



Course report 2019

Subject	Fashion and Textile Technology
Level	Higher

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any post-results services.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

The Higher course assessment has changed this year with the introduction of a question paper, and minor amendments made to the assignment.

Question paper

The majority of the question paper performed in line with expectations and was found to be challenging for some candidates. Feedback from the marking team suggests that it covered course content and had the appropriate level of demand.

Assignment and practical activity

The marks for the assignment were as expected and indicated that more candidates/centres had a better understanding of the assignment process. In some cases, candidate's written and/or practical work was not in line with the national standards. Written responses within the assignment, at times, lacked clarity, detail and did not link to evidence obtained within the assignment.

Marks for section 2 — practical activity (making the item) remain high. There was evidence that some practical fashion/textile items constructed by the candidates did not have the relevant complexity and lacked the required skills, or construction techniques identified were not accurate.

The issues arising from both the question paper and the assignment were discussed during the grade boundary meeting.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1(a): Most candidates could identify three key features from the images provided. Most candidates discussed how these identified features could influence a designer and linked these to a variety of design features on fashion/textile items.

Question 1(c): Most candidates could provide evaluative responses for using social media as a means to promote the collection. Some responses were repetitive.

Question 3(a): Most candidates could give benefits of a bespoke service, but at times the answers were very repetitive.

Question 3(b): Most candidates were able to correctly evaluate the use of silk for the prom outfit.

Question 4(a): The majority of candidates could describe and explain at least one principle of design. In some instances, candidates incorrectly identified a principle of design or did not correctly explain it in relation to the children's track top.

Assignment and practical activity

Stage 1: Design and plan

Section 1(a): The majority of candidates correctly identified the two key themes and provided a valid explanation.

Section 1(b): Most candidates carried out investigations correctly. A good proportion of candidates completed their research, using a variety of techniques, to a good standard. Most of the research conducted was easy to interpret, concise and factual, and contained an appropriate source with a relevant explanation of the purpose of the research. Most of the investigations were progressive, allowing candidates to effectively gather information, enabling them to select an appropriate final solution. A number of candidates used the findings from one investigation to help identify what they needed to research in their next investigation.

Section 1(d): The majority of candidates created effective time plans that assisted them with the manufacturing of the fashion/textile item. Most candidates allocated 10–15 minute blocks to a task. There was less evidence of retrospective time plans this year than in previous years however there were a greater number of time plans that were too detailed.

Section 1(e): Most candidates completed their requisitions well. Candidates included the majority of textiles/components required to construct the fashion/ textile item with relevant justifications for each. Generally, areas of information that candidates had omitted were the dimensions of the textiles and zips, and the colours of components, for example zips/thread/embellishments.

Stage 2: practical activity (making the item)

Many candidates focused on the manufacturing of their textile item as the most important element of the assignment, as it tends to be the most time consuming aspect in the process. A good range of items were observed, with candidates clearly being provided with personalisation and choice by most centres. The construction techniques showed a good range, and a variety of abilities and skills were demonstrated. Many items showed creativity and imagination.

Stage 3: evaluation

Stage 3(a): The majority of candidates produced tests that enabled them to gain quality feedback on the finished fashion/textile item. The tests generally gave clear and concise results, and were laid out well. Candidates used subject experts to gain information on the suitability of their textiles and components used to manufacture the fashion/textile item.

Stage 3(c): Almost all candidates provided a point of improvement/adaption to their fashion/textile item. The points of change were relevant and the majority of candidates linked it to evidence obtained in the tests 3(a) or the investigations 1(b).

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

It was evident that many candidates had a good level of subject knowledge. However, many candidates were unable to answer questions correctly due to not fully understanding the command words: describe, explain, analyse and evaluate, which resulted in them not being able to fully access marks.

Question 1(a): Most candidates provided three key features with examples from the images. In addition, a good proportion of candidates then discussed these features and linked them to items which could be included in the collection.

Some candidates' responses were difficult to interpret and not well laid out. A number of candidates provided features relating to the images but did not link them to a specified fashion/textile item.

A large number of candidate responses were repetitive. Candidates linked a feature, such as colour, to a number of different items of clothing, for example a red skirt, a yellow top, a purple bikini therefore they could only be awarded one mark once due to the repetition.

For the candidate to be awarded more marks, they could subsequently use colour to describe a feature of a fashion/textile item, such as purple bias binding trim on a skirt hem/pocket, yellow polka dot fabric to be used on a contrast Peter Pan collar. This still links to the identified feature but provides more detail and is not a repetition.

Question 1(b): A large number of candidates did not correctly describe a crease-resistant finish in relation to the holiday collection. Candidates showed a level of knowledge but did not apply it correctly to their response. These responses were statements and failed to describe benefits. It is a statement to say 'the fabric will crease less'. To describe, the candidate needs to give a reason why this is useful, such as 'it will take you less time to iron it while on holiday/the crease will shed easier when removed from the case so will have a better appearance for the wearer'. At times the knowledge was not correct.

