group in mind e.g. teenagers was identified in the brief. When a target group is not identified in the brief candidates who narrowed down the target group provided more focused work and tended to score higher marks.
Step 1.1	Although candidates often now earn marks for the correct explanation of the word ‘develop’ however they often fail to take this key point through all stages of the technological project. Candidates had difficulty explaining the following words – influenced, culture, interior design range.
Step 1.2	Some candidates produced very general specification points whereas those candidates who focused on the key points and additional key points found these more helpful by keeping the research focused. As ‘teenagers’ was identified in the wording of one of the briefs, this would have kept the candidates focused on the correct target group. If specification points contain a lot of detail the candidate may fail to either explain all aspects of the specification point. Detailed specification points must be evaluated in greater depth in step 4.1. A number of candidates failed to take the word develop through to their specification point. ‘Measurable terms’ still cause confusion in some centres – this is a way of testing that the specification point has been met.
Step 2.1 (Investigations) & Step 3.3 (Tests)	The candidates must follow the guidance given at the back of the Candidate Guide on how to conduct investigations and tests. Candidates should check the validity of their investigations / tests by making sure they identify the source of the information e.g. name/job title /organisation of person being interviewed, websites / textbooks used etc. Questions and answers should be clearly displayed. Figures are acceptable – there is no need to produce bar charts as space is limited. Figures are acceptable – there is no need to produce bar charts as space is limited. Some charts can be very difficult to read It is disappointing to see that some candidates are completing their investigations and tests by interviewing the teacher. More valuable data can be obtained by encouraging the candidates to conduct their investigations outside the classroom. Investigating the skills of the candidates / resources available in the department is often weak and so solutions are often disappointing. A number of candidates used mood boards for investigations. If mood board are used in investigations candidates should state the sources of graphics etc. The mood board could then be used in an investigation. The candidates should not just make their own decision based on personal preferences. Conclusions should be take account of how the results of research will impact on the possible solution. Candidates must avoid personal comments as conclusions must be based on evidence. Investigations are a good opportunity to get outside the classroom and obtain data from a range of relevant sources.
Step 2.2	Any textile items should have the sizes/dimensions of fabrics/textiles /trimmings identified.
Step 3.1	Time plans lose marks if they fail to give details that allow the product to be recreated e.g. cutting out of fabric pieces, application of trimmings, pressing etc Fashion candidates tend to identify time in class period times. A more detailed breakdown of

	<p>time is required. Candidates should take care to identify the type of fabric so that if necessary the textile item can be recreated.</p> <p>Some candidates failed to identify all the resources and could take more care when justifying the reason for the use of the ingredients. Some candidates are taking too long to create their final solution. This may reduce the time available for the final sections of the technological project and so effectively lower the marks.</p>
Step 3.2	Tests should be planned before manufacture of solutions – this will help avoid retrospective planning of tests. Check that the aim of the investigation is quite clear and that the technique clearly identifies a target group for the tests. The target group should be specified to help keep the candidate focused e.g. teenagers
Step 3.3	<p>A few candidates lost marks as they only provided a summary of the results of sensory testing. Individual results should be provided but they can be totalled and averaged so that they can be compared.</p> <p>Negative feedback from interviews or other tests was often ignored however this could have provided valuable evidence for the evaluation (Step 4).</p>
Step 4.1	If through testing of all key points is carried out then the candidate will have more information to refer to in the evaluation against the key points.
Step 4.2	<p>Suggest that candidates complete evaluation of each step once they have completed it. Some candidates provided the fact and opinion but not the consequence.</p> <p>The marker is looking for evidence within the technological project that has allowed the candidate to come up with their evaluative comment.</p> <p>If candidates identify the words skills, resources and time in old it may help them to use these words in their evaluation.</p>
	Check exemplification on the Understanding Standards Website.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Written paper

Section A

2	Poorly answered.
4	Poorly answered – silk given as an answer.
11	Candidates could only identify one point linked to quality control.
14	Some candidates confused CAM with CAD.

