Course Report 2018

Subject	Graphic Communication
Level	Higher

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. 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

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: assignment

The assignment performed as expected, although the verification process showed that some centres marked too generously. This was usually towards 'A' type marks (high 50's, to the maximum of 70 marks).

The verification team identified many centres where candidates produced high-quality work across the assignment.

Component 2: question paper

The question paper was well received, appropriate and performed well as a final assessment. It covered the main topic areas from the course assessment specification (CAS) and included:

♦ 3D computer-aided design (CAD) modelling techniques
♦ justifying graphics in specific contexts
♦ drawing standards, protocols and conventions in accordance with British Standard
♦ using digital technology in graphic communication
♦ spatial awareness and visual literacy relating to 2D, 3D and pictorial drawings and sketches
♦ desktop publishing (DTP) features
♦ design elements and principles for promotional graphics

This year, candidate responses showed a greater depth of knowledge on subject matter and demonstrated that centres had covered most of the topic areas sufficiently.

Some candidates still responded to 'describe' or 'explain' questions with bulleted statements or single-word responses. To gain full marks, candidates must expand their responses in line with the command word.

'State' questions require one response. Many candidates gave multiple responses when they were unsure which one was correct.

Some candidates are still using incorrect terminology for CAD questions. They must use the terms in the CAS.

Most candidates tried to respond to all questions in the paper, with only a few 'no responses' recorded. This is an improvement from previous years.

Some candidates lacked course knowledge and the subject-specific language. This could suggest centres may have presented them at the wrong level.

Candidates responded very well to the 3D-modelling questions this year. However, some candidates used incorrect terminology, so did not gain all the marks available.

Examples included:

♦ circular array instead of radial array
♦ extrude without a mention of subtract
♦ extrude/cut

A few candidates still did not relate the 3D modelling to the given dimensions.

In most cases, the quality of the responses to the DTP elements, principles and features questions was very good. Most candidates responded with the correct terminology and clear descriptions.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: assignment
Generally, candidates performed well in the CAD stages of the assignment. There are now many candidates producing high-quality CAD and DTP components, and some producing high-quality graphics across the entire assignment.

Component 2: question paper

Question 2(d)(i)
Many candidates could state the correct term for the third-angle projection symbol, however, had difficulty describing what it is used for on a drawing. An incorrect response commonly given was "shows that the drawing is drawn to British Standard."

Question 3(a)(i)
Many candidates accurately explained why promotional graphics are used in industry and/or commerce.

Question 3(b)
Many candidates could explain clearly the advantages of digitally produced graphics compared to manually produced graphics. However, there were still instances of candidates saying that it was 'quicker' without justifying why it was quicker.

Question 4(b)(i)
There were good responses from candidates on the British Standard sectional drawing. Candidates made a good job of hatching, with different materials having the angle or pitch of hatching changed accordingly. Very few candidates hatched into the thread at the bottom of the set screw.

Question 5(d)
Candidates showed good knowledge and understanding of the term 'depth' in DTP.

Question 6(b)
The question on the benefit of multi-lingual versions of an online magazine had the best response in the paper, with 96% of candidates gaining the mark.

Question 6(d)
Most candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of serif and sans serif fonts.

Question 6(e)
Most candidates demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of cloud based storage.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: assignment

Some centres are still allowing candidates to carry out retrospective planning work, such as tracing CAD drawings and centres are still marking this work. Retrospective planning and tracing is **not permitted** for the assignment (or project) at any level and must not be awarded any marks.

Some candidates' preliminary work was disappointing and well below the standard expected at Higher, for example using line, shape form and proportion, and communicating design features using light shade, tone and texture.

Some candidates did not produce three different CAD modelling techniques. Candidates should be reminded that they do not need to show all three techniques in the model, as some could appear in the scene. Other candidates produced three techniques, but not at a level appropriate to Higher.

A few centres allowed candidates to model simple block models that were nowhere near the standard of CAD modelling required for Higher.

Technical detail should be relevant to the task. Some candidates produced inappropriate sections and detail views, and centres awarded marks for simply creating these views.

Higher candidates create a 3D scene as part of the promotional activity. In a few cases, the quality of illustration was below that required. Materials and textures (bump-maps) were often in an incorrect orientation or scale, making the scenes unrealistic and ineffectual. Some candidates found the application of the illustration to the scene challenging. Either they omitted it completely or the application was poorly executed.

Component 2: question paper

Question 1(b)(i) and (ii)
Very few candidates could calculate the major and minor axis sizes of the ellipse for the drawing. Most tried to measure the sizes with a ruler or tried some very complex calculations.

Question 2(a)(i)
Many candidates did not know the universal 3D modelling STEP file format.

Question 4(a)
This question, along with question 4(c)(i), caused the most difficulty. Candidates should have been able to read and interpret from the drawing, as all the information was easily accessible.

Question 4(c)(i)
Candidates responded poorly to this question.

Question 6(f)(ii)
The term 'colour picking' for DTP caused difficulties for many candidates. Instead of referring to the colour picker tool, they described why certain colours had been picked/chosen for the design of the layout.

Question 6(i)
Many candidates struggled to understand the DTP term 'justification', with only 20% gaining the mark.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Centres should make themselves familiar with the course specification for 2018–19.

Component 1: assignment

The assignment is now worth 50 marks. This is a reduction in the overall marks for the course assessment. Centres should ensure they are familiar with the assessment conditions set out in the course specification.

Component 2: question paper

The question paper is now worth 90 marks, which is 64% of the overall marks for the course assessment. The duration of the question paper has been extended to 2 hours and 30 minutes. It is important that centres take account of this in their learning and teaching.

Centres should use the correct terms from the course documentation when preparing candidates. This is particularly important when candidates are responding to questions on 2D and 3D CAD. Performance in this area has vastly improved but some candidates are still using generic terms that are specific to CAD packages, rather than those in the CAS.

Candidates must be aware of the meaning of the command words used in questions. It is acceptable to write bullet points or short responses when 'state' is used. 'Describe' and 'explain' require extended responses.

Centres should encourage candidates to sketch and annotate their responses to 3D-modelling questions. Candidates who perform better are generally those who chose to use sketching along with a description, rather than a block of extended writing. There was also evidence of candidates not referring to the dimensions given — this is critical to any 3D-modelling process.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	4351

Number of resulted entries in 2018	4134

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	20.0%	20.0%	826	106
B	27.7%	47.7%	1144	92
C	28.0%	75.6%	1156	78
D	9.6%	85.2%	395	71
No award	14.8%	-	613	-

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 which 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.

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 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.

Grade boundaries from exam 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 exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.