

Principal Assessor Report 2005

Assessment Panel:

Technical Education

Qualification area

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

Product Design Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update

Number of resulted entries in 2004	829
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Number of resulted entries in 2005	654
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General comments re resulted entry numbers

Although the numbers are down a little this year compared with last year; Intermediate 2 Craft and Design being the appropriate comparator; this is not surprising.

So far only a handful of Centres have brought the course down into S3 and S4, perhaps due to the absence of an Intermediate 1 course, so there is no appreciable increase coming from that direction.

Other Centres have been running Practical Craft Skills in S3 and S4 and have therefore decided to offer the "other" (metal/wood) craft skills course in their upper school curriculum, giving their candidates progression by breadth rather progression by depth. As many of the Intermediate 2 Craft and Design candidates came from a similar cohort, that easily explains the dip in presentations for this first year of Product Design.

It may also be the case that one or two schools have kept away from Intermediate 2 Product Design in this first year to enable them to concentrate on only one level (Higher) for the time being, as they familiarise themselves with the new course. To be fair, this is speculation on my part, resulting from some anecdotal evidence.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 100	-	-	-	-
A	26.5	26.5	173	71
B	24.6	51.1	161	61
C	16.2	67.3	106	51
D	7.8	75.1	51	46
No award	24.9	100.0	163	-

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

There were no significant changes in distribution of awards or the grade boundaries this year.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Candidates' performance was on a par with past years in Craft and Design. In the examination there were some questions which were answered extremely well by the majority of candidates.

Almost half of the candidates scored somewhere in the teens for Question 1 (kettle and toaster) which was out of 20. The format of this question will not change significantly for the foreseeable future so candidates should know what to expect from now on. Question 2 (printer evaluation) was generally well answered. Question 3 (salt and pepper set) required the candidates to state what would have been researched BEFORE producing a design specification. This was very poorly answered by the majority of candidates, giving the impression that they did not understand the significance of (Unit 1) doing research prior to producing a specification. Question 4 (training shoes), question 5 (playground equipment) and question 6 (modelling) all produced fair responses. Question 7 (furniture) was a very traditional question, eliciting excellent responses from candidates.

In the Design Assignment, candidates performed well in most sections of the assessment.

It was relatively easy for markers to award a good score for the first section (ideas) as they could simply keep on marking each new idea until they reached 9 or 10 marks.

Section 2, however, did not display the depth of development which we would have hoped for. Candidates seemed fairly able to produce a wide range of alternative aesthetic ideas but few seemed capable of producing a similar range of constructional options. There was little reasoned justification for choosing one concept over another. With some candidates there was obvious change from one drawing to the next but this is not the same as development. Even at Intermediate 2 level, candidates should be annotating their work with meaningful comment and stating whether one idea is better than another, giving a reason why. The standard of graphics was not high but this is to be expected at this level. Most candidates' graphics were adequate for communicating their thoughts. The most popular tasks were the seating and the table, the slide came third with the baby changing station being attempted by the fewest candidates. No statistical work was done to see if any particular task scored better than another.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Candidates performed fairly well in the examination, particularly in Questions 1, 2, and 7.

In the Design assignment, due largely to the SQA guidelines for the DA completion, most candidates were able to direct their responses to match the range of statements and thus score reasonably well in most sections.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

In the question paper, Question 3 was poorly answered.

In the DA Section 2: Development towards a Design proposal. This was the section with 20 out of the available total of 50 marks. The final Section of the DA, Communication of the Design proposal, required either a Rendered Graphic or a Model.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

There are no particular issues, which need flagged up to centres, regarding the Examination.

In the Design Assignment, there are some points worthy of note:

The DA tasks set for Higher should not be presented for Intermediate 2 assessment, and vice-versa.

Centres should ensure that their candidates attempt to follow the DA Guidelines issued by SQA.

Additional mood boards, mind maps and morphological analysis tables did not attract a sufficient amount of marks to make their inclusion worthwhile.

Thumbnail sketches with just a little annotation are sufficient to score full marks in Section 1. Indeed, many initial sketches had too much information, making it difficult to subsequently develop them.

It is sufficient to just develop one idea. No need to develop more than that.

Candidates should “explore alternatives” rather than just “make changes.” There is a significant difference which is apparent to teachers but less so to students.

For all tasks, candidates should use any relevant anthropometric data which is supplied.