

Principal Assessor Report 2005

Assessment Panel:

Home Economics

Qualification area

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

**Home Economics Intermediate 1
Health & Food Technology
Lifestyle & Consumer Technology
Fashion & Textile Technology**

Statistical information: update

Fashion & Textile Technology

Number of resulted entries in 2004	319
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	391
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Health & Food Technology

Number of resulted entries in 2004	989
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	463
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Lifestyle & Consumer Technology

Number of resulted entries in 2004	705
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	777
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General comments re resulted entry numbers

There is a small increase in all contexts, perhaps due to third year pupils now being presented. However the introduction of the new code for Health & Food Technology makes the statistics show a large increase for this context, when last year the statistics were included in two codes.

The continued move to Hospitality instead of Health & Food Technology means a reduction in numbers from two years ago.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Fashion & Textile Technology

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 45	-	-	-	-
A	35.5	35.5	139	38
B	38.6	74.2	151	32
C	13.6	87.7	53	27
D	2.6	90.3	10	24
No award	9.7	100.0	38	-

Health & Food Technology

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 45	-	-	-	-
A	49.5	49.5	229	36
B	30.2	79.7	140	30
C	8.6	88.3	40	25
D	2.6	90.9	12	22
No award	9.1	100.0	42	-

Lifestyle & Consumer Technology

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark- 45	-	-	-	-
A	44.4	44.4	345	36
B	33.2	77.6	258	30
C	10.8	88.4	84	25
D	1.9	90.3	15	22
No award	9.7	100.0	75	-

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 any significant changes in distribution of awards/grade boundaries

The standard of passes is very similar to last year overall, however there is a slight drop in the number of candidates achieving Upper A awards for Lifestyle & Consumer Technology and Fashion & Textile Technology. This may be due to third year pupils being presented with a poorer standard of English and fewer skills in making evaluative comments.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Overall the performance of candidates is very similar to last year with some general improvements in the presentation of candidates' work.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

ALL CONTEXTS:

Step 1: More candidates are now identifying the main points from the brief successfully.

Steps 2/3: Most candidates made good decisions about the items they chose to make in the allocated time.

Step 7: Most candidates completed the star ratings successfully, with relevant evaluative comments being given. Candidates appear to be better at making evaluative comments in general.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

ALL CONTEXTS:

Step 1: A few candidates are still not using the accurate title of the brief, missing out words or using their own interpretation.
Many candidates are still listing too many additional points, which makes the evaluation at Step 7 very difficult.

Step 2: A few candidates are failing to complete the choice table accurately by missing out some boxes with ticks and then going on to choose the items in their final choice.

Step 3: As above.

Step 4: Some candidates planned for more than 10 hours.
Some candidates planned for a much shorter time, some as little as 6 hours. This limits the possibilities for the candidate's choice of items to be made.
Some candidates, usually from the same centre, used less than 50% of their planned time on practical work.
Some candidates did not plan to make the items that they had chosen in Step 3 or made others not chosen.
Some candidates omitted the time/date from their plans.
Some centres appear to still be leading the candidates into making the same items/dishes.
A few candidates are still writing retrospective time plans (fewer each year).
In some cases time plans are still very vague and it is not clear what the candidate plans to do.

Step 5: Still a few centres do not indicate that resources, equipment and materials have been requisitioned correctly, or mistakenly indicate in both boxes.

Step 7: Some candidates, especially younger candidates made statements rather than evaluative comments.
Some candidates failed to refer to the items they had made when making their evaluative comments.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Centres should make good use of the Practical Assignment Exemplars now available on the Home Economics page of the SQA website.

Centres should refer to the changes made to the new Guidelines for Candidates and Teachers. Electronic copies of the 2006 versions of these documents will be available on the SQA website.

Centres should make sure they are familiar with administration procedures for the completion of relevant documents.

Centres should ensure that they are using the accurate brief titles for Diet 2006. They can be found on the SQA website along with the candidate pro formas.

Centres should ensure that candidates are given the correct allocation of time (10 hours) to carry out the practical assignment.

Centres should ensure that candidates are given the opportunity to carry out a practice Practical Assignment before embarking on their SQA brief for that year.

Centres should make good use of the evaluation skills materials produced by SQA.

A calendar for all Home Economics procedures is being compiled by SQA and should be available soon. Centres should make good use of this to keep up to date with SQA administration.