

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Technical Education

Qualification area

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

Craft & Design Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of resulted courses in 2002	773
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Number of pre appeal courses in 2003	791
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General comments re entry numbers

There is a small increase in numbers this year. The numbers are unlikely to increase significantly until the intermediate course becomes popular in the middle school. This is unlikely to happen until there is an intermediate I qualification to run in parallel with it.

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

Grade boundaries are as follows

	<u>Mark</u>
Upper A	127
A	106
B	92
C	78

All of these compare with a maximum possible score of 150.

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 pass mark of 78/150 (52%) and subsequent B boundary minimum mark of 92/150 were set taking account of:

- the level of difficulty as indicated by the Notional Rating
- standard of work produced by many candidates being only equivalent to that of a General level Standard Grade Student. As Intermediate 2 is broadly equivalent to a Credit award at Standard Grade, It is important that we do not devalue the Intermediate 2 award and ensure it is levelled appropriately.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The highest score by any candidate was 137/150.

This suggests that Intermediate 2 candidates who have extremely high ability are being given the “benefit of the doubt” by the teaching staff in their centres/schools and are being given the opportunity to gain a Higher award.

In past years we have come across a small percentage of candidates who we felt were of higher ability, but this was not the case in 2003.

At the other end of the scale, we still have a significant number of candidates who present Design Assignment, but do not attend the 2 hour Examination.

In addition we have candidates who do not seem to follow the Design Assignment Assessment Specification as published annually by SQA.

This is obviously reflected in their final marks.

Out of 729 candidates, only 19 (2.6%) scored less than 50/150 and this is very encouraging.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

The average score of candidates in the Design Assignment was 55. This was identical to last year. Many candidates scored well in the early stages of the Design Assignment.

In the examination the average score increased by one mark.

In the examination, candidates answered well in the question about the Injection Moulding machine, the plant stand, the wooden box and the materials used to manufacture the Iron.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

In the Design assignment there is still a significant number of candidates who do not follow the SQA guidelines for this assignment.

A number of candidates did not choose one of the 3 topics issued by SQA for 2002/2003.

Synthesis of design work and Planning for Manufacture are still poorly attempted by a significantly large number of candidates.

In the examination, many candidates seemed to have difficulty when asked to “describe”. They seemed unable to do this either in the form of sentences or in the form of a numbered list. Many were similarly unable to use sketches to aid their description(s).

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

- It is appreciated that many candidates derive great benefit from producing informative and attractively presented work within their Design Assignments.
- Some will benefit in confidence, simply from the exercise of producing neat work, some will gain information from that work which they can then take with them into an examination.
- It must be remembered, however, that bold and attractive borders and headings do not gain candidates any marks in the Design Assignment.
- Similarly, research and investigation which is not directly linked to the design task will not gain the candidates any marks and in order to ensure that there is a link, candidates must highlight or underline all directly relevant aspects of their research. Otherwise, this will not gain any marks.
- Too many candidates produce many pages of cut 'n' paste photocopies or hand-written work which eventually score zero marks.

In the examination, candidates need to focus on examination technique so that they can appropriately respond to questions which ask them to:

- List
- State
- Describe.