

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Technology

Qualification area

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

Higher Grade Craft and Design

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	2478
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Number of pre-appeal entries in 2004	2419
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General comments re entry numbers

Slight reduction in numbers again this year which could be as a result of candidates choosing or being directed to Int 2. This however could also be a result of candidates choosing to do a Practical Course in either wood or metal craft skills.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

A	11.5%
B	20.0%
C	25.8%
D	14.1%
No Award	28.6%

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

The pass mark for the paper was set at 92 this year which is the same as last year. This resulted in a drop in the pass rate from 30.8% of candidates achieving Grade C to 26.8%. With the boundary grades remaining unchanged for both the upper and lower grade scores a rise in candidates achieving these grades was seen. The award of an upper grade A went up from 1.5% to 1.9% and that of the lower band A from 8.9% to 9.2%. Candidates at Grade B fell slightly from 21.2% to 20.2%. As can be seen candidates receiving grades below that of C rose from 37.6% to 41.9%.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum%	Number of Candidates	Lowest mark
A	11.5	11.5	278	138
B	20.0	31.5	485	115
C	25.8	57.3	623	92
D	14.1	71.3	342	80
No award	28.6	100	691	

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

Boundary grades consistent with last year and reflect the standard required for the written paper whilst ensuring the appropriate level of difficulty.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Paper 1

The results gained in this paper were in line with those of last year. This once again showed evidence of aspects of the course having received light treatment in teaching. The paper followed a similar layout to previous years with similar content and style of questions. Candidate responses were in line with the design of the paper where the more demanding questions being at the end of the paper.

Design Assignment

Candidate responses in the Design Assignment were slightly poorer than last year.

Section 1 Problem Analysis and Specification

This section is generally done well by candidates although some candidates still do not justify their reason for the use of the design factors chosen.

Section 2 Generation of Ideas

Generally well attempted, but as in other years a wide variation in the quality of graphics.

Section 3 Development and Synthesis

This is where the more able candidates tend to gain significantly more marks than the rest of the field. There is still a problem in this section with candidates having difficulty in the transition from developing ideas which is still a divergent stage in the design process to synthesis where ideas are being refined towards a conclusion and the design process is convergent.

Section 4 Modelling

Generally well done by candidates

Section 5 Planning for Manufacture

Again a section where the more able candidates perform significantly better than others.

Section 6 Evaluation

Generally well done.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

In general as with other years candidates had a sound knowledge of plastics processes. Candidates generally performed well in the ergonomics question. This year the question on aesthetics was at last answered reasonably well with candidates able to describe and explain how the designer had used a theme in designing a range of kitchen equipment.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Candidates performed very poorly in the question about Spindle Moulding and had very little detailed knowledge of CNC machining and Pressure Die Casting.

Surprisingly candidates also had difficulty answering question 6 which was on graphics.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Next year the subject changes to the new Product Design Course. Centres should listen to advice given at the launch seminars and look at the style of question being asked in the exemplar paper.

The new shorter Design Assignment should leave considerably more time for teaching course content which should enhance candidates K&U.