



## External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Play in Early Education and Childcare
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

# Comments on candidate performance

## General comments

This was the final year of this Course, and candidates had been well prepared by centres. Projects were clearly laid out and accessible. Centre marking was consistent with the national standard in some sections.

A variety of Case Studies were used this year, indicating a breadth of placement experience, and all candidates were able to relate the case study to their own experience.

Whilst this is the last year of this Course, centres presenting candidates for Higher Project Based Courses may benefit from reading comments from past reports for this Course.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

As in past years, candidates performed well in the Research Based Report and also the Case Study. Candidates who were able to relate these aspects to their own experiences and observed good practice, performed well.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

Candidates continued to find the Planning section of the project demanding, and there were frequent discrepancies between centre marks and SQA marking. Candidates lost marks for not producing the minimum evidence required for each section. The resource/timeline sections were often poorly executed, with candidates giving little details for either.

In the Research Report, some candidates gave examples of good practice which did not appear to reflect the needs of the children in the setting of Early Learning and Childcare.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

This is the last year of this Course. However, the following guidance would be good practice for candidates undertaking future projects (also see comments and guidance detailed in previous reports):

- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates have a clear, detailed timeline, and that resources listed should, ideally, be in Harvard Reference style.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates are appropriately placed to ensure that they observe, and are engaged in, 'good practice'.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	98
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	78
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## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 200				
A	5.1%	5.1%	4	140
B	41.0%	46.2%	32	120
C	38.5%	84.6%	30	100
D	1.3%	85.9%	1	90
No award	14.1%	-	11	-

The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

## General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). 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 management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ 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, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this 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.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.