Course Report 2017

Subject	Care
Level	Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component: project

The Higher care project consists of eight sections (A–H) totalling 100 marks. Candidates choose from three briefs published by SQA, and are expected to relate each section of the project to their chosen brief. The three briefs remain unchanged from previous years.

It was clear that the majority of candidates had been given opportunities to personalise their work, and most candidates evidenced research skills.

It was apparent that the majority of candidates had a better understanding of the requirements of the project this year. Candidate performance was generally of a good standard and an improvement on the previous year.

As in previous years, the majority of candidates selected Brief 1 *'Is it always better for people requiring care to be cared for at home?'* Most of these candidates interpreted this brief appropriately and could relate each section of their project to it.

Many of the candidates who chose Brief 3 *'Why is it important for people to have choices about the care they receive?'* did not discuss the importance of choices in the care received. Instead they discussed the importance of choices generally, and this reduced their overall mark.

This year there were some creative and innovative projects from candidates who had selected Brief 2 *'Choose a current initiative, strategy or campaign relating to care. Why is this initiative, strategy or campaign required?'* An example of those chosen is the Blind Eye campaign from Women's Aid. It is essential that candidates are advised to select a campaign or strategy rather than a service.

Adherence to the 4000-word limit was variable. If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10% a penalty will be applied. Centres should offer guidance to candidates from the SQA Course Assessment Task document to try to ensure that candidates are not penalised.

This year the majority of candidates used appropriate health or social care services in their projects, which is an improvement on previous years.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component: project

Section A was completed well by most candidates, who clearly explained the needs of individuals requiring care in relation to their chosen brief.

Candidates conveyed a good knowledge and understanding of psychological and sociological theory in their projects (Sections C and E).

Most candidates provided a sufficient conclusion and appropriate references (Sections G and H). The majority of projects were presented clearly and structured well.

The majority of candidates this year used relevant health and social care services in their projects.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component: project

A proportion of candidates analysed needs or theory rather than aspects of development in Section B. This often resulted in repetition of information from Section A or C. In Section B candidates are required to analyse developmental concepts. The judging evidence table in the General Assessment Information SQA document clarifies what is required.

Although most candidates could explain psychological and sociological theory well, many found evaluating or applying this knowledge to the brief more difficult. Candidates often linked theory to a case study rather than the question posed in the brief, thereby reducing their overall marks for this section.

Section F was demanding for some candidates. This was because they did not respond appropriately to the prompt, which requires candidates to evaluate features of positive care practice in three specific care services. Some candidates discussed care practice generally but did not refer to specific care services in their response. Some conveyed detailed descriptions of the actual service itself, rather than positive care practice in three services. Another issue for some candidates was that they did not relate features of positive care to their chosen brief at all.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component Project

As explained in the General Assessment Information document (http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/GAInfoHigherCare.pdf) lecturers/teachers should ensure candidates are clear about the requirements of the project from the outset. Discussions with candidates to clarify their understanding of their chosen brief before they start the project should also occur.

Wherever possible the use of anti-plagiarism software is recommended. This addresses plagiarism and promotes good practice for candidates. Centres should also assist candidates in adhering to word count limits.

Candidates are expected to use appropriate language in their projects. Projects should not include discriminatory language which conflicts with care values and principles.

Candidates should be given opportunities for the development of their own individual research skills whilst being guided to fully understand the project requirements.

If candidates select Brief 2 *'Choose a current initiative, strategy or campaign relating to care. Why is this initiative, strategy or campaign required?'* it is essential that candidates are advised to select a campaign, initiative or strategy rather than a service.

Whilst it was pleasing to see that the conditions of assessment for coursework were adhered to in the majority of centres, there were a small number of examples where this may not have been the case. Following feedback from teachers, we have strengthened the conditions of assessment criteria for National 5 subjects and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher. The criteria are published clearly on our website and in course materials and must be adhered to. SQA takes very seriously its obligation to ensure fairness and equity for all candidates in all qualifications through consistent application of assessment conditions and investigates all cases alerted to us where conditions may not have been met.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	1129

Number of resulted entries in 2017	1181

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	22.3%	22.3%	263	72
B	21.8%	44.1%	258	62
C	25.4%	69.5%	300	52
D	8.8%	78.3%	104	47
No award	21.7%	-	256	-

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.