



## External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	<b>Product Design</b>
Level	<b>Advanced Higher</b>

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

### Extended Case Study

There was a continued improvement in this element with the average mark reaching 90/150 (2009 — 87, 2008 — 77, 2007 — 75, 2006 — 69).

The marks awarded ranged from 24–150.

### Written Paper

The average mark in the Written Paper was 48/100 (2009 — 49, 2008 — 45, 2007 — 52).

The marks awarded ranged from 22–81.

### Overall

The average overall mark rose slightly to 138 (2009 — 136, 2008 — 122).

61% of candidates achieved grade C or better (2009 — 58, 2008 — 44, 2007 — 51).

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Extended Case Study

Performance in the first three sections of the Extended Case Study maintained the improvement shown last year. Many candidates produced very good work in Sections 2 and 3.

### Written Paper

Candidates performed best in Question 1, displaying good knowledge of materials and processes. Question 4 also produced high quality answers from the majority of candidates.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Extended Case Study**

The average mark in Section 4 was 8 out of a possible 20. This is largely due to the Section not being completed by a significant number of candidates.

Although Section 2 was generally well done (average mark 48 out of 80), and exceptionally well done by a number of candidates, a significant number scored badly. This Section accounts for 80 of the 150 marks available and it is therefore important that candidates gain as many marks as possible. In order to do so, candidates must demonstrate a clear understanding of materials and processes, generate and explore alternative solutions and make clear, justified decisions. A large number of candidates produce superficial work which is often simply restyling of existing products.

### **Written Paper**

Many candidates are still not displaying the depth of knowledge and exam techniques required to do very well at this level. This was particularly evident in Question 5 where a large number of candidates failed to develop their answers. Questions 2 and 3 caused the same problems for a number of candidates, with many of them not constructing their answer and drifting into repetition.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **Extended Case Study**

**It must be noted that the Extended Case Study mark allocation and guidance have been amended for Diet 2011.**

Centres are encouraged to make themselves aware of the new guidance (available on SQA's website: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)) and direct candidates appropriately.

The new mark allocation will mean that it is even more important that candidates do more than simply restyle existing products. Candidates should be encouraged throughout the Course to identify problems with existing products and to consider solving the problem(s) in the Extended Case Study. This is likely to produce better evidence than trying to restyle a whole product.

### **Written Paper**

Candidates who performed well in the Written Paper clearly had a deep knowledge and understanding of the Course content. They were able to give clear examples of products, processes, historical references, designers, successes and failures etc to illustrate their answers. It was clearly evident that this knowledge had been picked up during the Unit work. Centres are encouraged to create opportunities for their candidates to gain appropriate knowledge while undertaking the Units.

A number of candidates were unable to construct clear answers. Centres are encouraged to give their candidates the opportunity to build their skills in constructing the extended answers required at this level.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	57
Number of resulted entries in 2010	72

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark — 250				
A	15.3%	15.3%	11	175
B	23.6%	38.9%	17	150
C	31.9%	70.8%	23	125
D	6.9%	77.8%	5	112
No award	22.2%	100.0%	16	—

### 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.