Question 2: The majority of candidates did not perform well in this question. Candidates did not fully demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of properties and characteristics and/or construction techniques in their responses, and found the analysing aspect of the question challenging.

Some candidates provided appropriate responses for the properties and characteristics element of the question and demonstrated a good understanding of their knowledge of fibres in relation to the uniform. A number of candidates stated a property/characteristic of the textile, but their analysis linked to a different property/characteristic, such as identified durability and then provided an analysis in relation to strength.

The majority of candidates did not gain marks for the analysis of the construction techniques. Many candidates did not identify the correct construction techniques from the image. A larger number of candidates did not identify the type of zip, collar, pocket etc, as illustrated on the image.

Some candidates identified the construction technique and provided an analysis, linked to the requirements of the uniform, but did not provide an explanation of how to apply/insert/attach the identified technique. In these cases, the candidate did not fully meet the assessment standards.

Question 3(b): Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the properties/characteristics of silk and were able to evaluate silk for a prom outfit.

Some candidates found the evaluation question difficult to answer and provided statements. Some candidates correctly identified a property/characteristic of silk, but then began discussing a different property within the response.

Question 3(c): A large number of candidates could explain the relevance of information on a commercial pattern, however many gave statements and failed to provide a correct explanation of the importance. The candidates did not consider why the information was important and how it may help the consumer/end product.

Question 4(b): Many candidates correctly identified a suitable method of embellishment. Only a small number identified a method which was not an embellishment, or would not be suitable.

A large number of candidates did not provide correct reasons linked to the children's track top, on the suitability of their chosen embellishment. Most of these responses did not consider the item/individual and were repetitive.

Assignment and practical activity

Stage 1: design and plan

Stage 1(b): investigations

Most candidates provided an explanation of the relevance of their investigation, however some only provided statements or did not provide any explanation.

In a number of cases, candidates did not obtain marks for their investigations as they did not successfully summarise points of information from their research. They simply repeated evidence and did not show a progressive approach to their conclusions. Candidates must pull information from the investigation, and conclude in the summary as to how it will assist them in moving forward.

Other candidates did not obtain marks as they did not provide any evidence in their investigations. For example, some candidates carried out research using a questionnaire but did not provide data, only the questions that were asked. The summaries were therefore not valid as they were not factual, but personal statements.

Stage 1(c): the solution

Most candidates provided a solution page, where candidates either illustrated or described their item, however not all candidates did this which put them at a significant disadvantage during the justification stage, as markers can use the solution page to help with understanding the justification.

Justification: candidates did not perform well when justifying the following areas: properties/characteristics of the textile(s) and construction techniques.

Candidates did not meet the standards as follows:

- 1) Candidates did not correctly justify the above areas, linked to evidence, generated from investigations in section 1(b).
- 2) Candidates did not carry out an investigation in 1(b) to provide relevant evidence for the justification of the properties/characteristics and construction techniques. These justifications were from personal opinion and knowledge, but had no reference from evidence obtained in 1(b) therefore marks could not be awarded.

It is clearly stated in the 'Instructions for candidates' section of the coursework assessment task that all justifications must come from evidence obtained during the investigations.

Stage 1(d): plan

Candidates who copied the pattern instructions, without putting it into their own words, did not demonstrate an understanding of the tasks completed, and therefore had marks deducted.

A higher proportion of candidates this year provided very extensive and overly detailed time plans.

Stage 2(a): make and finish a complex fashion/textile item

Some candidates found the manufacturing of a complex fashion/textile item challenging and did not use eight or more construction techniques. These candidates' items did not demonstrate enough techniques from the 5–6 mark columns in the marking instructions. Some techniques were incorrectly identified, impacting on the marks allocated.

Some items produced were detailed, but lacked the complex skills required for this level. Centres should ensure that the fashion/textile item that the candidates select to manufacture has the correct level of challenge and complexity.

Other candidates found some techniques too challenging — for example zips, waistbands and collars — which affected the overall finish and appearance. Some of these items were not fit for their intended purpose due to the standard of finish.

Some candidates used unstable textiles which they found challenging to work with. This had an impact on the finished quality and appearance of the item. Candidates should consider the chosen textiles' characteristics and their own capabilities/skills to ensure that the item manufactured is completed to an appropriate quality.

Stage 3: evaluation

Stage 3(b): evaluation of the finished item

A large number of candidates performed lower than expected within this section of the assignment. The candidates did not meet the criteria of an evaluative response due to a number of factors:

- 1) A number of candidates did not use evidence from investigations/tests within their responses.
- 2) Candidates did not link their evaluation back to their item. There was no reference made to it within their response.
- 3) Many candidates failed to evaluate, instead they wrote statements as their response, which were often based on opinion rather than information from testing.

Stage 3(c) amendments

Some candidates did not use evidence provided within the tests and instead provided changes from personal opinion meaning they were not awarded a mark.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidates should be given more experience of answering exam-style questions, specifically analysis (question 2), evaluation, describe and explain type questions, which are more challenging.

