



Course Report 2017

Subject	Hospitality: Practical Cake Craft
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

Practical activity

The practical activity is conducted in three stages: designing, implementing and evaluating.

The intention is to extend and apply skills developed in the course units in the context of baking and finishing a celebration cake from a given brief. The brief is the same year on year and the coursework performed as expected. Candidates' work was of a very good standard, and assessment judgements were in line with national standards.

Centres made good use of the marking instructions, and feedback indicated this was received positively by the assessors with all marks being fair and accessible for candidates. The holistic marking instructions allow candidates personalisation and choice in how they present their work, giving them opportunities to use higher-order skills if this is appropriate to their abilities.

Candidates' interpretation of the assessment criteria indicated a good understanding of the practical assignment requirements, with most cake designs constructed with flair and imagination, demonstrating personalisation and choice.

Candidate pro formas were completed to a good standard. Most were typed and neatly presented, and good photographic evidence of the completed cakes backed up assessment judgements.

Candidates performed well in most instances, resulting in a high standard of cakes being presented for verification in those centres that were sampled.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Practical activity

Overall, candidates performed well this year. Most candidates completed the task within the given timescale and to the desired standard.

Design illustrations were constructed with flair and imagination, demonstrating personalisation and choice. Where colour was included in the illustrations, it gave an early indication of how the finished cake would look in terms of colour balance and design.

Work plans were completed in a logical order in most instances, and this helped keep the candidates on track during the assessment task. Cake baking was carried out to a very good standard, and assessors made sound judgements. Clear photographic evidence included in the candidate pro formas supported centres' decisions.

Cake finishing techniques were executed to a good standard in most instances, in line with general marking principles and specific marking instructions. Assessors' comments were accurate, and clearly justified the marks applied to each section.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Practical activity

A small number of candidates found the following finishing application and finishing decoration techniques demanding.

Candidates should be encouraged to read and fully understand the information required for completing the candidate workbooks as well as the practical activity tasks.

Smoothing: Initial preparation of coatings such as marzipan and sugar paste must be carried out correctly. Both mediums should be softened and pliable before use. Marzipan should be rolled out using caster sugar as this helps prevent drying out prior to rolling and coating the base cake. Where sugar paste is used for the final coating, it should also be softened and made pliable prior to rolling. Minimal use of icing sugar during this process will help prevent the sugar paste from premature drying out, allowing a smooth neat finish which can be polished and show no cracks or creasing.

Trimming: Trimming of marzipan and sugar paste should be carried out with extreme care to allow an even and smooth finish on the cake. The cake board, if coated, should be trimmed neatly to the correct size of the cake board /drum, with no ragged edges.

Modelling: This technique must be executed to a high standard to attain full marks. Marking guidelines are provided for three types of models and are described as simple models, straightforward models and detailed models. Clear guidelines are provided in the marking instructions; examples are provided on the SQA website.

Crimping: This technique attracts high marks. Candidates should be encouraged to use this technique correctly and accurately. In some instances, crimping tools were used incorrectly, the crimping was not effective, and some marks were not accessed.

Embossing: Where this technique is used, it should be clearly stated in the design illustration. The resources and type of embossing tool used should be listed and also mentioned in the plan for finishing the cake.

Stencilling: This technique needs to be improved to achieve a better result. Marks were not accessed in this area where stencilling was smudged or poorly executed. The marking guidelines give an indication of the standard required.

Evaluation comments were minimal in some instances. Candidates should be encouraged to evaluate and apply correct comments within each section of the evaluation section. Marks were not accessed where statements were given instead of evaluative comments.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Practical activity

It was clear that candidate performance in the practical activity task was in most instances of a high standard. This reflects the support and preparation provided by assessors and centre staff in facilitating opportunities for candidates to undertake additional practice sessions and research, allowing them the potential to achieve good marks.

The SQA marking instructions clearly identified where marks can be allocated for more insightful responses that show depth of understanding.

The sampled centres ensured that candidate work presented for the practical activity assessment task was in line with national standards. Visiting verifiers provided additional support, guidance and advice to centre assessors where necessary. Centre assessors commented that the SQA webinars and the recent audio presentations had proved to be very helpful.

For future assessment, centres are encouraged to use the current and most up-to-date versions of SQA-devised Hospitality: Practical Cake Craft documentation.

Candidates should be aware of the skills and knowledge that are being assessed, and should also be encouraged to use evaluative comments where required within the assessment task.

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	1785
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	1730
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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	34.6%	34.6%	598	82
B	33.0%	67.6%	571	71
C	23.2%	90.8%	402	60
D	3.8%	94.6%	65	54
No award	5.4%	-	94	-

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.