



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Mental Health Care
Level	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

The Mental Health Care Higher continues to be a popular choice for many centres with most centres selecting the Dementia option. There was a slight improvement in the overall performance of candidates. It was evident, however, that a significant number of candidates presented were clearly not working at the standard required for SCQF level 6. Also, some centres submitted candidate work that was incomplete and did not meet minimum requirements for the course.

There continues to be little evidence of internal verification having taken place in centres where there is more than one marker, or where there is more than one campus.

Once again, there were several incidences of plagiarism with candidates copying long passages from websites and making no effort to write in their own words or acknowledge the sources.

No candidates were penalised this year for not including word counts or for exceeding the word count. However, candidates who wrote excessively tended to lose focus and their results reflected this.

A number of centres estimated marks more accurately this year. However, some centres continue to overestimate grades, indicating the possibility that staff in these centres may not have an understanding of requirements for the course.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Evaluations were slightly better than last year.

Research based reports tended to be more focused and relevant than in previous years.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Plan

Plans continue to be an issue for many candidates. Many find it difficult to distinguish between an aim and an objective. Some centres had missed out parts of the project in the plan and a number of candidates seemed to have very little knowledge and understanding about the project and what was expected of them. In some instances candidates were allowed to continue with the project despite the fact that their plan was clearly unworkable.

Research Based Report

Out of date/English legislation continues to be cited and discussed in detail. Key pieces of legislation were omitted by a number of candidates. Many candidates omitted to describe how care in the community has developed since the Griffith's Report.

Case Study Report

The 'needs' section of the report continues to be done poorly with many candidates stating how to meet the needs of the individual rather than stating what the needs are. There was very little evidence of knowledge and understanding in relation to theories of stress and stress management.

Conclusions and recommendations

This section continues to challenge candidates with many providing a synopsis of the case study report as conclusions and unrealistic recommendations being made.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Minor amends have been made to the Higher PBNC Mental Health Care Arrangements document to clarify the Unit assessment techniques and Outcome 3 PC (e) Unit DF6H 12 Understanding of Mental Health and Mental Illness.

The revised Higher PBNC Mental Health Care External Assessment document is now available and should be used by all centres delivering this qualification in session 2011–12. This document contains the new case studies that must be used to assess all candidates who are being registered with a May 2012 completion date and onwards.

New NABs are available on SQA's secure website and will replace the existing NABs. They should be used to assess candidates who are being registered with a May 2012 completion date and onwards. All candidates who are registered for August 2011, November 2011 and February 2012 completion dates should be assessed on the existing NABs. Please note the existing NABs will be removed at the end of February 2012.

Centres should direct candidates appropriately by being familiar with the project brief, External Assessment Report, the Arrangements document and any available exemplars.

Centres should ensure that no candidate proceeds to the development stage until they have produced a plan which is realistic and workable.

Candidates should adhere to the recommended word count for each stage and should be advised to clearly state 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.

Staff estimating grades should be familiar with the content of the underpinning Units.

The 'Your Coursework' document should be made available to all candidates. Centres should ensure that all candidates fully understand SQA's rules in relation to plagiarism.

Centres should be mindful of 'the conditions of assessment' as not every section needs to be carried out under invigilated conditions.

Centres should appropriately support and advise the candidates at the planning stage and ensure that they have the necessary guidance and support to complete the project.

Centres should ensure that all sections of the project have been marked by the centre prior to submission.

Centres should ensure that the flyleaf for the project is completed correctly on both sides.

Where the project is being delivered in more than one campus, centres should ensure that internal verification takes place to ensure consistency.

Candidates should be capable of working at SCQF level 6 before being entered for the qualification.

Centres need to ensure that submitted work is legible and complete.

Project-specific advice

Plan

Candidates should be directed to clearly state aims and objectives.

The plan should cover both the Research Based Report and the Case Study Report.

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.

Candidates should not progress to the development stage of the project if their plan is clearly unworkable.

Research Based Report

Candidates should focus on the development of care in the community during the last 25 years.

Legislation should be up to date, correctly identified and dated. It should also be relevant to the case study.

When discussing legislation, candidates should highlight how this has impacted on the provision of mental health care.

Candidates should include discussion of models of mental health care when considering changes to service provision.

The contents of the Research Based Report should be clearly linked to the case study family.

Case Study Report

Candidates must write in the first person as the daughter and the community psychiatric nurse (CPN) or the mother and the CPN.

Candidates should clearly state the needs of the individuals in the case study. No marks are given for ways of meeting need in this section.

Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding from the underpinning Units in this section.

Conclusions and recommendations

Candidates should make informed, reasonable and appropriate recommendations for the individuals in the case study.

Candidates are expected to draw conclusions and make realistic recommendations. They should draw conclusions from both reports and make recommendations for the individuals in light of these.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2010	423
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	388
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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	2.8%	2.8%	11	140
B	9.0%	11.9%	35	120
C	31.4%	43.3%	122	100
D	16.0%	59.3%	62	90
No award	40.7%	100.0%	158	-

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.