



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Practical Cookery
Level(s)	Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2

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

The majority of candidates made very good use of the preparation time, weighing ingredients where appropriate and setting out their work area.

Appropriate protective clothing was worn by the majority of candidates and hair was pinned back, and jewellery and nail varnish were removed.

Refrigerators were used appropriately by the majority of candidates.

Knife skills demonstrated were appropriate for the level being assessed.

Areas in which candidates performed well

The majority of Intermediate 2 candidates used short, focused statements in their time plan and did not rewrite the recipe. A small number of Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 candidates are still rewriting the recipe instead of using short statements in their time plans.

The majority of candidates refrigerated perishable foods correctly at the start and during the assignment when necessary.

The majority of candidates anchored chopping boards.

A large number of candidates displayed excellent cooker control.

At both Intermediate 1 and 2, the majority of candidates served all dishes within the time allowed and most completed their washing up.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Intermediate 1

The Assignment was well received by centres and candidates. A number of candidates experienced difficulty in the following areas:

- ◆ writing time plans with all the necessary personal and food hygiene points
- ◆ securing chopping boards and bowls
- ◆ piping to show four portions.
- ◆ washing up in clean, hot water and drying with a clean, dry towel
- ◆ tasting and seasoning dishes

Intermediate 2

On the whole the Assignment was well received by centres and candidates. A few candidates experienced difficulty in the following areas:

- ◆ cutting brunoise

- ◆ dividing the haggis mix into equal size portions
- ◆ shaping the parathas
- ◆ tasting and seasoning dishes prior to service.
- ◆ peeling and segmenting the orange

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

Only ingredients stated in the recipe can be used. If ingredients need to be changed, approval must be given by SQA.

Candidates who do not produce a workable time plan must be given one by the centre and awarded marks for the time plan they submitted. Candidates must not undertake this assignment with time plans that will not allow them to complete the assignment in the time allowed.

Time plans

- ◆ Time plans must not be a re-write of the recipe.
- ◆ Short statements referring to the recipe stages can be sufficient in most cases.
- ◆ Time slots should be no less than 10 minutes, and must be governed by the tasks being undertaken.
- ◆ Important points could be highlighted with capital letters or a highlighter pen.
- ◆ Hand washing must be included at the start of the time plan.
- ◆ Insert hand washing at appropriate times, eg after handling raw meat, eggs etc.
- ◆ 'Clean as you go' (CAYG) must be included at regular intervals.
- ◆ Ensure preheating of oven is included.
- ◆ Ensure heating/warming of plates is included.
- ◆ At Intermediate 2 level, diagrams would be very useful as part of the Service Details, particularly for the course being served as 4 portions.
- ◆ Best practice would be for the internal verifier to cross-mark planning booklets to ensure consistency throughout the centre.
- ◆ It is important to show evidence of how the assessment decision has been reached.
- ◆ Centres must ensure that time plans provided by them allow the assignment to be completed in the time.

Preparation time

- ◆ All perishable foods should be stored in the refrigerator until required during the assignment time.
- ◆ Vegetables can be portioned to a size a little larger than required to allow pupils to weigh during the assignment. This reduces waste.
- ◆ Vegetables can be peeled during preparation time if indicated in the list of ingredients.
- ◆ Ingredients measured during preparation time should be labelled to prevent confusion whilst carrying out of the assignment.
- ◆ Perishable foods must be covered, labelled and placed in a fridge during preparation time.

- ◆ Ovens must be turned on during the assignment but can be preheated during the preparation time if they are required within a short time of the assignment commencing.
- ◆ Plates for the course served as four portions can be garnished/decorated in the preparation time.

Carrying out the Assignment

- ◆ Recipes must be followed in the order they have been written.
- ◆ Candidates could use a pencil, pen or highlighter to mark off the time plan and/or recipes as tasks are completed.
- ◆ Tasks should be carried out in the order the recipe has been written.
- ◆ For safety reasons, chopping boards must be anchored to the work top with safety mats, damp dish towel or damp paper towels.
- ◆ For safety reasons, vegetable and cook's knives should be sharp.
- ◆ It is good practice to have suitable table top containers/bins for vegetable peelings rather than paper towels.
- ◆ Candidates must re-weigh vegetables after preparation to ensure they use the correct weight or volume.
- ◆ For safety reasons, candidates must clear their chopping boards to a mise-en-place/separate tray/plate before preparing the next product.
- ◆ Candidates should be taught when it is appropriate to use a vegetable knife and when to use a cook's knife.
- ◆ Sweating of vegetables must be completed with the lid on.
- ◆ The use of a refrigerator should be encouraged for storing perishable foods until required.
- ◆ Hands must be washed after handling raw eggs, chicken or meat.
- ◆ Candidates must be encouraged to taste and season dishes hygienically throughout the Course so that it becomes second nature in the Practical Assignment.
- ◆ Garnishing and decorating skills should be developed and individuality encouraged.
- ◆ Dishes served as four portions must show individuality and flair.
- ◆ Candidates can be given time prompts every 20 minutes and reminded of the appropriate serving times.
- ◆ Dishes can be served five minutes either side of serving time.
- ◆ Additional foodstuffs should be available in the kitchen in case food or dishes are spoiled by candidates.
- ◆ Crushing of biscuits would be better in a polythene bag, and rolled, not broken with the end of the rolling pin.
- ◆ Haggis mixture could have been formed into a sausage shape and then cut in half and then half again and then half again to ensure even sized parcels.
- ◆ Orange rind should have been removed on the smallest part of the grater. Wrapping the grater in cling film will help achieve a high yield of rind.

Statistical information: update on Courses Hospitality Practical Cookery – Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2013	5936
Number of resulted entries in 2014	3690

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	61.3%	61.3%	2263	79
B	26.7%	88.1%	987	67
C	9.2%	97.2%	338	55
D	0.9%	98.2%	34	49
No award	1.8%	-	68	-

Statistical information: update on Courses Hospitality Practical Cookery – Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2013	6620
Number of resulted entries in 2014	520

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	43.8%	43.8%	228	60
B	39.6%	83.5%	206	50
C	10.6%	94.0%	55	40
D	0.6%	94.6%	3	35
No award	5.4%	-	28	-

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.