



## External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Mental Health Care
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests.

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

For a third year, all presenting centres opted for the Dementia option for the Mental Health Care Higher. There were fewer entries than in 2013.

Most centres accurately estimated candidate performance. As in previous years centres still continue to present candidates who are clearly not working at the standard required for SCQF level 6. However, fewer candidates had been allowed to proceed with unworkable plans.

A minority of centres continue to ignore the assessment conditions, which are clearly stated in the Mental Health Care External Assessment document.

There was evidence of candidates completing their work in invigilated conditions, clearly disadvantaging them, when most centres had followed the guidance which clearly states 'supervised conditions'.

Centres still fail to impose the word-count limits on candidates. Centres should ensure that candidates adhere to the word count limit which is clearly stated in the project brief. Candidates should also clearly state the word count on the submitted work.

As in previous years, centres still fail to identify plagiarism and submit work that is clearly not the candidate's own. Candidates continue to copy long passages from websites or reports with no attempt at referencing. A few centres were overly prescriptive in their guidance, which resulted in several candidates producing almost identical pieces of work that appeared to be plagiarised.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

- ◆ The standard of written English continues to improve.
- ◆ There was an improvement in the responses to the planning section of the project, and whilst candidates still struggle with the difference between aims and objectives, there was an overall improvement in relevance of content.
- ◆ The evaluation section of the project was the strongest section overall.
- ◆ Many candidates demonstrated a robust knowledge and understanding of the relevant legislation and were able to apply this accurately to the family in the case study.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Plan

- ◆ Many candidates still find it difficult to distinguish between an aim and an objective.

- ◆ Many plans were well in excess of the 500 word limit.
- ◆ Candidates still incorrectly identify legislation at the planning stage. This is then followed through to the development stage, with fewer marks being awarded due to the inaccuracy of information supplied by the candidate.
- ◆ A substantial number of candidates planned to use online support forums as a method of research. This is concerning, given the highly sensitive and personal nature of the content on these sites. It was felt that using this as a source of information was breaching care values.

### **Developing Stage**

- ◆ Candidates remain unclear about the role of a CPN, and this is clearly demonstrated when they write from the CPN viewpoint.
- ◆ The Needs section of the case study report continues to be poorly completed, with many candidates failing to identify the range of needs required.
- ◆ Many candidates failed to demonstrate an understanding of dementia and how this impacts on those living with it.
- ◆ Conclusions were very poorly completed. Many candidates provided a synopsis of the case study rather than drawing any conclusions.
- ◆ When making recommendations to meet the needs of the family, many candidates focused solely on Mary and Jack, forgetting that Robert, the son, also had needs.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **General**

- ◆ Centres should direct candidates appropriately by being familiar with the project brief, External Assessment Report, the Arrangements document and any available exemplar material.
- ◆ Candidates should adhere to the recommended word-count for each stage, and should be advised to state clearly the word-count for the work they have produced for each section. They should be reminded that where too few words are given, they miss opportunities for gaining marks; and where they significantly exceed the word-count, responses will not be clear, concise or focused on the important issues.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that internal verification takes place prior to submission of the candidate work.
- ◆ The 'Your coursework' document should be made available to all candidates. Centres should ensure that all candidates fully understand SQA's rules on plagiarism

- ◆ Centres should adhere to the conditions of assessment — not all sections of the project need to be invigilated, and also some sections are not ‘open book’.
- ◆ Candidates should be capable of working at SCQF level 6 before being entered for the qualification.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that every project is marked prior to submission.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that the flyleaf for the project is correctly completed and that the EX6 is **not** completed by the centre prior to submission.
- ◆ It is preferable, but not essential, that candidates submit their work in typewritten form. Where work has to be hand written the preference is to use plain black ink.
- ◆ Centres need to ensure that submitted work is legible, complete, stapled in sections, with all marking grids at the front, and submitted in SQA-approved envelopes. The use of folders, treasury tags or poly pockets should be avoided.

### **Project-specific advice**

#### **Plan**

- ◆ Centres should offer appropriate guidance and support prior to and during the planning stage to ensure that candidates are adequately briefed to undertake the project.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates are able to clearly identify what an aim is and what an objective is.
- ◆ Centres should guide candidates to use ethical methods of research whilst undertaking the project.

#### **Research Based Report**

- ◆ Candidates should consider how the legislation has impacted on the provision of mental health care.
- ◆ The models of mental health care should be discussed in the ‘changes in service provision’ section of the project.
- ◆ Candidates should use valid and reliable sources of data when considering changes in public attitudes. Centres should discourage candidates from developing their own surveys/questionnaires.
- ◆ Candidates should ensure that they link the research-based report to the case study scenario.

#### **Case Study Report**

- ◆ Needs should be clearly identified as requested in the project brief.
- ◆ Candidates’ knowledge and understanding of the underpinning units should be clearly evidenced in this part of the project.

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

- ◆ Conclusions should be based on both the research-based report and the case study scenario.
- ◆ Candidates should make realistic and reasonable recommendations for **all** the individuals in the case study scenario based on the needs they have identified.



## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	336
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	183
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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	1.1%	1.1%	2	140
B	18.0%	19.1%	33	120
C	41.5%	60.7%	76	100
D	14.2%	74.9%	26	90
No award	25.1%	-	46	-

## 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.