



## External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Graphic Communication
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

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

Candidate performance in Section A improved slightly from previous years. Many centres appear to have taken cognisance of previous advice and recommendations. Section B appeared to remain consistent with previous year's marks.

As with previous years, a number of candidates were presented who did not come close to the standard required at Higher level.

Grade boundaries at A and Upper A were reduced by one mark. This was to allow for unanticipated responses from the top-end candidates which the marking instruction did not cover and to ensure that no candidate was disadvantaged.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Section A

Question 1. CAD commands: Well answered by most candidates. Candidates appeared well prepared for this type of question.

Question 3. BS Dimensioning and Convention: Well attempted — an improvement was evident from previous similar type of questions.

Question 4 (a), (b) &(c). Architectural Drawing: Well attempted — an improvement was evident from previous similar type of questions.

Question 5. The Three P's: Similar to questions in previous papers, well attempted.

Question 6. BS Convention and Line Types: Well answered by most candidates. Candidates appeared well prepared for this type of question.

### Section B

Question 8. Auxiliary Plan: Well attempted by the majority of centres, although it was evident from the candidate response that, in a few centres, this element had not been taught to the standard required at Higher level.

Question 9. Isometric: Generated a wide range of marks that differentiated between the A and C level candidates. Even when given two starting points, some candidates managed to draw a solution incorrectly orientated.

Question 11. Assembly: Well attempted by the majority of the candidates.

Question 13. Measured Perspective. Previous advice regarding the firming up of lines appears to have been taken on by the majority of centres. The majority of candidates who attempted this question achieved good marks, although a number did not attempt to draw the canopy.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Section A**

Question 2 (e). DTP Terminology: A number of candidates did not know this DTP term and gave the answer as 'a collection of completed drawing and sketches.'

Question 4 (d). Layering: Although displaying knowledge of the computer-aided feature **layering**, a number of candidates did not gain maximum marks by not referring to Plan A when describing its uses.

### **Section B**

Question 10. Interpenetration & Development: A number of candidates appeared not to realise that there were four separate curves that had to be found and drawn, and attempted to join them in a continuous curve.

A number of candidates did not plot the correct length of the circumference in the Development.

Question 12: Planometric. Some candidates who attempted this question plotted the two semicircles instead of drawing with compasses. Markers noted that accuracy was an issue, and there was a distinct drop in the quality of draughtsmanship from previous years.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **General**

This year was the last examination of this Higher Graphic Communication Course, which has been replaced by the new Higher Graphic Communication Course. The new Higher Graphic Communication exam question paper will not feature technical drawing questions like Section B. Full details and supporting documentation can be found on SQA's website and SQA Secure. Centres presenting candidates for the new Course are advised to thoroughly read and understand these documents including the Course Specification and Course Assessment Specification and to ensure that delivery of the Course covers fully the elements that may be examined.

Centres are advised to make use of the Understanding Standards materials and attend Understanding Standards events where possible. Full details of Understanding Standards activity and materials are available from SQA's website.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	4150
Number of resulted entries in 2015	734

## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - 200				
A	29.0%	29.0%	213	139
B	25.7%	54.8%	189	119
C	22.3%	77.1%	164	100
D	8.6%	85.7%	63	90
No award	14.3%	-	105	-

For this Course, the intention was to set an assessment with grade boundaries at the notional values of 50% for a Grade C and 70% for a Grade A. However, an issue with the marking instructions on one question (that would only have affected the A/ A\* candidates) led to a mark being inaccessible and the A/ A\* grade boundaries were, accordingly, lowered by one mark.

## 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.