

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Technical Education

Qualification area

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

Craft & Design Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	791
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Number of pre-appeal entries in 2004	829
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General comments re entry numbers

There is only a small increase this year.

The course is primarily followed by candidates in the upper school.

S4 1.5%, S5 87.8%, S6 10.6% in 2004 compared with

S4 0.7%, S5 85.8%, S6 13.5% in 2003

The new Product Design Course is likely to have little effect on the middle school uptake until it has bedded in with the upper school so we can reasonably expect the Intermediate 2 numbers to remain relatively static for another year or two.

Some centres are taking the first step with the middle school, but for others it seems like a step too far.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

	%	% cum
A	34.1	34.1
B	20.2	54.3
C	15.2	69.5
D	3.5	73.0
No Award	27.0	100

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Significant increase in Grade 'A' performances this year.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	34.1	34.1	283	111
B	20.2	54.3	167	97
C	15.2	69.5	126	83
D	3.5	73.0	29	
No award	27.0	100.0	224	

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 set to reflect an overall decrease in the level of difficulty of the examination and accessibility of the Design Assignment.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The highest score by any candidate was 148/150 (98.7%)
This compares with a high, last year, of 137/150 (91.3%)

Even although we had candidates scoring 58, 59 and 60 out of 60 in the exam, it was clear from their answers that they were simply "hitting all the right buttons" in order to score marks. They were not producing the style of extended response which would be required in the Higher exam. We also had some high scoring DA scripts, but these too would not have scored significantly well if they had been entered at Higher level. In past years we have come across a small percentage of candidates who we felt were of Higher ability, but despite the high scores quoted above, we did not feel that this was the case in 2004.

At the other end of the scale, we still have a small but significant number of candidates who sit the 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 published Annually by SQA.
This is obviously reflected in their final marks.

Only 2% of candidates 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 60. This was 5 marks higher than last year for the reasons given above. In addition, many more centres than last year included evidence of modelling and this further led to an increase in marks.

In the examination the average score increased by 3.5 marks.

In the examination, candidates answered well in the questions about Product Evaluation, writing a Design Specification, Modelling and Flat Packed furniture.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

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

Similarly, a few of the candidates did not choose one of the 3 topics issued by the SQA for 2004 and this attracted a penalty which was applied uniformly across these particular scripts.

Synthesis of design work and Planning for Manufacture are still poorly attempted by a significantly large number of candidates. Candidates from a few centres chose to leave out the "modelling" section from the assignments and, although there were exceptions to this, within any given centre this seemed to be common for all candidates. They either all attempted the modelling section or none of them attempted it .

In the Examination, many candidates seemed to have difficulty with various aspects of ergonomics relative to the Shower Cabinet and a small but significant number did not appear to understand the meaning of the phrase "ease of maintenance".

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 the 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. Although this trend is happily decreasing, there are still too many candidates producing many pages of cut 'n' paste photocopies or hand-written work which eventually score zero marks.

The above feedback to centres is largely similar to last year.

In the examination, candidates need to focus on examination technique so that they can appropriately respond to questions.

eg A question asking for anthropometric considerations relative to a shower cabinet is really expecting a response which refers to both a human dimension (eg stature) and a dimension of part of the cabinet (eg height of the spray head). Not simply to one or the other.

eg A question asking for physiological considerations relative to a shower cabinet is really expecting a response which refers to both a physical action (eg twisting) and a part of the shower cabinet (eg the dial on the control box). Again, not simply one or the other.