



**Standard Grade 2012  
Internal Assessment Report  
Home Economics**

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to centres on verification in Standard Grade qualifications in this subject.

# Standard Grade

Home Economics

## General comments

The national standards for Standard Grade Home Economics are generally understood and adhered to in most centres. Where there was a lack of understanding, Home Economics tended to be part of a faculty grouping or, in some cases, had an inexperienced principal teacher who had been recently appointed, or inexperienced staff working in the department. In all of these cases staff welcomed the advice given by visiting External Verifiers. Centres are reminded that information relating to national standards can be found on the Standard Grade Home Economics page on SQA's website. Centres should pay special attention to comments made in the Standard Grade Internal Assessment Reports for 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 as well as the guidance document for teachers/lecturers.

Excellent standards of hygiene and safety were demonstrated by candidates in all centres visited. Most candidates were able to demonstrate a high standard of food preparation skills.

Some centres had difficulty in complying with the national standards when grading Course Objective 7 (Practical Assignment) but had little or no difficulty with complying with national standards when grading Course Objectives 5 and 6.

Visiting External Verifiers gave detailed advice and instruction with regard to any misunderstanding related to the grading of Course Objective 7. In a number of cases it was agreed, that in order to improve candidate grades, another Course Objective 7 assessment would be carried out before the end of the session.

Staff in the centres visited made Verifiers very welcome and appreciated the help and advice given.

## Administration of assessments

Generally, Course Objectives 5 and 6 were accurately marked. A large number of centres cross-marked, which is commended. Correct procedures were followed with regard to the carrying out and recording of final grades.

The majority of practical exercises used by centres are appropriate as they take into account candidate ability, time and resources. Centres should refer to SQA's website to check the potential level of a practical exercise and to ensure it is appropriate for the time available.

Most centres followed SQA guidelines and carried out a minimum of three Course Objective 7 assessments. The final assessment should be carried out by the candidate without assistance. Centres showed evidence of internal verification in all areas of Course Objective 7 assessments.

## Areas of good practice

### Course Objective 7

Centres are advised to use assignment briefs suggested in the Course Arrangements document. Most centres follow this advice but a number of centres are now able to make up their own suitable assignments with a degree of confidence.

**Analysing** — Candidates managed to identify key and additional points with little difficulty. In many cases they were able to link some of the key points making the explanation, of each key point, more straightforward.

**Planning** — In most cases candidates chose practical activities that made good use of time, skills and resources. In all cases, centres ensured that a minimum of 100 minutes was allocated to carry out the practical activity section in the assignment.

**Evaluating** — Foundation and General sections (pages 9, 10 and 11 of the pro forma) were generally well done, however, there are still cases where candidates find it difficult to distinguish between 'taste', 'texture' and 'appearance'. In some centres, candidates only tackled the Credit section of the proforma. In a large number of cases this meant that the candidate failed this section, bringing their overall grade down. It is advisable for all candidates to complete pages 9, 10 and 11 of the pro forma in case their attempt at the Credit section does not meet the national standard.

### Course Objectives 5 and 6

Practical exercises continue to be carried out very well in the majority of centres. Staff are well organised and competent. Candidates show good use of time, skills and resources, and work in a safe and hygienic manner. There is evidence of accurate marking and cross-marking in most centres, ensuring that an agreed standard is applied in line with the national standard.

'Dovetailing' was evident in most centres allowing candidates to reach their full potential. A good example of dovetailing at Credit level is illustrated below:

**Practical exercise** — Chicken Korma with Rice and Apple Tart in 50 minutes.

1. Make pastry and chill.
2. Cut chicken into 2 cm cubes and set aside in a clean bowl.
3. Peel and chop onion. Wash and remove seeds from pepper then dice.
4. Collect curry powder, stock cube, creamed coconut, tomato puree, single cream, cooking oil and long grain rice. Set all ingredients aside.
5. Wash and dry all surfaces, remove any peelings etc and wash hands thoroughly.
6. Set oven to 200 °C or regular 7 on a gas cooker.
7. Roll out pastry into two rounds. Place one round on a foil plate and put aside the other round on a floured board.
8. Cut the apple into quarters and remove the core. Peel apple and cut into thin slices. Put half of the slices on the pastry (on foil plate) and sprinkle with sugar.

