

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Technical Education

Qualification area

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

Higher Graphic Communication

Statistical information: update

| | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Number of entries in 2002 | 2975 |
| Pre appeal | |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Number of entries in 2003 | 3048 |
| Pre appeal | |

General comments re entry numbers

Once again it was encouraging seeing an increase in numbers, even though it was only 2½ %. This has maintained the positive trend. Having 3048 entries is an excellent return from approximately 4250 credit candidates from session 2002 (around 72 %).

Unfortunately it would appear that many of the additional candidates are at the lower ability level.

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

| Grade | Band | Minimum Mark |
|--------------|------|--------------|
| A | 1 | 168 |
| A | 2 | 140 |
| B | 3 | 130 |
| B | 4 | 120 |
| C | 5 | 110 |
| C | 6 | 100 |
| Compensatory | 7 | 90 |
| No Award | 8 | 80 |
| No Award | 9 | 0 |

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

Boundary grades identical to last year indicating that the paper was set at a similar level of difficulty. Cut-offs are also very close to the ideal 50, 60, and 70% for C, B and A.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

As the paper was accessible to all, there were very few candidates who failed to achieve some marks for every question. As a result the majority of candidates achieved 50% or greater. Unfortunately there were only a handful of high performing candidates who managed to achieve greater than 120 marks from a possible 140, candidates poorly attempted question 7 which may have been a contributing factor.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Section A

This is still an area where candidates do not perform particularly well in, but there were two questions that were the exception this year.

Question 1, BS Name Block

Answered very well even though very few achieved maximum marks. Therefore a good starting question.

Question 6, CAD & DTP

Almost all candidates achieved more than 50% for this question with a large number achieving maximum marks.

Section B

Most candidates attempted all questions in this section and managed to gain marks. Even though differentiation is built into each question there were some that were done extremely well by most candidates.

Question 9a, Floor plan

This was the best-done question in the paper, which reflected the fact that it was also the easiest question.

Question 9b, Measured Perspective

Usually well done as centres prepare candidates extremely well for this topic. This year was no exception and even the more difficult aspects of the drawing were very well attempted by most candidates.

Question 10, Tangency

For a topic a topic that has been done poorly in the past this was done very well. As one of the smaller topics in the course it was expected that only a small number would choose to do this question over question 11. This was not the case as around 75% of candidates did it and achieved very high marks for it. It was pleasing to see that this topic is being taught so well now.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Section A

Question 2, DTP

This topic is rarely done well. It was particularly surprising that a large number of candidates did not know what thumbnail sketches were, even though every candidate must do them as part of their Thematic Presentation. In addition “the purpose of a DTP package” was very poorly answered.

Question 3, BS line conventions

This was either done very well or very poorly. On the many occasions where it was poorly done it was by all candidates from the same centre indicating that it may not have been covered in detail in class.

Question 4b, Sections

Possibly the poorest attempted question in this section with very few candidates achieving more than one mark from a possible four. Disappointing when this is basic knowledge of BS conventions.

Question 6, DTP terms

Average mark of one from three was very poor. This is typical of responses to DTP questions.

Section B

Question 7

The poorest done question in section B and probably the entire paper. Only a very small percentage of candidates achieved more than twenty marks from a possible thirty marks. No more than around 1% of candidates managed to draw the correct lines of intersection on the elevation. Then both the auxiliary plan and development were poorly done, even though fairly straightforward.

Question 11, Isometric & Section

Only around 25% of candidates chose to do this question and very few answered it well, in particular the curves on the isometric and the part section.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

General

- ❖ Most candidates are being well prepared for the exam, in areas such as measured perspective.
- ❖ There are still a number of candidates who should be presented for Intermediate 2 rather than Higher.

Section A

- ❖ All aspects of DTP questions are being poorly answered. These types of questions appear every year and therefore must be covered. This one topic would make a significant difference to performance in this section.
- ❖ Candidates must give more than a one-word answer when the question asks for a description, comparison or explanation.
- ❖ BS convention need to be covered in more detail in some centres. As various types of sections can appear in both sections of the paper candidates need to be familiar with more than just a straight section on a single plane

Section B

- ❖ Measured perspective and tangency were very well done.
- ❖ Candidates need to take enough point to accurately draw a circle in isometric. A minimum of 12 for a complete circle.
- ❖ Auxiliary views are still causing difficulty for a large number of candidates. This is a common topic that regularly appears in the paper