



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Hospitality: Professional Cookery
Level	Intermediate 2 and 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

This has been another successful year for Intermediate 2 and Higher Professional Cookery. The standard of candidate performance was high in the external assessment and this was reflected by results produced for certification. Similar to last year, both the practical assessment and Question Paper demonstrated excellent technological skills and abilities and knowledge and understanding. It is evident that centres are becoming more familiar with the expectations of the Question Papers at both Intermediate 2 and Higher levels, and that candidate performance has improved.

Relating to the practical performance at both levels, many candidates perform at levels above the Course requirements. External Verifiers commented on the very high standard of lecturers' understanding of national standards and commended them for the professional way in which they hosted the events.

Lecturers involved with the delivery of both levels should be commended for their efforts.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Hospitality Professional Cookery Intermediate 2

The majority of candidates performed well in the practical activity.

With regards to the Question Paper, candidates responded thoroughly to the Safety and Food Hygiene questions, and the majority of candidates answered Culinary Terms, Vegetable Cuts and Cookery Processes well.

Hospitality Professional Cookery Higher

The candidates' responded thoroughly to Menu Planning, Food Costing, and the Storage and Quality of Commodities. There was a continued improvement relating to Food Hygiene and HACCP.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Hospitality Professional Cookery Intermediate 2

Some candidates either did not attempt the full range of questions or misinterpreted questions and presented poorly structured inaccurate responses. It is recommended that candidates practice past papers in preparation for the examination.

Hospitality Professional Cookery Higher

With regards to the external assessment, some of the candidates' choices of dishes were disappointing in terms of what is expected at Higher level.

The feedback for the Question Paper is similar to last year in that some candidates find it demanding to be descriptive when responding and so are omitting detail, eg this was evident in question 2c ('Describe, in a detailed recipe style, the preparation and cooking of the following dish'). It is recommended that candidates practice this type of question in preparation for the examination.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

For both Intermediate 2 and Higher, it is advisable to continue to invest time with candidates throughout the academic year to develop and practise examination techniques. This could be linked by issuing worksheets in conjunction with practical activities to contextualise the knowledge relating to health and safety, food calculations and food hygiene — paying specific attention to temperature control and HACCP.

Specifically for Higher, continue to involve the candidates with research methodology as this would assist the learning process in terms of menu creativity and achieving the appropriate level of skill for the dishes selected. Continue to raise and apply the importance of core/soft skills to gain additional marks in the exam and, most importantly, for employment and or progression to a higher level. It is also recommended to continue supporting the candidates individually and collectively.

Lecturers are encouraged to network with colleagues and other colleges and to continually update their skills and knowledge via academic/scholarship activity/industrial placements to give all candidates the best learning experience possible.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2010	77
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	92
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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 100				
A	25.0%	25.0%	23	73
B	50.0%	75.0%	46	62
C	15.2%	90.2%	14	51
D	3.3%	93.5%	3	45
No award	6.5%	100.0%	6	-

Statistical information: update on Courses

Higher

Number of resulted entries in 2010	72
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	77
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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	32.5%	32.5%	25	70
B	37.7%	70.1%	29	60
C	20.8%	90.9%	16	50
D	1.3%	92.2%	1	45
No award	7.8%	100.0%	6	-

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.