Section B

1a)	Some candidates did not know that polyamide was nylon.
1b)	Batch dying response was vague by a number of the candidates. Candidates often failed to explain how the items were dyed e.g. a dye bath.
1d)	Candidates confused Trade Descriptions Act and Sale and Supply of Goods Act.
1e)	The candidates did not make use of the information in the table. Some candidates put two properties together in one comment which meant they lost the point they were trying to make. Party wear was often used in the answer but the candidates did not show an understanding of how the property was linked. Evaluative so candidates must provide – Opinion, Fact and Consequence.
2a)	Candidates did show an understanding of design principles but the explanations were minimal or not linked to the child's fancy dress outfit.
2b)	Same answers provided for glow in the dark and thermo chromatic fabrics. Gap in knowledge.
3a)	Poorly linked to global fashion. Not always evaluative.
3c)	Stages in product development identified however some candidates lost all marks as they did not know the names of the stages. Marks were lost because answers were not linked to menswear. Sometimes confused with stages of fashion.
3d)	Good knowledge of facts about line but not proportion. Answers however were not evaluative and did not give consequences.
3e)	Colour was not linked to mood.
4b)	Limited ability to evaluate mass production of textile items. Candidates need to have the knowledge before they can give an opinion and a consequence.
4c)	Gaps in knowledge related to labels.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Fashion & Textile Technology Technological Project

- Candidates should have access to the most up to date Candidate Guide for the Technological Project (which can be downloaded from the SQA website). There is also an updated Teachers Guide which should be used.
- Candidates should check that each step has been completed in line with the guidance in the document to ensure they maximise the marks they earn.
- Candidates may find it helpful to identify a target group for their project as this may help them to focus on the needs of this particular group and so produce a more in depth piece of work.
- Candidates should take responsibility for checking that each page of the project has been correctly collated.
- If you have presented candidates for three years, you are encouraged to become involved in the marking of

the technological project so that you have a greater understanding of how candidates gain marks. Markers always state how valuable marking is in helping to raise their candidate's attainment. Information on how to apply to become a Marker can be found on the SQA's website in the Appointee Management section

- Although the marking instructions for the projects are available on the SQA website, candidates should be encouraged to come up with their own specification points, investigations and tests which will then be more clearly focused on the wording of the brief.

Fashion & Textile Technology Written paper

- Use the SQA website for past papers; update letters, marking instructions, Understanding Standards materials etc.
- Practice all past Section A questions.
- The questions towards the end are more difficult and require more detail if they have the following wording – advantage, disadvantage, explain, benefit etc.
- Practice Section B question 1 to ensure that the candidates are prepared for the compulsory question.
- Practice questions with knowledge and evaluation so that candidates have experience of all skills required to pass the examination.
- Marking the written paper for the SQA illustrates how marks are lost and gained which is useful in training candidates on answering technique.
- Candidates can make use of bullet points to reduce the amount of writing and so save time.
- Pupils should use the mark allocation to show how many points they should make in their answer.

Prelim Examinations

Points to consider when constructing a valid prelim paper

The best way to prepare pupils for their final examination is to give them a valid prelim which is made up of:

- Correct balance of marks from Resource Management and Consumer Studies
- Tests the correct balance of KU and EV skills.
- Use questions from the previous three or four years papers as these questions are nearest the style of the current questions.
- No complete questions should be used or the paper will be invalid so mix questions from at least three different papers.
- Mix questions from Section A past questions so that a range of different areas are sampled.

Reasons given for rejecting prelim papers are:

- Key information is missing e.g. cut off scores, sources not provided; wrong paper submitted which doesn't match marking instructions.
- Examination paper made up from questions which are from which are a number of years old and therefore the style of questions has changed which leads to technical errors. Papers which are three to four years old use the updated essential knowledge and so are most appropriate.
- Older marking instructions used and not applied correctly. Marking instructions for each year are published on the web and so are available for cutting and pasting /adapting.
- If a past paper or specimen paper used in its entirety this is invalid as is a lifting a complete question – this is known as *en bloc*.
- If marking instructions are created correctly but not applied correctly the evidence will require to be remarked using the national standard of marking.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	126
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	181
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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 - 150				
A	22.1%	22.1%	40	105
B	26.5%	48.6%	48	90
C	28.7%	77.3%	52	75
D	9.4%	86.7%	17	67
No award	13.3%	100.0%	24	-

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.