



Internal Assessment Report 2010: Home Economics (197)

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in National Qualifications in this subject.

Standard Grade

Titles/levels of Standard Grade qualifications verified

Practical and Organisational Skills: Objectives 5, 6, 7

General comments

There are centres who continue to use the old pro forma and assessment structure for the practical assignment Course Objective 7, and display a lack of understanding with regard to their requirements/preparation for the verification process. This is predominantly the case where Home Economics appears to be a part of a faculty grouping.

All centres are advised to access the up-to-date information which can be obtained from the Home Economics page on the SQA website.

There are excellent practical skills and standards of hygiene and safety demonstrated by candidates in most of the centres visited.

The majority of centres are marking to standard and are well organised.

Most centres make good use of the Course Arrangements document and the SQA website to ensure that they accurately carry out assessment procedures.

Practical assessments are carried out a minimum of three times over the duration of the Course, and where possible staff cross mark the Course Objective 7 pro forma and the carrying out of the practical exercises.

In some areas of the country, centres share examples of good practice with other centres at local network meetings.

Areas of good practice

Course Objective 7 — practical assignment

Assignment brief

Centres are advised to use the brief suggested in the Course Arrangements document. Briefs with fewer words may be preferable for most candidates; this is because they will have to provide a more limited number of explanations, therefore will require less time to carry out this area of work.

- ◆ Analysing — although most candidates easily identify key points, some have difficulty providing an explanation. It may be helpful to link some words together in a single key point. For example, in the assignment illustrated below, the key points in brackets can be linked together:

'Friends are (organising a barbecue). (Create a selection) of (side-dishes) and deserts.'

- ◆ Planning — recipes chosen must provide a minimum of 100 minutes' practical work, and consequently should be related to the ability of the candidate. If the candidate does not make good use of their time and ability, they will underachieve and be awarded a lower grade than they are capable of.
- ◆ Explanations — candidates frequently fail to explain why their chosen items link to the key/additional points. An example of a good explanation for the choice of items for the key point 'nursery school' would be as follows:
'The items chosen will all suit the age range of the children in the nursery as there are no strong or spicy flavours that will put them off eating the foods. I will make sure that I don't use too many herbs and spices on the pizza as children may not like them.'

Evaluating

Foundation and General sections (pages 9, 10 and 11 of the pro forma) are well done in most cases. However, many candidates still have difficulty when writing evaluative comments in the Credit section (pages 12 and 13 of the pro forma).

An evaluative comment at Credit level on final items would be as follows:

'The pizza faces were good for the party as they looked fun because I decorated them to look like smiley faces with bits of pepper and tomato. They were spoilt a bit because some of the cheese melted over my design so I would use a bit less cheese next time.'

Course Objectives 5 and 6 — practical exercise

Practical exercises continue to be carried out well in the majority of centres. Candidates are well prepared and produce high-quality work in the allocated time.

There is still evidence of candidates being restricted by the nature of the practical exercises determined by the centre, including limited complexity and combination of skills demonstrated. In some centres candidates of varying abilities all cook the same or similar single dish. For example, all candidates cook a variation of a pasta dish.

Some centres are unsure about the combination of skills required to gain Credit level. The Arrangements document on the SQA website can be referred to for the level potential for various combinations of recipes.

Set recipes and tasks allocated to candidates do not allow the candidate to demonstrate their potential. A limited choice of practical exercises should be provided, and appropriate advice given. Candidates should be offered a choice of up to six practical exercises (two at each level: F, G and C) and should be directed to the exercise that most meets their own ability level.

Dovetailing should be encouraged with regard to carrying out the practical exercise. This will allow the candidate to reach their full potential in most cases. A good example of dovetailing at Credit level is illustrated below:

Practical exercise — spaghetti Bolognese with lemon meringue pie

1. Make pastry and chill.
2. Prepare vegetable for sauce.
3. Prepare pastry flan and bake blind (10 minutes).
4. Brown mince and boil water for spaghetti.
5. Cook pastry for a further 10 minutes.
6. Complete preparation of Bolognese sauce and cook.
7. Prepare pie filling and fill flan case.
8. Cook spaghetti.
9. Make meringue and complete pie.
10. Serve completed dishes.

Areas for improvement

Centres should ensure that candidates make good use of all available time to demonstrate their skills. At present, some candidates do not have enough to do in the time allocated.