



## External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	<b>Graphic Communication</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

Although centres are experienced in the delivery of the Advanced Higher Graphic Communication Course, this was not reflected in the fairly average performance produced by the candidates this year. Candidates are not well prepared for the knowledge aspects of the Course. There is some evidence that centres are acting on advice given in previous years' reports. However, the majority of candidates have great difficulty in producing clear, accurate solutions to the drawing questions along with good descriptive answers.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

There were very few areas within the paper in which candidates consistently performed well.

Question 1: Candidates partially demonstrated a high level of success in naming the Design Principles. Many of the candidates were unable to give a good description of the Design Principle and lost 50% of the marks.

Question 2: Candidates demonstrated that they had a very clear understanding of the basic DTP terms requested.

Question 3: Candidates demonstrated a high level of success in naming the Design Elements. However, many of the candidates were unable to give a good description of the Design Elements and lost 50% of the marks.

Question 9: Candidates demonstrated clearly that they were able to calculate the true lengths and use them to draw the surface development. Accuracy could have been to a higher standard which would have allowed more marks to be allocated.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

Question 2: Some candidates were unable to give a good description of their chosen Design Principle as it applied to the given document.

Question 3: Candidates were unable to give a good description of their chosen Design Principle as it is applied to the given document.

Question 4: Candidates' responses to this question were very varied. A number of candidates created their own balance. Centres and candidates are reminded that only the terminology referred to in the Arrangements document, which is published on the Advanced Higher Graphic Communication page of SQA's website, will be considered as the correct response. Overall, candidates missed the opportunity to gain the four marks allocated.

Question 5: Candidates' responses to this question were poor. Many candidates clearly did not understand the commands or that a description and sketches were required to gain full marks.

Question 6: The responses from the candidates clearly indicated that they had not fully understood the printing terms listed. Centres may be advised to encourage candidates to research printing terms and create a self-study document.

Question 7: The responses from the candidates clearly indicated that they had not fully understood the terms listed. Centres may be advised to encourage candidates to research printing/paper terms and create a self-study document.

Question 8: Many candidates treated the question as if it were the interpenetration of two cylinders. Attempts at the development were poor with respect to accuracy.

Question 9: A high percentage of candidates were able to calculate the true lengths of the transition piece but they did not accurately transpose them to draw the surface development. A number of candidates did not open the transition at the position indicated.

Question 10: Candidates' responses to this question were poor. Very few candidates were able to draw the true shape requested. It would appear from the responses that the position of the oblique cone was not clearly understood.

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

### **General**

There is evidence that 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 are reminded that they should also encourage candidates to use the appropriate terminology when answering the knowledge and interpretation questions.
- ◆ Centres are reminded that there is a BSI symbol information sheet which is available from SQA's website and are encouraged to make this available for candidates.
- ◆ Centres are reminded that candidates should be made aware of the terminology used by SQA. In particular, centres should explain to candidates how to handle different types of questions in order to achieve maximum marks. Past question papers and marking instructions are available on SQA's website.
- ◆ Centres are encouraged to remind candidates to read each question very carefully and ensure that their response accurately answers the actual question asked. It is good practice to encourage candidates to re-read a question immediately after writing their answer to check their understanding of the question and the response provided.
- ◆ Centres are reminded that candidates must provide only one response to any question. Where they have made more than one attempt at an answer, any work which they wish a Marker to ignore must be scored through.

Candidates should be made aware of the correct use of the 'command' words and how to respond to 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.

Centres are reminded that there are no longer any half marks within the marking instructions of the question paper, and this should be reflected in any prelim papers. Prelim papers produced with half marks will be invalid for use in Assessment Appeals.

There is room for improvement in performance in all areas, even for the most able candidates. Candidates should be given the opportunity to increase their depth of knowledge; for example, when being taught about serif and sans serif fonts they should explore the three main groups of serif fonts.

There is an impression from the responses of the candidates that, due to the high percentage of the total marks available for the two folios, inadequate time is being spent by the candidates on the knowledge and drawing aspects of the Course.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2010	797
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	903
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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	38.1%	38.1%	344	148
B	33.3%	71.4%	301	127
C	19.7%	91.1%	178	107
D	3.4%	94.6%	31	97
No award	5.4%	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.