



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Home Economics – Lifestyle and Consumer 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. Over 81% of the candidates who were presented passed. There has been a steady increase in the number of candidates entered for Lifestyle & Consumer Technology over the last five years indicating that the course is becoming increasingly popular with both teachers and candidates. This session there was over 34% of the candidates were from centres who were presenting for the first time. 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.

Most of the candidates who study higher Lifestyle & Consumer Technology progress from Standard Grade Home Economics (53%) although there are a significant number of new starts with no previous experience (33%). 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.

Technological Project

The majority of candidates selected the technological project which focused on the child's party, which in turn produced a number of creative food and textile solutions. This session there was clear evidence of an improved standard of work for a number of candidates however there was a slight drop in the average marks awarded for the technological project (46/70). Those candidates who made good use of the Guidance to Candidates when completing their technological project tended to score higher marks.

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 (43/80). 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 required in the evaluation answers.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Lifestyle & Consumer Technology Technological project

Candidates who made reference to the candidate guide throughout their technological 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	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.

(Tests)	
Step 2.2.	Clear recipes provided with weights of ingredients and a step by step method.
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 technique which allowed 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.

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.

Candidates are well presented for the compulsory question in Section B meaning that they scored well.

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

Technology Technological Project

Step 1	<p>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. specific age group for the party.</p> <p>A few centres issued the brief to the candidates and omitted the word textiles so the candidates lost marks as they failed to refer to all key points.</p>
Step 1.1	<p>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 – savoury, organic produce , high in calcium,</p>
Step 1.2	<p>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.</p> <p>If specification points contain a lot of detail the candidate may fail to either explain all aspects of the specification point or evaluation all aspects at a later stage.</p> <p>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.</p>
Step 2.1 (Investigations)	<p>The candidates must follow the guidance given at the back of the candidate guide on how to conduct investigations and tests.</p>

<p>& Step 3.3 (Tests)</p>	<p>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</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Conclusions should be take account of how the results of research will impact on the possible solution. Investigations are a good opportunity to get outside the classroom and obtain data from a range of relevant sources.</p>
<p>Step 2.2</p>	<p>Any textile items should have the sizes/dimensions of fabrics/textiles /trimmings identified.</p>
<p>Step 3.1</p>	<p>Time plans lose marks if they fail to give details that allow the product to be recreated e.g. cut for vegetables, size of any food that is cut, cooking times & temperatures etc</p> <p>Candidates should take care to identify if ingredients if they are relevant to the brief e.g. low in fat. 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 failed to provide weights for ingredients.</p>
<p>Step 3.2</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Step 3.3</p>	<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>
<p>Step 4.1</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Step 4.2</p>	<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 project that has allowed the candidate to come up with their evaluative comment.</p> <p>If candidates identify the words skills, resources and time it may help them to use these words in their evaluation.</p>
	<p>Check exemplification on the Understanding Standards Website.</p>

Areas which candidates found demanding

Technological Project

Written paper

Section A

Q3	Some confused properties of cotton with those of breathable membranes.
Q5	Candidates who omitted °C lost a mark.
Q7	Poor knowledge of this abbreviation.
Q8	Organisations that enforce the Food Safety Act 1990 – many thought it was the Food Standards Authority.
Q11	Must indicate advantage and disadvantage before marks can be awarded.
Q14	Credit unions not understood by a large number of the candidates.

Section B

Question 1	
1a)	Some candidates did not understand the term ‘economic support’.
1b)	Candidates had knowledge but answers were not evaluative and so lost marks.
1c)	Poor understanding of the role of the organisation Shelter and confused it with sheltered housing.
1d)	Not all candidates linked their explanations to choice of electrical products.
1e)	Candidates confused credit sale and credit cards.
Question 2	
2a)	Some candidates did not answer the nutrition evaluation well because they did not have a complete knowledge of nutrition. Some candidates made mistakes in judging whether there was too much or too little of the nutrient in comparison to RNI.
2c)	Candidates confused Fibre content labels with the NSP found in food products.
2e)	Poor knowledge of DEFRA.
Question 3	

3a)	Candidates confused First Production Run and Launch when explaining the product development strategy. If explanations were not applied to the development of the jacket marks were not awarded.
3b)	Poor knowledge about breathable membranes so candidates unable to evaluate effectively.
3c)	Candidates showed knowledge of promotional techniques however as they did not always manage to successfully evaluate each technique in relation to the jacket marks were not awarded.
3d)	Knowledge about Sale & Supply of Goods to Consumers Regulations.
3e)	Poor link to how food poisoning in the packed lunch could be prevented.
Question 4	
4b)	Specific knowledge of dietary targets was poor. Candidates did not know the details of each target.
4c)	Knowledge/facts about NHS were good but marks were not awarded unless they were linked to ways of supporting the family.
4e)	A number of candidates thought the way of solving the problem was to take out a loan. Answers had to be linked to ways of helping the family manager their debt.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

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 mark the technological project for at least a couple of years 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.

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 when they have the following wording – advantage, disadvantage, explain, benefit etc.
- Practice Section B question 1 to ensure that the candidates can answer Nutrition evaluation questions. A few candidates have gaps in their knowledge of nutrition.
- Dietary targets – a number of pupils did not know the whole dietary targets in sufficient detail for higher. 5 a Day is not acceptable at higher. Pupils should know the full target e.g. Increase consumption of fruit and vegetables to 400g per day.
- There is even confusion with the food categories used in the target.
- Marking the written paper 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.
- Encourage pupils to use the code of KU and EV so they can formulate their answers in the correctly to earn the marks.

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.

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	232
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	294
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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	23.8%	23.8%	70	105
B	28.6%	52.4%	84	90
C	27.2%	79.6%	80	75
D	9.5%	89.1%	28	67
No award	10.9%	100.0%	32	-

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.