

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Home Economics

Qualification area

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

**Advanced Higher
Health and Food Technology
Lifestyle and Consumer Technology**

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	Fashion and Textile Technology:2 Health and Food Technology : 13 Lifestyle and Consumer Technology :4
----------------------------------	---

Number of entries in 2004	Health and Food Technology : 15 Lifestyle and Consumer Technology :2
----------------------------------	---

General comments re entry numbers

Health and Food Technology

Eight centres presented a total of 15 candidates. This was a slight increase in candidate numbers in this context as compared to last year.

Lifestyle and Consumer Technology

Two centres presented a total of 2 candidates. This was a drop in presentations as compared to last year

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

Health and Food Technology

	%	Cum %
A	6.7	6.7
B	26.7	33.3
C	26.7	60.0
D	20.0	80.0
No Award	20.0	100.0

Lifestyle and Consumer Technology

	%	Cum %
A	0.0	0.0
B	0.0	0.0
C	50.0	50.0
D	50.0	100.0
No Award	0.0	100.0

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Health and Food Technology

Overall out of 15 candidates, at pre appeal stage, 9 of the 15 candidates were successful

One A candidate – same as last year

Four B candidates as compared to one last year

Four C candidates as compared to five last year

No award candidates six – same as last year.

Within these six candidates, three obtained a D award. The other three candidates obtained very poor marks in the question paper, demonstrating a level of knowledge not appropriate for Advanced Higher level.

The mean mark for the dissertation was 56.1 as compared to 52.4 in 2003

The mean mark for the Question paper was 51.5 as compared to 51.9 in 2003

Lifestyle and Consumer Technology

The two candidates were both successful – one gaining very good marks in the Question paper

One B candidate and one C candidate.

The mean mark for the dissertation was 54.0 as compared to 59.0 in 2003

The mean mark for the Question paper was 59.0 as compared to 49.8 in 2003

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Maximum mark in both contexts is 200
(Question paper mark is scaled to 100 marks by SQA)

Health and Food Technology

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	6.7	6.7	1	140
B	26.7	33.3	4	120
C	26.7	60.0	4	100
D	20.0	80.0	3	90
No award	20.0	100.0	3	

Lifestyle and Consumer Technology

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	0.0	0.0	0	140
B	50.0	50.0	1	120
C	50.0	100.0	1	100
D	0.0	100.0	0	90
No award	0.0	100.0	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 arrangements evolve and change.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Grade boundaries have been set in line with “a priori” boundaries.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Question Paper – HFT / LCT

Some candidates provided very little discussion, which resulted in limited responses. Responses still tend to be repetitive and so discussion is restricted.

Candidates tended to list knowledge rather than apply knowledge to what is asked by the question – a lack of focus on the key words is evident.

The more able candidates showed good understanding and an ability to apply knowledge

Dissertations – HFT / LCT

The majority of candidates made a good attempt at and showed a better understanding of all the stages within the dissertation. Work was well presented, clear and showed good use of IT skills.

The standard of English was good in the majority of candidate's work but some of the weaker candidate's work contained a number of grammatical errors and phrasing was poor.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Question Paper

Health and Food Technology

- Section A was generally well answered by candidates
- Question 2 - irradiation of food –was discussed accurately and in depth by one candidate
- Question 4 was well answered by one candidate who showed a very good knowledge of the properties of eggs and applied this knowledge to food products

Lifestyle and Consumer Technology

- Candidates coped reasonably well with the compulsory Section A question
- One candidate showed a very good awareness of marketing tool and provided excellent discussion in part (b) of Section A
- Question 3 was very well answered by one candidate , showing an in depth knowledge of mental health issues

Dissertation – HFT and LCT

Introduction

- Candidates demonstrated a range of reading and the majority used a variety of relevant source materials
- Key issues were identified and generally well discussed

Methodology

- Increased evidence of piloting of questionnaires
- Appropriate approaches were used to prove/disprove the objectives

