



Course Report 2017 – External Assessment

Subject	Graphic Communication
Level	National 5

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

Component 1: question paper

Overall, the make-up of the question paper represented a good mix of questions covering the main elements in the National 5 Graphic Communication Course Assessment Specification. Areas included:

- ◆ computer aided design techniques
- ◆ advantages and disadvantages of manual and electronic techniques
- ◆ spatial awareness
- ◆ drawing standards, protocols and conventions
- ◆ use of colour, layout and presentation
- ◆ graphic communication as it impacts on our environment and society.

The content coverage of the question paper was in line with the requirements of the National 5 Graphic Communication Course Assessment Specification.

The question paper took a similar approach to that used in 2015 and 2016. Questions were substantial and contained a range of topic areas based around a different central theme. This approach appeared to be well received by most candidates and afforded them the opportunity to immerse themselves fully in each question. The question paper performed well in all areas and provided a suitable level of demand for all levels of candidate.

Component 2: assignment

Whilst the assignment performed as expected, there was still evidence that a small number of centres were marking candidate work too generously. This was usually towards the top end of the marks range — ie where the marking instructions may have been misinterpreted there was a migration towards 'A' type marks (high 50's to the maximum of 60 marks).

The verification team identified many centres where candidates were producing high quality work across the assignment.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

Question 1 (a) (i): Most candidates managed to describe one benefit of the pictorial view provided.

Question 1 (d): Most candidates performed very well in identifying the correct true shape solution, interpreting from a given orthographic drawing.

Question 1 (e): Most candidates managed to describe at least one way that hatching can be varied to aid identification of different component parts.

Question 2 (a) (ii) & (iii): Most candidates were able to describe how both unity and contrast have been achieved by the graphic designer in the graphic items provided.

Question 2 (d): Many candidates were able to identify the correct pictorial assembly drawings from a plan view provided.

Question 2 (e) (i): Many candidates managed to identify the correct CAD Command — Mirror.

Question 3 (a): Most candidates were able to correctly identify all three colours used in this colour-choice question.

Question 3 (d) (i) & (ii): Many candidates were able to correctly identify the line types shown in the provided surface development.

Question 4 (a): Most candidates were able to correctly identify that a pie chart was included in the provided graphic.

Question 5 (c): Most candidates were able to identify the correct sectional end elevation.

Component 2: assignment

The verification team identified many centres where candidates were producing high quality computer aided design (CAD) and DTP components in the assignment. Generally, the illustration of CAD models was completed to a high standard.

There was evidence of some high-quality work in the promotional item, particularly in centres where candidates had completed their preliminary layouts well and had made clear reference to design elements, principles and the DTP features and techniques they were intending to use.

Centres are advised to ensure that all candidates are aware of design principles and elements as well as DTP features.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper

Question 1 (g): Many candidates failed to achieve full marks in this question due to poor use of terminology and/or not accurately describing where a particular process had been carried out.

Question 2 (a) (i): Many candidates failed to achieve this mark as their description of the different elements and how they were aligned was too vague.

Question 2 (b): Many candidates failed to achieve this mark as they struggled to relate the promotional graphic to the illustrated environment.

Question 2 (e) (ii): Many candidates did not manage to describe a benefit that was specific to this CAD command. Many responses were too generic in nature to be awarded the mark.

Question 2 (f) (i): Many candidates failed to identify that stage 2 was a subtraction, not a shell. Candidates should make sure they read the full question and all the signposting that accompanies it.

Question 2 (g) (ii): Many candidates provided vague descriptions that did not accurately illustrate the way in which a CAD library can assist with the design process.

Question 4 (b): Although many candidates were able to achieve the mark in part (a) for identifying the pie chart, few were able to fully explain the appropriateness of this type of chart for displaying this type of information. Many responses were too generic and not specific enough.

Question 5 (b) (i): Many candidates struggled to achieve full marks in this question. Many did not apply the dimensions correct to British Standards.

Component 2: assignment

Some candidates still appear to find the research and analysis component challenging. There were a number of candidates who were not researching or analysing the graphics as required for the assignment.

Some candidates were not satisfying the full brief when it came to the promotional item, and there was evidence of retrospective planning and some traced work. This attracts zero marks.

Some candidates were producing poor preliminary promotional layouts. This then went on to impact on their final promotional item.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper

In examination preparation for next diet, centres should encourage candidates to support their responses with sketches where appropriate. Although this is not a requirement, it has been identified from all previous examinations that some candidates may find it challenging to fully articulate some of their responses through written means only. This is particularly evident in 3D CAD modelling questions. Although pencil may be used to construct a sketch, any final sketch to support a response should be in blue or black ink.

There were also examples of good practice this year where candidates used annotations to support their responses to the question on alignment in a graphic item. Candidates often struggle to fully articulate which items are being aligned and how they have been aligned.

Centres are reminded to ensure that candidates are using the correct terminology, as detailed in the National 5 Graphic Communication Course Assessment Specification. This has particular importance when responding to 2D and 3D CAD modelling questions and drawing standards, conventions and protocols type questions.

It was evident from this year, and previous diets, that centres continue to prepare their candidates well for the new content introduced to National 5 (CAD and DTP). However, there appears to be a continuation of poor candidate performance in the more traditional content, such as: orthographic projection, surface developments, CAD library, graphs and charts, drawing types, and British Standard style questions. Centres are encouraged to focus more fully on these areas (as well as the 'new' content) in preparation for the 2018 question paper.

Candidates should ensure that, when using additional space at the rear of the question paper to continue their response, their response is clearly indicated and identified.

Centres should ensure that they encourage candidates to respond to each question relative of the command word used in each (ie State, Explain, Indicate, Describe etc.).

Component 2: assignment

With the move to remove units from the National 5 course, centres should be mindful of the new documentation produced and ensure that they are using the latest editions for session 2017–18, including the new assessment conditions set out in the new Specimen Assignment document.

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	6505
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	6301
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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 -				
A	35.9%	35.9%	2261	86
B	28.2%	64.0%	1774	74
C	21.0%	85.0%	1321	62
D	6.1%	91.1%	387	56
No award	8.9%	-	558	-

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.