

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panels:

**Construction Craft
and
Construction Technician**

Qualification area

Construction

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

Construction Industry Practice – Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	36

Number of entries in 2003	
Pre appeal	30

General comments re entry numbers

For 2003, there were 30 processed entries for the 31st May completion date. A further 16 processed entries were received for a June 30th completion date. Only 25 projects were submitted, from four centres.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

These were unchanged from year 2002.

Grade	Lowest mark (from 200)
C	100
B	120
Lower A	140
Upper A	170

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 syllabuses evolve and change

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

The same project specification was used as in previous years. The characteristics of the candidature were unchanged and there was no evidence to justify any changes in grade boundaries.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

There was a further marginal decrease in the performance of the candidate group from that of 2002, with a slight decrease in both the pass rate and the mean mark.

The ability range within the candidature was not as great as in 2002 and there were fewer really good projects, as indicated by the distribution of awards. There was a decrease in the number of candidates achieving A or B grade awards, from 27.7% in 2002 to 16.0% in 2003, with an increase in C grade awards from 41.7% to 52.0%. The overall pass rate fell from 69.4% in 2002 to 68.0% in 2003.

Candidate performance varied between centres. The mean mark for all candidates was 101 from a possible 200 marks (103 in 2002). The mean marks for the four centres were 84.5, 96.4, 114.9 and 121.5.

There were marginal decreases in the mean marks for the three components of the practical assignment as shown below.

	Planning	Developing	Evaluating	Total
2003	20.8	60.9	18.8	100.5
2002	21.2	61.8	19.8	102.8

As in 2002, the standards of presentation and drawing work were generally poor, although there were considerable variations between centres. There was, however, little variation between candidates at a single centre, which indicates that centres are placing different emphasis on the requirements of the project portfolios.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Candidates generally performed well in the planning stage of the project. Results for the developing stage were also reasonable. One centre recorded mean marks of 28.0/40 and 73.5/120 for these two stages.

As in previous years, candidates made reasonable attempts at quantifying and costing materials.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Candidates continue to experience difficulty in evaluating their own project work, and the mean mark for this stage fell slightly to 18.8/40.

Sketches and drawings were generally poor, with little attention being paid to presentation, layout and basic drawing practice. The standard of drawing continues to fall well below the standards set by the course component unit Drawing for Building.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

There was evidence this year that some centres are providing written feedback to candidates on items of evidence, to enable candidates to improve their work prior to submission to SQA.

Before submission, teachers/lecturers should look over candidates' portfolios to ensure that structure and presentation are satisfactory, and that all items of evidence are included.

The standard of drawing work continues to be disappointing. Centres should remind candidates that good drawing practice must be demonstrated. There is no reason for drawings being submitted without borders, titles and dimensions.

For the planning stage of the project, centres should ensure that candidates' planning, time scales and/or bar charts relate to their own practical assignment work rather than to the construction projects on which their assignments are based.

This year, one centre shadow marked projects as a basis for estimates. The centre also provided feedback comments in justification of the marks awarded. This is good practice and is extremely helpful at the SQA marking stage.

Centres are again reminded that they should ensure that in all cases:

- the SQA flyleaf is attached to each project
- the candidate and teacher/lecturer declarations are signed
- reliable written and photographic evidence of setting out activities is provided.