

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Care

Qualification area

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

Care Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003 (pre appeal)	791
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Number of entries in 2004 (pre appeal)	623
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General comments re entry numbers

There were over 900 Course entries however a much lower figure sat the examination.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards and grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	9.5	9.5	59	66
B	14.1	23.6	88	56
C	20.4	44.0	127	46
D	11.4	55.4	71	41
No award	44.6	100	278	

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Most markers commented on the lower standard of candidate in 2004.

There was a change in syllabus of Human Development and Behaviour and Interpersonal Skills.

There was a large drop in the mean mark for Paper 1.

Marking was tighter with less ability to pick up marks for non-specific answers.

General commentary on passmarks and grade boundaries

- While SQA aims to set examinations and create mark schemes which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum 50% of the available marks (notional passmark) and a very well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70%, it is almost impossible to get the standard absolutely on target every year, in every subject and level
- Each year we therefore hold a passmark meeting for each subject at each level where we bring together all the information available (statistical and judgmental). 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 senior management team at SQA
- We adjust the passmark downwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly more demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- We adjust the passmark upwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly less demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- Where the standard appears to be very similar to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries
- 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 are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. And just because SQA has altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry 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
- Our main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

There were some factors which we took into account in setting the pass mark.

- ◆ some candidates appeared to fail to turn over the Question Paper from question 6 to the second case study and questions 7–11 on the back page
- ◆ changes in the syllabus especially for Human Development and Behaviour
- ◆ failure to remove old descriptor for Human Development and Behaviour from the web. (Reasons for last minute change to Paper 1, ie correction notice).

As such, grade boundaries were lowered from 2003 to those of 2002.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Candidates' performance overall was poorer than in previous years. There were a number of scripts that received no marks or less than five marks. Candidates failed to read the question or follow the instruction of the Question Paper and to put the correct question number against their answer. The paper layout with the case study in Paper 1 on the last page caused problems.

It appears that candidates were not prepared for the papers in many cases. Some candidates indicated they had not covered a specific question in the information they had been taught by the college. Legislation that underpins care practice was again poorly answered in Paper 1 and Paper 2. The value base which clearly underpins the Interpersonal Skills for Care Unit, was again poorly answered. At Higher level it is not unreasonable to expect candidates to know the date and content of the legislation.

Paper 2 was also a problem for these candidates. One marker wrote 'a good fair paper, no surprises in terms of questions asked and it covered the syllabus well.' Some candidates failed to number their questions correctly and if we had taken it exactly as they had numbered it on the paper they would have lost marks.

Candidates often paid no attention to the allocation of marks. They had written long answers for 2 mark questions and short answers for 10 mark questions.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Responses to question 6, Paper 1 were in general good. They remembered key points and did not have to apply knowledge to a case study, but there were one or two exceptions to this.

Some good answers to questions 1 and 2, but this was not a general trend, nor did it apply to specific centres.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

A general failure to relate answers to care settings was reflected in many areas of the paper by the candidate.

Paper 1

Question 10 on equality legislation was poorly answered from a lack of dates for the legislation chosen to 'newly created legislation' for the exam!

The exam team will reflect on this question and try to produce a clearer, better distribution of marks and question if we choose this in the future.

Curiosity as a level within Maslows Hierarchy was quoted by many?

Question 7 was often answered based on the actions Gloria should take, not as asked, on the actions of Gloria's employer.

Question 5 was poorly answered by many in spite of the predictability of this area of the descriptor in relation to questions.

Paper 2

Health Promotion

Question 1

Candidates often failed to give full answers and lost marks.

Question 2

Poor evidence of understanding and some candidates omitted this altogether.

Question 3(a)

Many candidates did not stress why research was important.

Question 3(b)

Common references to 'the internet' as a research method was incorrect.

Question 4

Models of Health Promotion were, generally, answered well but many candidates only listed rather than described the models.

Interpersonal Skills

Question 1(a)

Very poorly answered in many cases.

Question 1(d)

Many candidates lost marks by not describing rather than merely listing.

Question 2

Attributes and skills were often confused with each other.

Question 3(a)

Often poorly answered with many examples of failure to mention service user involvement. Candidates often cited 'care plan' as assessment model.

Question 3(b)

Many failed to describe how the 'tool' could be used for Mrs Smith's needs.

Question 4

Poorly done. When candidates managed to get the legislation correct they then failed to indicate how the legislation can support the service.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Centres should consider:

- 1 Preparing candidates on exam technique. The gaps noted this year were on reading and language, ie identify, describe and what they mean.
- 2 Candidates should identify what is asked and the marks attributed and write answers to match this. Some centres had taught candidates to mark the key words of a script with a highlighter. This is good practice.
- 3 Only submitting candidates who have some chance of succeeding.
- 4 Ensuring that all named theorists are covered in the teaching.
- 5 That teachers delivering Care Higher are able to relate Sociological and Psychology theory to Care Practice. This is what separates this paper from Higher Psychology and Higher Sociology.

Finally, there were an increased number of candidates where English is clearly not their first language and who were not able to express themselves fully in the field of Care. This obviously had a detrimental effect on marks for these candidates.