



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Graphic Communication
Level(s)	Advanced 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

The overall standard of response of the candidates was varied. The question paper responses indicated that there were a number of candidates who had been very well prepared for the examination, while others were not fully prepared. This was particularly evident in responses to the Printing Terms, Design Elements and Design Principles questions this year.

As in previous years, it was evident from the responses that many of the candidates did not read the questions carefully. Some candidates did not give both a sketch and a clear explanation when asked to do so in Question 6 (a).

In general, the drawing questions were answered well. Within the drawing questions it was very clear that many candidates did take the time to draw the solutions to the questions more accurately than previous years.

Within the written questions only a few responses were in-depth, with good detail and carefully written. Others were very basic and demonstrated only a limited knowledge of the subject matter.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Question 3: Most candidates knew the typographical features requested.

Question 5: Most candidates clearly understood the types of balance and the DTP terms requested.

Question 6 (a): Most candidates knew the Boolean terms and responded with diagrams similar to that given in past question papers.

Question 7: Most candidates demonstrated that they had a very good understanding of measured perspective. Greater accuracy would have increased individual scores.

Question 9: Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of right cones.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question 1: Although most candidates could name a design principle, their description, relative to the given document, lacked detail and depth of knowledge.

Question 2: Although most candidates could name a design element their description, relative to the given document, lacked detail and depth of knowledge.

Question 4: Most candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge of basic printing industry terms.

Question 6 (b) and (c): Most candidates were unable to give a clear in-depth description to the standard of Advanced Higher level.

Question 8: Most candidates demonstrated that they had difficulty with a transition piece starting with a rectangle and finishing with a lower circle.

Question 10: Many candidates treated the oblique cone as a right cone. A large number of candidates did not find the required true lengths to complete the surface development accurately.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

Knowledge and Understanding

Centres may wish to give guidance to candidates at the beginning of the Course on the standard of the quality, depth and accuracy of answers required for full marks at Advanced Higher level.

Candidates require to have a more in-depth knowledge of Design Elements and Design Principles if they are going to answer successfully questions that require them to produce a more extended answer.

Centres may wish to consider giving emphasis to the learning and teaching of Design Elements and Principles to address the continual poor in-depth responses provided by some candidates in this area.

Centres may wish to consider teaching the importance of answering the written questions with very clear sketches, and very good descriptions, as a separate topic to help candidates achieve maximum marks at this level.

As in previous years, centres are encouraged to stress to candidates the importance of reading the question before formulating their answer. If the question asks for a sketch to be included, they must include a relevant quality sketch in their answer, along with the appropriate description, to achieve the marks available.

Centres are reminded that half marks no longer feature in the assessment of this Course (and this should be reflected in prelims submitted for assessment appeals purposes). As advised in past Subject Update Letters — prelim papers produced with half marks will not be valid for use in assessment appeals.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2011	903
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	1,011
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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 Mark200				
A	36.8%	36.8%	372	160
B	34.0%	70.8%	344	140
C	19.2%	90.0%	194	121
D	2.6%	92.6%	26	111
No award	7.4%	100.0%	75	-

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.