Results

- Results well presented with continuing good use of IT
- The majority of candidates identified key results from graphs, charts and tables

Conclusion

- Candidates did attempt to relate conclusions to the objectives and some tried to identify the limitations of research

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Question Paper

Health and Food Technology

Section A

- (a) Some candidates provided 3 pages of responses for this 5 mark question. This clearly wasted time and left candidates with insufficient time to answer the questions in Section B to the required depth
- (b) Some candidate's responses lacked detail and relevant discussion in relation to a "whole school approach"
- (c) Candidate's responses tended to be repetitive and did not relate to the question adequately

Section B

- 1(a) Disappointing answers for this question, particularly as this question followed the pattern of previous years.
Some candidates showed a lack of precise knowledge in relation to dietary targets. Candidates did not relate responses to what was asked in the question ie a reduction in the consumption of fats. Candidates linked the dietary targets relating to salt and sugar to helping to achieve a reduction in the consumption of fats.
- 2 Candidates did attempt to give both sides of the debate surrounding irradiation of food but responses lacked clear detail
- 3 Candidates did not link their responses to “at every stage of life” as asked in the question. Candidates also included minerals – iron, calcium - in responses. This was acceptable when appropriately showing the inter relationship of these with vitamins but separate discussion of their functions was not required in the question, which clearly focussed on vitamins
- 5 Badly answered by one candidate who had a poor knowledge of the role of food legislation

Lifestyle and Consumer Technology

Section A

- (b) One candidate’s answer was limited. Tended to be too descriptive of one or two marketing tools and lacked understanding of the variety of tools available and their role.
- (c) Key issues failed to be addressed and both candidate’s responses were too repetitive

Section B

- 1 (a) Candidates raised some relevant points – mainly economic and some social to justify changes. Tended to be repetitive and so discussion was restricted. Generally all aspects of the table in Q1(a) were included in responses
- (b) Answers varied. The more able candidate addressed the main issues very well. The other candidate showed limited understanding of diet and lifestyle issues
5. Responses tended to be too general in that they linked to making best use of financial resources rather than linking specifically to the elderly

Dissertation – HFT and LCT

General points

- A few candidates used less than credible source materials and over concentrated on using web based information.
- References not always accurately cited

Introduction

- All candidates identified objectives but little justification provided
- A few candidates tended to copy information rather than express in own words and provide discussion

Methodology

- Candidates work still lacked sufficient detail and explanation of procedures
- Explanations of sampling procedures need to be made more clear
- Some questions within questionnaires did not focus on the objectives are so were not relevant
- A few candidates attempted to carry out too much during the primary research

- Lack of appropriate references to support methodology

Conclusions

- Candidates still tended to repeat results
- Conclusions were not always based on evidence and included assumptions and personal comment
- Lack of support from appropriate references
- The limitations of research and recommendations for further research were not always included

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Question Paper – HFT and LCT

- Section A (a) Candidates should outline five responses. Some candidates are still spending a disproportionate length of time on this area and providing far too many responses. This disadvantages them later in the question paper as insufficient time has been allowed to provide good quality, detailed responses for Section B
- Candidates must relate their responses and apply knowledge to what is asked by the question. Only relevant information should be included in responses
- Candidates should be encouraged to develop greater discussion skills within responses. This should provide the level of depth and detail required for AH level

Dissertation – HFT and LCT

- References should be credible and correctly cited throughout all stages of the dissertation
- Full reference details should be supplied in the Reference List
- Justification should be included in choice of objectives.
- Methodology should supply sufficient details of the primary research to allow someone else to repeat the research
- One well constructed questionnaire could be sufficient to prove/disprove the objectives
- Conclusions should provide a discussion of the main findings of the research and be based on evidence within the dissertation
- Conclusions should identify the limitations of research and suggest further relevant research
- Centres should refer to
 - Guidance notes for Candidates/Teachers and Lecturers
 - Dissertation Specification and
 - Dissertation Grade Descriptorsfor further information