



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Product Design
Level	Advanced Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

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

There was a significant rise in the number of presentations (111 entries compared to 72 in 2010).

Extended case study

The performance in this element ranged from 15–99%.

The average mark was 81/150 (2010 – 90, 2009 – 87, 2008 – 77, 2007 – 75).

Question paper

The average mark in the written paper was 42/100 (2010 – 48, 2009 – 49, 2008 – 45, 2007 – 52).

Overall

The average overall mark was 124 (2010 – 138, 2009 – 136, 2008 – 122).

52% of candidates achieved a grade C or better (2010 – 61, 2009 – 58, 2008 – 44, 2007 – 51).

Areas in which candidates performed well

Extended case study

A number of candidates produced work of a very high standard and tended to score more consistently across the extended case study than in previous years.

Many candidates demonstrated excellent communication skills, particularly in graphics.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question paper

In most questions the responses of candidates were very generic and lacked the depth of knowledge required at this level. Many answers were simply too short. In particular:

Q1 There was generally a lack of detailed understanding of processes and materials.

Q2 Answers generally lacked depth.

Q3 Candidates did not address enough issues to score well in (a). Again, there was a lack of detailed knowledge. Candidates scored better if they used a range of examples to illustrate their answer.

Q4 Again, answers were too short and lacked depth.

Q5 This question was very poorly answered. Candidates who referred to specific products or drew on their knowledge from case studies scored better.

Q6 (a) Although candidates could suggest two methods of idea generation, many failed to describe them or illustrate their answer with examples.

Although most candidates identified two critical stages they failed to describe how they had influenced the development of the product.

Many answers were very generic.

Q7 Although a significant number of candidates produced good answers to this question, a large number produced very superficial responses.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Extended case study

Centres must use the revised guidelines in Diet 2012. These are available on the Advanced Higher Product Design page of SQA's website.

Candidates should be given advice on a selection of suitable tasks. Care should be taken to stop candidates producing a superficial restyling of an existing product.

Centres should refer to SQA's secure website to access exemplification of standards.

Question paper

Candidates are required to gain experience of producing the extended in-depth answers which are required at this level. Staff should remind candidates to use past papers available from SQA's website.

Candidates are required to build up a body of knowledge about products and their development. This could be done by producing a folio of short case studies.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2010	72
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	111
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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 250				
A	12.6%	12.6%	14	175
B	12.6%	25.2%	14	150
C	24.3%	49.5%	27	125
D	9.9%	59.5%	11	112
No award	40.5%	100.0%	45	-

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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.