

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Art and Design

Qualification area

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

**Advanced Higher Art and Design: Design (Enquiry)
Advanced Higher Art and Design: Expressive
(Enquiry)**

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	Design Enquiry - 508
	Expressive Enquiry - 758

Number of entries in 2004	Design Enquiry - 562
	Expressive Enquiry - 739

General comments re entry numbers

2004 saw a further increase in numbers, continuing a trend that has persisted for more than 10 years at this level, and underlining a healthy acceptance of the Advanced Higher course. More of the extra candidates were entered for Design Activity, redressing slightly the imbalance between that and Expressive Activity which first appeared in 2003.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

Art and Design Enquiry: Design

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	16.0	16.0	90	149
B	18.9	34.9	106	124
C	34.7	69.6	195	100
D	21.7	91.3	122	
No award	8.7	100	49	

Art and Design Enquiry: Expressive

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	14.6	14.6	108	149
B	18.3	32.9	135	124
C	37.1	70.0	274	100
D	20.4	90.4	151	
No award	9.6	100	71	

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

- ◆ The grade boundaries remain the same as 2002 and 2003 in both of the above subject areas with the exception of submissions which scored a mark of 148 were not considered to have been of a sufficiently high standard to merit an A award.

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Art and Design (Enquiry): Design

- ◆ 69.6% A — C broadly in line with previous years, but showing a slight improvement.
- ◆ An improvement of 1.3 (out of 200) in the mean mark was insignificant.

Art and Design (Enquiry): Expressive

- ◆ 70.0% A — C shows a marked improvement over 2003, but is still behind the first two years of the exam. Markers had reported seeing a better standard of Expressive work and a better understanding of process in 2004.
- ◆ An improvement of 1.3 (out of 200) in the mean mark was insignificant.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

- ◆ Some excellent work was submitted, and overall the general standard was thought to be higher than last year.
- ◆ There seemed to be a better awareness of course requirements, and there were fewer ‘problem’ centres.
- ◆ There were fewer sketchbooks included in folios showing an improved awareness of the submission limits.
- ◆ Close to 3 out of 4 candidates selected a course option that included Art and Design Studies (2 out of 3 in 2003), continuing a trend towards this option that first became apparent in 2003.
- ◆ There was a lack of 3D work being submitted, and where 3D work had been undertaken it was usual to submit photographs rather than the original work.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

- ◆ In Expressive Activity, the most successful submissions were again in portraiture and figurative work.
- ◆ In Design Activity there were again some excellent submissions in textiles.
- ◆ There were many fine submissions in Art and Design Studies, and it was not uncommon for candidates to achieve a pass on the strength of the written work in their optional Unit, where the practical mandatory Unit had substantially failed.
- ◆ Media handling skills were observed to have been of a high standard in general.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

- ◆ The greatest difficulties again occurred in attempting to link the two Units thematically. This was most obvious where candidates had opted for two practical Units, but there was also a disturbing lack of awareness from many centres of the need to relate the Art and Design Studies Unit closely and directly to the practical Unit.
- ◆ In Expressive Activity there were too many Units based mostly on photography, paying lip service only to the need for directly observed drawing.
- ◆ In Design Activity the areas of Product, Fashion, and Interior Design tended to be less well done than other areas.
- ◆ In both Design and Expressive Activity the development stage of the processes was less well done than other stages.

- ◆ Many submissions floundered by tackling too broad a study — for example, by trying to solve multiple design briefs.
- ◆ Statements of Intent were often poorly considered and badly written.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

- ◆ Identify and number sheets to aid assessment.
- ◆ Examine carefully the course requirements, in particular the need for —
 - Personal input from the candidate
 - Expressive work to originate from first hand sources
 - Folios to observe the submission limits
- ◆ Provide a clear design brief where applicable.
- ◆ Do not submit material that requires assessors to access the Internet. Web site designs must be submitted on disk or CD with the home page or htm index file clearly identified, and in a form which allows the disk or CD to operate as a web site.
- ◆ Do not submit work in ring-bound plastic sleeves as this makes it difficult to lay work out and the reflective surface makes work more difficult to view.
- ◆ Be aware of the value of a strong Statement of Intent, and the potential loss of 10% of the marks if it is missing.