

Moderation Feedback

Assessment Panel:

Construction Craft

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
included in this report**

**Practical Craft Skills:
Woodworking Skills – Int. 1 and Int. 2
Engineering Craft Skills – Int. 1 and Int. 2**

Visiting Moderation

General comments on visiting moderation activity

On this the third year of Practical Craft Skills the courses generally were found to have been very well conducted by all and there were no real difficulties encountered in the assessment moderation process. A greater number of centres presented in an exemplary manner with outstanding results in the quality of craft skills. There was also evidence of a very high standard of teaching and course management, in some cases in difficult circumstances of centre development and refurbishment. It was also encouraging to find that a higher number of female candidates are taking the course and scoring high grades.

Generally, the preparation and presentation of materials for Moderation was conducted to a very high professional standard and the internal assessment was found to be almost 100% accurate in terms of concordance with the national standard.

Candidates are motivated towards PCS because:

- ◆ It is a hands-on practical activity
- ◆ There is no involvement in design
- ◆ There is no external exam
- ◆ Teaching staff say that now that the course is embedded in the curriculum and they have become familiar with the administration procedures, recording and reporting, class management and time scale issues they are finding the course much easier to teach.

Specific issues identified

- ◆ While there is still evidence of a drop-off in candidate numbers before completion of the course, there is evidence this year of a small number of centres not having course projects completed before moderation takes place. This had resulted in a re-visit having to take place. It must be made clear to centres that the course project should be complete and internally assessed before moderation. If a centre finds, after agreeing a date for moderation, that they may not be finished on time they must call SQA and have the visit postponed.
- ◆ The possible reasons why some centres are finding difficulty in completing the course project in time for moderation are:
 - Centres running the course for the first time and are unfamiliar with course management and timing.
 - Candidates taking too long to complete unit projects.
 - Candidate poor attendance.
 - Candidate spending more time on other subjects, which they find more demanding on their time.
- ◆ Some centres are providing materials for candidate project work, which has been machined by the technician to the exact sizes specified, while other centres provide material, which requires candidates to plane to size. This must be taken into account in the assessment and perhaps could be indicated on the Project Assessment Summary Form. Clearer guidance should be provided for centres on this issue.
- ◆ In a very small number of centres candidates have been allowed to adopt a 'Craft and Design' approach to the Woodworking Skills course project. Instead of being given a standard NAB drawing and instructed to lift sizes on to the appropriate material and generate skills evidence accordingly, candidates

have been given freedom, to a greater or lesser extent, to introduce their own interpretations and 'do their own thing'. This of course is contrary to the spirit and letter of the Assessment Instrument specifications contained in the Subject Guide and must not continue if the candidate skills evidence is to be maximised.

- ◆ It is becoming apparent among course presenters that there is insufficient scope for differentiation between Int. 1 and Int. 2 in the NAB clock drawing and specification. As a course project and AI at present the only prescribed differentiation are the joints in the flat frame. An Int. 1 candidate is expected to form halving joints and rebated mortice and tenon joints are intended as appropriate to Int. 2 candidates. What is now tending to happen is that most candidates are attempting the mortice and tenon version, felt by many to be less difficult. As I have stated before, most candidates find the coner-halving more difficult, whereas as long as stub M&T shoulders haunches are close (and with softwood this is relatively easy) most candidates can produce a good joint. Since the range of processes tends to be the same for all candidates, the ultimate measure of differentiation at present therefore is the overall sharpness and chamfers, tolerances, quality of joint fitting and turnery, end grain and overall surface finishing, freedom from gross blemishes, and the preparation and application of a surface finish. The internal assessment of candidates that is conducted subjectively before moderation should take all of the skills evidence into account and balance the degree of independence as the course progressed. Many centres tend to enter all candidates a Int.2 and drop down those who fail to achieve the Int. 2 standard criteria.

Feedback to centres

- ◆ A number of minor changes were made by centres to the National Assessment Bank materials in particular the Clock and the Bike Clamp. In the event these were only minor changes and were recorded for the moderator.
- ◆ In the case of the Bike Clamp a number of centres have made changes to the threaded spindle component. Instead of candidates having to step-turn this material down from a 25 dia. Bar to a 10 dia., a 25 mm dia. bar is drilled and brazed to the end of a 10 mm dia. Bar. Thus increasing the range of processes to be attempted.
- ◆ In the case of Woodworking Skills projects it must be stressed again that down scaling of the material section sizes may disadvantage candidates at the lower end of the ability range.
- ◆ It should be stressed that centres can assist the moderation process further by inserting subjective notes for each candidate to support the 'indication of degree of independence' on the Project Assessment Summary form. Examples might be:
 - Reasons for being marked down on a particular process
 - Details of poor attendance or absence through illness.
 - Details of changes in rate of performance over the course.
 - Details of re assessment performance.
 - Whether the Technician prepared materials to the exact sizes specified, or whether the candidates had to plane to size by hand.
- ◆ To further assist in the moderation process centres should ensure that the following information is communicated when approached to arrange the moderation visit.
 - The name of the source project (whether NAB or prior moderated)
 - If candidates cannot complete the project by the suggested date of moderation make contact with the SQA in time to postpone the visit.
 - If centres have altered sizes on NAB or prior moderated materials, drawings should be produced showing these alterations.
 - Whether the course project will be completely finished or not and if there will be evidence of surface finishing.
- ◆ In the case of Woodworking Skills, centres should be advised to select and provide timber materials of such quality, in terms of hardness and seasoning, which will in no way disadvantage candidates.
- ◆ In a very small number of centres candidates have been allowed to adopt a 'Craft and Design' approach to the Woodworking Skills course project. Instead of being given a standard NAB drawing and instructed to lift sizes on to the appropriate material and generate skills evidence accordingly, candidates have been given more freedom, to a greater or lesser extent, to introduce their own interpretations and 'do their own thing'. This of course is contrary to the spirit and letter of the instruction contained in the Subject Guide and must not continue if skills evidence is to be maximised.
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