

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

Care

**Qualification area:**

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

Mental Health: Higher

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## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	136
<b>Pre appeal</b>	136

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	213
<b>Pre appeal</b>	

### General comments re entry numbers

Entries were significantly increased again this year (+77) from 14 centres. It is encouraging to see this trend.

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

The Grade Boundaries were set at:

A – 142

B – 122

C – 102

### **Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area**

The boundaries set reflect that centres were sent additional guidance on the implementation of the project, along with a marking scheme to encourage more accurate estimates, which overall was effective. However some centres may not have received this information in time to implement it, hence the adjustment to the grade boundaries.

## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

Candidate performance was varied, which is to be expected with the general increase in entries. Centres which have previously entered candidates benefitted from this experience in terms of adhering to the project brief and guidelines.

The level of communications in some projects was very poor.

Planning and Evaluating stages were still the weaker areas for candidates and the developing stage was the best, although it too was not without its difficulties.

Overall this project seems to be enjoyed by those who complete it and many describe an increased insight and sense of satisfaction on completion.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

It is evident from the entries that this project enables the candidates to draw and expand on the learning they have undertaken in the component units. The overall understanding of issues which face those with mental health problems and their carers was high. Many candidates had undertaken extensive research to enable them to complete their project, interviewing health professionals and visiting support groups (voluntary, statutory and self help). A number of candidates were able to draw on their experience of working with this client group.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

#### Planning Stage

Candidates continue to find this one of the more challenging aspects of the project and continue to show a lack of understanding of aims and objectives.

Candidates should be encouraged to explain these more in relation to the set tasks.

#### Developing Stage

Whilst this remains the area where candidates perform best, several issues were highlighted this year.

- ◆ Research based report — the reports from some centres went back much further than the “25 years” detailed in the project brief (eg medieval/victorian), which although important and to an extent influential, do not have a significant bearing on the case study. Centres should encourage relevant research from candidates.

- ◆ Case Study report — whilst most centres attempted the first part of this effectively, some chose to write in the third person and consequently did not demonstrate the complexity of the issues within the case study.

The second part of this report was one of the strongest in the entire project although centres should be aware that candidates are required to demonstrate an understanding of the individuals' needs and should not generalise too much.

- ◆ Conclusions and recommendations — most were satisfactory, but some conclusions were poor in light of the research that was undertaken and often the recommendations were not linked to the individuals identified needs.

Candidates should be supported to continually link the component parts of this project.

### **Evaluation Stage**

This element showed that many candidates have difficulty in evaluating, often simply re-stating parts of their plan with little or no reflection. Centres should encourage candidates to consider their work objectively and support them in developing skills to achieve this.

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

On the whole, centres are implementing the project satisfactorily, although the performance of some individual candidates was poor and care should be exercised to present individuals at the appropriate levels.

#### Planning Stage

Centres should encourage candidates to explain their aims and objectives more clearly and should emphasise the importance of the plan.

A few candidates plans seemed to be retrospective. Centres should remind candidates that planning is the **first** stage and that their research and subsequent work is as a result of their plan and not vice-versa.

#### Developing Stage

- ◆ Research based report — it should be noted that the project brief instructs candidates to research “approaches in the last 25 years”. Many candidates included periods in history far beyond this which resulted in difficulty in linking the case study with the report and usually meant that their conclusions and recommendations were weaker.

Candidates should be reminded to view this project holistically, linking all the component parts.

#### Case Study Report

Candidates who performed best here were able to demonstrate an insight and understanding of the individuals by writing in the first person. Candidates also used the opportunity to include relevant models of need, stress and mental health.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

Candidates should be encouraged to draw conclusions from **both** the Research based report and the case study report and then to make recommendations in light of these.

#### Evaluation Stage

Again, centres should encourage candidates to reflect on all aspects of the work they have undertaken in the project.

In order to further support centres delivering the Mental Health Higher, some minor amendments have been made which should clarify both the project specification and brief. These will be distributed along with a marking scheme, to enable centres to consolidate their understanding of the project. The marking scheme should be used by centres to estimate candidates work and should be **submitted with the projects**.