



Subject	<b>Building Construction</b>
Level	<b>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

There were no changes to the course content or structure this year and the marking criteria and standards remain the same. Candidate performance was similar to last year.

### Project

Work was generally well presented although some of the manual drawing work was poor. Some of the construction details presented appeared to be similar amongst candidates from the same centre.

### Question Paper

There were no major issues over the difficulty of the paper.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

In section A, questions 2, 6, 7 and 8 were answered well although these questions have been used in the past and should be straight forward.

In Section B questions 9 and 10 were the most popular and generally answered reasonably well.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Section A.

Question 1 – types of brick bond and parts of a brick – very few got this correct.

Question 3 – Should be straight forward but very few got this correct.

Question 4 – Only the butterfly wire tie was familiar to most candidates.

Question 5 – This was a demanding question and it proved to be the case. Very few candidates could sketch a roof verge detail. Most opted for a roof eaves detail and in doing so could not show the main components outlined in the question.

### Section B

Question 11 – This question was not selected by most candidates.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

As commented last year, the standard of many construction details produced as sketches was poor and out of date. This was most notable in the project where centres appear to provide candidates with a very poor detail to copy and submit in their portfolio.

Centres should encourage candidates to research the details requested in the project and use the materials available electronically online as reference. The web site of the Scottish Building Standards has a comprehensive library of Accredited Construction Details (Scotland) and centres should refer to them.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	39
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	36
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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	5.6%	5.6%	2	140
B	22.2%	27.8%	8	120
C	22.2%	50.0%	8	100
D	11.1%	61.1%	4	90
No award	38.9%	100.0%	14	-

## 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.