



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Health and Food Technology
Level(s)	Advanced 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

Three new centres presented candidates for the first time. Most of these centres made good use of the guidance documents from SQA.

Overall candidate performance in the question paper has improved slightly from previous years.

All questions in the paper were accessed. Some very able candidates provided detailed and accurate answers, but there were some candidates either whose answers lacked depth or who did not attempt the required number of questions.

Some candidates did not write a sufficient number of responses to the question which obviously affected the ability to access marks.

Candidate performance in the dissertation was similar to previous years.

Some candidates used resources that were outdated, eg Hungry for Success, or not relevant, eg American research, Wikipedia.

Some dissertations titles did not clearly reflect the work undertaken. Some titles were too long, whereas the best titles were concise and clear.

Referencing of sources remains an area requiring improvement.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Dissertation

Introduction

Candidates generally provided a good, focused, overview of the chosen topic, and were selective with the information they included in the introduction.

Most candidates provided three appropriate objectives with justification.

Methodology

Suitable methods of research were chosen by all candidates and objectives were well covered.

Some candidates identified and justified specific questions which were particularly relevant to age or gender, which allowed them to further develop and evaluate the results in the conclusion.

All questionnaires were piloted with the relevant target group.

Results

In general results had been completed to a good standard. Most graphs were clear and easy to interpret.

Question paper

Section A

- a Most candidates achieved full marks, showing understanding of the report content.

Key issues were addressed well. Most candidates gave six responses. This often benefited candidates, and is good practice.

- b More able candidates provided a good range of relevant answers which linked to the implications for children's health of a diet high in 'junk food'.

- c Candidates displayed good subject knowledge. A wide range of promotional techniques were well discussed.

Section B

- 1a The majority of candidates provided detailed and accurate current dietary targets. These were well linked to reducing the risk of coronary heart disease.

- 2 The key micronutrients were well addressed and responses were generally relevant to the diet of an elderly person. A few candidates included macro nutrients in their responses.

- 3 The properties of eggs were thoroughly discussed and linked to the manufacture of food products.

- 4 The candidates who attempted this question produced work of a very good standard. Stages of product development of a chilled ready meal were correctly sequenced and each key stage was discussed in detail.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Dissertation

Methodology

Although all methods of research were relevant, some lacked detail, making it difficult to replicate the research. Age groups, and their justification, were sometimes omitted or not clearly identified. Few, if any, reference sources were identified.

Results

Some dissertations did not identify all the key points and some lacked accurate interpretation of the graphs.

Conclusion

Not all results were concluded. A more detailed analysis of the results would have resulted in a conclusion of greater depth.

Some candidates did not show a clear understanding of the limitations encountered during the research. The limitations should be pertinent to the dissertation and could include, for example, any problems arising from the choice of methodology/ target group. Limitations should not focus on time, number of words or candidates' skills — these are common to all candidates.

Reference lists

Reference lists were not always organised alphabetically by author, date and publisher. The subject matter/title of websites was often missed out, as was the date when an online reference was accessed.

Question Paper

Section B

- 1b Some candidates performed less well in this area and often did not provide sufficient responses, so could not access the full mark range.
- 5 Some answers were repetitive and did not fully address the contribution of functional foods to diet and health.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Course Assessment tasks

Project

Referencing information

Sources of information such as reports, statistical information, online sources etc used by candidates should be current, relevant and from a credible source.

Candidates should follow the guidance for referencing information provided in the Health and Food Technology Project: General Assessment Information.

Literature review

Candidates should be selective in the information they include in the literature review. This should show that there is a clear, concise focus for the research.

Research techniques

The techniques used in the research should be appropriate and allow information to be collected, eg if using a questionnaire, ensure that all the questions are pertinent to the focus of the research question.

Analysis and evaluation

The analysis of the finding of the research undertaken should lead to conclusions that are based on the evidence recorded in the project.

Recommendations for further research should be based on any area the candidate has researched and which could merit further investigation or expansion.

General

Candidates should check word count, spelling and grammar before submission.

Question paper

Candidates should be made aware that they are expected to undertake independent research to extend and update their knowledge.

Candidates must read the question and respond to what is being asked. Underlining the key points in the question may help candidates to focus.

Candidates should provide sufficient answers to each question to allow them to access the available marks. At Advanced Higher level it is expected that detail is provided in the answers linked to the command words of *explain*, *evaluate* and *analyse*.

Access to the General Marking Principles for Advanced Higher Health and Food Technology and the Specimen Question Paper would be of value to candidates. This would provide guidance to candidates on how to structure their responses.

Centres should provide opportunities for timed question to be completed. This will allow for good time management during the examination.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	38
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	23
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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 - 200				
A	30.4%	30.4%	7	140
B	30.4%	60.9%	7	120
C	26.1%	87.0%	6	100
D	4.3%	91.3%	1	90
No award	8.7%	-	2	-

The course assessment functioned as intended therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

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.