



Course Report 2016

Subject	Graphic Communication
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: question paper

Overall, the make-up of the question paper represented a good mix of questions covering the main elements contained in the National 5 Graphic Communication Course Assessment Specification. Areas included:

- ◆ Computer Aided Design techniques.
- ◆ Advantages and disadvantages of manual and electronic techniques.
- ◆ Spatial awareness.
- ◆ Drawing standards, protocols and conventions.
- ◆ Use of colour, layout and presentation.
- ◆ Graphic Communication as it impacts on our environment and society.

The content coverage of the question paper was in line with the requirements of the National 5 Graphic Communication Course Assessment Specification. The question paper took a similar approach to that used in the 2015 question paper. Questions were substantial and each contained a range of topic areas based around a different central theme. This approach appeared to be well received by most candidates and afforded the opportunity for candidates to immerse themselves fully in each question. The question paper performed well in all areas.

Component 2: assignment

Based on previous years' experience, the assignment performed as expected, although there was evidence through the verification process that some centres were marking candidate work too generously. This was usually towards the top end of the marks range, ie where the marking instructions may have been misinterpreted there was a migration towards 'A' type marks — high 50's to the maximum of 60 marks.

The verification team identified many centres where candidates were producing high quality work across the assignment.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

Question 1 (d) (i) & (ii): Most candidates were able to explain how the graphic design had been used in the given design elements and principles.

Question 1 (e): Most candidates were able to accurately describe the purpose of using the 'transparency' DTP (desktop publishing) technique in the graphic provided.

Question 1 (g): Many candidates were able to identify the positive impact of using a webpage over printed media.

Question 2 (a): Many candidates were able to identify the steps that could be taken to ensure that the packaging has less of an impact on the environment.

Question 4 (a): The majority of candidates were able to identify the type of graphic provided and the purpose of these types of graphics.

Question 4 (c): Many candidates were able to identify the correct view shown in the graphic provided. Many candidates were also able to state the correct scale used for such views. Centres are reminded that a scale of 1:1250 is the most commonly used scale for a location plan.

Component 2: assignment

The verification team identified many centres where candidates were producing high quality computer aided design (CAD) and DTP components in the assignment.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper

Question 1 (d) (iii): A number of candidates found it challenging to articulate how alignment was used in the graphic. Although some candidates stated different graphic elements within the graphic, they did not describe how they had been aligned.

Question 2 (c) (i) & (ii): Some candidates found it challenging to extract the correct scaled dimensions from the drawing provided

Question 3 (e): Many candidates were unable to identify the correct constraints required to assemble the product.

Question 4 (b): A number of candidates did not provide accurate responses to the advantages that 'Remote Working' has to offer. This is not new content and has been detailed in the Course Assessment Specification since the implementation of the course.

Question 4 (d) (ii): Some candidates were unable to accurately articulate the purpose of an oblique view.

Question 4 (e) (i) & (ii): Some candidates found it challenging to extract the correct scaled dimensions from the drawing provided. Many candidates used inaccurate units in their responses.

Component 2: assignment

Candidates still appear to find the research and analysis component challenging. There were a number of candidates who were not researching or analysing the graphics as required for the assignment.

The quality of the preliminary graphics is still not of an appropriate standard for this level, and there was evidence of retrospective planning and some traced work. This attracts zero marks.

A significant number of candidates had not rendered work at an appropriate resolution and this resulted in pixelated work and diminished the quality of the material produced.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper

In undertaking examination preparation for next diet, centres should encourage candidates to continue supporting their responses with sketches, where appropriate. Although this is not a requirement, it was identified from all previous examinations that some candidates may find it challenging to fully articulate some of their responses through written means only. This is particularly evident in 3D CAD modelling questions. Although pencil may be used to construct a sketch, any final sketch to support a response should be in blue or black ink.

Candidates should ensure that, when using additional space at the rear of the question paper to continue their response, their response is clearly indicated and identified.

Centres are reminded to ensure that candidates are using the correct terminology as detailed in the National 5 Graphic Communication Course Assessment Specification. This has particular importance when responding to 3D CAD modelling questions and drawing standards, conventions and protocol type questions.

It was evident from this year, and previous diets, that centres continue to prepare their candidates well for the new content introduced to National 5 (CAD and DTP). However, there appears to have been a decline in candidate performance in the more traditional content, such as: true shape, orthographic projection, surface developments, drawing types and British Standards (BS) style questions. Centres are encouraged to ensure that content, from both new and traditional areas, contained in the Course Assessment Specification is fully covered.

Centres should ensure that they encourage candidates to respond to each question relative to the command word used in each (ie State, Explain, Indicate, Describe etc.).

Component 2: assignment

Centres should be mindful of the assessment conditions set out in the Course Assessment Specification (CAS):

'The assignment will be carried out under open book conditions, but supervised to ensure that the work presented is the candidates own work.'

Whilst the assessor may give candidates support and guidance, where any significant amount of support is provided, this should be reflected in the marks awarded. The candidate may be provided with feedback to help them progress to the next stage of the assignment.

The assignment is designed to discriminate between candidates, and therefore would be expected to provide a wide range of marks across a class group. Stronger candidates should be able to complete the assignment successfully with minimal support and guidance. Weaker candidates may not be able to complete all aspects of the assignment within a reasonable time, or may require significant assistance, and so would achieve a lower mark.

Once the assignment has been completed and assessed, it cannot be returned to the candidate for further work to improve their mark.

Section 1: Research & analysis

Where this section was completed well, candidates had research that confirmed all or most of the aspects of the assignment brief.

Section 2: Preliminary graphics

Some candidates produced retrospective planning. Work that is traced or is produced retrospectively cannot attract any marks. A few centres did not identify these issues and, subsequently, candidates had their marks reduced during verification.

Several centres were generous in their assessment of candidates with regards to creating sufficient evidence to generate production drawings. Centres should consider whether the evidence is clear and detailed enough to enable the creation of a 3D CAD model or manual drawing.

Where preliminary promotional layouts had been completed well, candidates had made clear reference to design elements and principles and the DTP features and techniques they were intending to use.

Section 3: Production graphics

Centres are reminded that BS8888 is the standard to be applied to all CAD drawings.

There should be sufficient views and dimensions of components to enable the product to be re-drawn via 3D CAD, if necessary.

Technical detail should be clear and relevant to the task; many candidates had produced inappropriate sections, some stepped, simply because they could or because they thought they should, and were then awarded marks simply for creating the views.

Centres should ensure candidates have a firm knowledge of BS, along with an understanding of the relevance of a particular graphic to a specific situation.

Section 4 Promotional graphics

There was evidence of some high quality work here, particularly in centres where candidates had completed their preliminary layouts well.

Centres are advised to ensure that all candidates are aware of design principles and elements as well as DTP features.

Section 5: Evaluation

The evaluation component was generally completed well by most candidates and tended to focus on the DTP component.

Candidates can evaluate any aspect of their assignment, and a high scoring evaluation should make reference to the brief and how the graphics have been produced to meet the requirements of the brief.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	6707
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	6505
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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 - 120				
A	21.0%	21.0%	1368	86
B	27.8%	48.9%	1810	74
C	26.8%	75.7%	1746	62
D	9.4%	85.1%	614	56
No award	14.9%	-	967	-

Decision Making Record Statement:

The overall demand of the course assessment was lower than intended and so all grade boundaries were set higher than intended.

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.