Candidates should be encouraged to read and use the scenario information at the beginning of a question. This will ensure that the candidates effectively relate their responses back to the context of the question.

Candidates should have a clear understanding of the properties/characteristics of fibres, which can be different from those of fabrics. Candidates must also be aware of the features of a fibre or fabric, for example 'comfortable' and 'ease of care' are not features. 'Absorbent', 'soft' or 'crease resistant' are features.

To assist with the answering of question 2, the candidates should develop their knowledge and understanding of a variety of construction techniques, and the method of inserting/applying them to fashion/textile items. In question 2, only construction techniques that are visible on the image should be analysed. Candidates are not expected to analyse any construction techniques that are hidden, such as seams.

Assignment and practical activity

Stage 1(b): investigations

All investigations should have at least four points of summary/conclusion that show progression. Candidates should not simply repeat information found in the investigation; they should indicate how the point highlighted will assist them with their selection of the final fashion/textile item.

A large proportion of candidates are using mood boards as part of their investigations. It is essential that all sources are stated, for example magazines/websites/journals, to ensure that the investigation is valid. In addition, a number of candidates, when using a mood board, do not summarise their findings, so they are not meeting the standards for 1(b).

To ensure candidates are meeting the standards in 1(c), it would be beneficial if one investigation is linked to the properties and/or characteristics of textiles/components and the suitable construction techniques to be used in their solution. This will assist the candidates in 1(c) when justifying their chosen textile's properties/characteristics and the construction techniques that they will use to manufacture their chosen item.

Some candidates do not include the responses from interviews/questionnaire/sensory tests/internet/literary searches, but a summary of the findings in their own words. This does not accurately represent the findings of the investigations. The candidate has the opportunity to summarise their findings at the end of each investigation.

Recommendations for investigations:

- ◆ interview — minimum five questions, clearly stating the source/expert

- ◆ questionnaire — 20 respondents, clearly stating the target group
- ◆ internet research — minimum three different sources, clearly identifying each with the relevant URL

Stage 1(c): the solution

The presentation of the solution should provide sufficient information to visualise it and replicate the item in the future.

Candidates can use a number of techniques to present their solutions; most popular is an annotated illustration or an image of the item. Any format selected by the candidate must include detailed information on the solution. This could include design features, colours, textiles, components, construction techniques etc.

When candidates are justifying their solution, they must ensure that there are a minimum of four points, with justifications, for design features, properties/characteristics and construction techniques. If there are less than four points in a particular section, for example design features, the candidate will be unable to obtain full marks for that section as it has not met the standards for 1(c).

Candidates should ensure that they link design features, properties/characteristics of their chosen textile and construction techniques from evidence derived from 1(b). This is an area in which candidates are not achieving well, and consequently are unable to attain full marks.

Candidates should ensure that they clearly justify the reasons for the design features on their fashion and textile item, properties/characteristics of the textile chosen, and the construction and specialist techniques selected.

Stage 1(d): plan

Plans should not be written retrospectively. They should be broken into realistic time blocks for tasks, rather than 50–55 minute periods. Candidates should not rewrite a commercial paper plan — they should write it into their own words. To gain familiarity with the timing and sequencing of tasks, candidates could be encouraged to record time taken to complete steps during earlier projects in their course.

Stage 2: making the item

This is the section candidates seem to prefer and spend most time on. Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that their item does contain eight construction techniques, of sufficient challenge, to meet the national standard before they finalise their choice of item.

When selecting a suitable textile for the solution, candidates should use information derived from investigations, in particular the investigation that refers to the appropriate textile.

The centre/candidates should ensure that the solution can be manufactured within an appropriate timescale. Some candidates are making very complex items, running out of time to complete section 3, which then has an impact on the quality of the written aspect of the assignment.

Stage 3: evaluation

Section 3(b): When evaluating their items, candidates need to be encouraged to make use of, and refer to, the evidence from their test in order to support their evaluative comments. The use of expressions such as 'therefore' or 'and so' may be useful triggers for candidates to develop their results into evaluative points.

Section 3(c): Candidates should justify all amendments/adaptions that they highlight. These points should reflect evidence gathered in either the investigations 1(b) or the tests 3(a).

Good practice

Centres should ensure that candidates are producing different fashion/textile items that are derived from their investigations. In a few centres, all candidates manufactured the same/similar solutions. Centres should ensure that there is personalisation and choice available to all candidates when they are completing their assignment and practical activity. The investigations should guide the candidate in creating an individual and personalised item. The item should reflect the key points summarised in each investigation.

The majority of centres/candidates used photographic/video evidence to good effect. Some centres have submitted images of all construction techniques carried out by the candidate during the manufacturing of their solution.

Centres should ensure there is photographic evidence of resources and components prior to construction of the solution.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	370
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Number of resulted entries in 2019	215
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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	8.8%	8.8%	19	103
B	34.9%	43.7%	75	88
C	30.7%	74.4%	66	74
D	16.7%	91.2%	36	59
No award	8.8%	-	19	-

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.