Course report 2019

Subject	Health and Food Technology
Level	Advanced Higher

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

The question paper contained four questions and took the same format as past papers and the specimen. It sampled knowledge and understanding from a range of topics in the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding.

There was a range of marks gained in the question paper. Feedback from the marking team suggested the paper was fair in terms of overall demand and course coverage, and candidates were able to complete it in the allocated time.

Project

Candidates performed as expected in the project, and achieved a range of marks. There were some interesting and informative topics covered from all areas of the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding. All candidates provided a research question, which could be researched accordingly, using the appropriate methods.

Candidates generally performed well in stages 1 and 2, and were weaker in stage 3. The candidates who provided a clear and concise literature review linked to the topic were then able to come up with a research question which had a clear focus for the research, this in turn allowed the candidates to have more information to use for analysis in stage 3 and therefore gain more marks. All candidates adhered to the 4,000 word limit.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1
Candidates performed well in this question as they are able to apply the skill of evaluation to a high standard. They also had a clear understanding of the role of the media and how it can influence teenagers' food choices, which allowed them to access the marks.

Question 2
Candidates who had a good knowledge of the ingredients and their function in baked goods were able to apply this knowledge and answer the question to a high standard.

Question 3
Some candidates performed really well in this question, as they were able to apply the skill of analysis and clearly link it to the impact food manufacturers had on meeting current dietary advice, and how it can help to reduce the risk of dietary related conditions.

Question 4
The candidates who answered this question well were confident in the skill of evaluation and had a good knowledge of the health implications of a vegetarian diet.

Project

Stage 1(a)
Most candidates performed well in this section by providing a clear, concise and informative literature review, which focused clearly on the chosen topic. Candidates were also able to back the literature review up with credible and current sources of information.

Stage 1(b)
Most candidates provided a research question, which was relevant and based on the topic of the literature review. Once again there were some excellent and different research questions.

Stage 1(c)
Almost all candidates were able to access marks for providing a clear and concise outline plan for how they were going to carry out their research and explaining why with valid reasons.

Stage 2(a)
This section was carried out to a very high standard. Candidates were able to access marks here as they were presenting results, which were communicated very clearly and easy to interpret. This was carried out in a variety of ways.

Stage 2(b)
Candidates were able to access the marks in this section by providing sufficient relevant evidence for analysis. Candidates made sure the type of research they carried out was clearly linked to the research question, therefore giving them more information to analyse.

Stage 2(c)
This section was done very well with almost all results being presented clearly and logically.

Stage 3(a)
The candidates who performed best in this stage were the ones who had carried out their research to a high standard, and were able to clearly interpret the results and the importance of these results, linking them to evidence from the literature review.

Stage 3(b)
Candidates were able to access marks in this section as they were able to draw conclusions from the results rather than apply the skill of analysis.

Stage 3(c)
Many candidates accessed the marks in this section by evaluating the whole process, giving some interesting information. Almost all candidates were able to give valid limitations and interesting recommendations for further study.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 2
This was the explain question and some candidates lacked knowledge in relation to baked goods and the choice and function of the ingredients.

Question 4
Candidates had the knowledge for this question, however, they were unable to link all the elements of the question together in order to fully analyse.

Project

Stage 3(a)
This is still the area of difficulty where candidates do not appear to access the marks. They did not fully analyse the results and link what they had found out from their research to the results. Some candidates introduced new information at this stage, which was not backed up by the research undertaken.

Many candidates purely repeated the results at this stage, without offering any extra information. At Advanced Higher level, more depth is required, especially as it is the technique of analysis which marks are being awarded for.

Stage 3(c)
Some candidates did not evaluate the process as a whole. Candidates should not refer to time and word count as being a limitation, as all candidates have the same time and word count to adhere to.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidates should be made aware of the knowledge and understanding being assessed in this component of the course. This can be found in the mandatory 'Skills, knowledge and understanding' section in the course assessment specification on SQA's website.

Project

There was a varying degree of quality in the work submitted. There was a very good range of topics chosen for research, which were from all areas indicated in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course assessment specification.

Centres must use the advice given on the submission of the project on SQA's website and in Understanding Standards material.

Candidates must adhere to the word count.

Presentation of projects was varied. It would be beneficial if line spacing was 1.5 and a minimum font size of 11pt was used throughout.

There was a lack of bibliographies in many projects. Bibliographies should be included.

Many candidates referred to themselves throughout the project. This should be avoided; where possible use 'the researcher found that'.

Candidates should be using up-to-date and credible research material.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	44

Number of resulted entries in 2019	22

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	4.5%	4.5%	1	70
B	18.2%	22.7%	4	60
C	54.5%	77.3%	12	50
D	4.5%	81.8%	1	45
No award	18.2%	-	4	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

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.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that allow:

♦ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary)
♦ 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.

Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring 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. Members of the SQA management team chair these meetings. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper has been more, or less, challenging than usual.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper is more challenging than usual.
♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual.
♦ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for question papers set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the question papers that they set themselves.