9. Put the rest of the apple on top of the sugar. Wet the edges of the pastry with water and then place the other round of pastry on top. Press down the edges.
10. Trim off excess pastry and make a small hole in the centre. Place on a baking sheet.
11. Place in the pre-heated oven for 20 minutes or until golden brown.
12. Remove all peelings etc from the work area.
13. Put a large pan of cold, salted water on to boil.
14. Heat oil in stew pan and fry chicken until cooked through. Remove and set aside.
15. Fry vegetables in the stew pan for 3 minutes then add curry powder. Cook for a further 2 minutes.
16. Put rice into large pan of boiling water and bring back to boil until cooked (12–15 minutes).
17. Remove tart from oven, sprinkle with sugar and leave aside to cool.
18. Turn the oven off but place a plate in it to warm for serving the curry later.
19. Make up the chicken stock and add to the stew pan along with the chicken, and tomato puree. Cook for ten minutes. Add cream and coconut and cook for a further 3 minutes until warmed through.
20. Test the rice, drain and serve on warmed plate. Place Chicken Korma in centre, garnish and serve. Serve the apple tart later.

## Specific areas for improvement

### Course Objective 7

Some centres opt to use a very long assignment brief, which disadvantages candidates. Candidates generally benefit from being given relatively short briefs. Centres must ensure that the briefs have a minimum of five key points and two additional points.

**Analysing** — Some candidates had difficulty in providing adequate explanations for all of the identified key points. In many cases the candidates would benefit by linking some of the key points together. For example:

<Make><suitable items> to<provide food> for an <18<sup>th</sup>.birthday>< party>

In a number of centres staff marked 'statements' as correct in this section. An example of a statement is as follows:

'I will be able to **make** more than one item for the party in the time available.'

An example of an 'explanation' is as follows:

'I will choose to **make** items that I have made before because I know I have the skills to make them. This is important if I wish to provide an item that I would be proud to serve.'

It is necessary to provide only **one** explanation for each key/additional point.

**Planning** — In some cases candidates chose practical activities unsuitable for their abilities. This can result in under achievement. There was evidence of candidates trying to make too many dishes in the time allocated and, in some

cases, making too many very simple dishes. In some centres candidates did not tick all of the key points with regard to their chosen dishes. Two complex dishes or four simple dishes chosen from a range of six dishes would be appropriate in most cases.

Candidates frequently failed to explain why their choice of items linked to the key/additional points. An example of a good explanation for the choice of items for key point 'make' would be as follows:

'I have chosen to make a decorated sponge and mini quiches. I have made these items before so I know I have the time, skills and resources to make them. They can also be made in advance and stored for the event.'

This explanation would count as two explanatory points when marking. Most candidates benefit from naming the chosen items when linking them to the key/additional point.

**Evaluating** — Candidates often had difficulty writing evaluative comments in the Credit section (pages 12 and 13 of the pro forma). An evaluative comment at Credit level on 'analysing' for example would be as follows:

'I carried out the analysing section quite easily as I managed to identify five key points and two additional points. I linked some of my key points together and this helped with my explanations. I knew it was important to use my skills, previously learned, in this section to make sure that I was on the right track when making my food choices in the planning section.'

### **Course Objectives 5 and 6**

There was evidence of some candidates being restricted by the nature of practical exercises offered. In some centres all of the candidates used identical recipes therefore no account was taken of varying abilities. Some candidates were disadvantaged as they were unable to demonstrate the complexity and combination of skills that they were capable of. Candidates should be given a choice of practical exercises at differing levels (F/G/C). Centres should refer to the Arrangements document on SQA's website for guidance on practical exercises suitable for different abilities.

Practical exercises should always allow for an element of dovetailing. This usually means making more than one item.

For verification purposes, it may be that all candidates in a particular centre are Credit level, for example. If this is the case, all candidates must be presented at Credit level and be given a Credit level exercise to carry out during the verification exercise. In most cases, the six candidates selected should show a range of abilities where at all possible. Candidates should be directed to a choice of exercise that most meets their ability.