



Course Report 2018

Subject	Graphic Communication
Level	National 5

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: question paper

This year's question paper introduced a revised approach, with the number of marks and weighting increasing from previous years.

The question paper was worth 80 marks and represented a good mix of questions, covering the main areas in the National 5 Graphic Communication course specification. The course content assessed included:

- ◆ computer aided design techniques
- ◆ graphic items in specific situations
- ◆ manual and electronic methods of graphic communication
- ◆ spatial awareness
- ◆ drawing standards, protocols and conventions
- ◆ use of colour, layout and presentation

Although this was an extended question paper, in terms of time and marks, it took a similar approach to the question papers for 2017, 2016 and 2015.

Questions contained a range of topic areas based around a different central theme. Most candidates took 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 candidates.

Component 2: assignment

This year's assignment also had a revised approach, with a time limit of 8 hours, carried out under a high degree of supervision and control, and submitted to SQA for external marking.

The assignment was worth 40 marks and followed a very similar approach to previous years.

Candidates had to respond to three practical tasks focused on a central theme. This involved:

- ◆ demonstrating graphic design skills and creativity
- ◆ using graphic communication technologies
- ◆ producing preliminary, production and promotional graphic responses
- ◆ applying illustration techniques to create graphics with visual impact
- ◆ producing 2D and 3D production drawings, applying appropriate standards, protocols and conventions
- ◆ reviewing and evaluating progress, giving justification for graphics and the graphic communication techniques employed

Most candidates presented their work on a maximum of eight single-sided A3 pages, as recommended in the assessment task.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

- Question 1(c): Most candidates correctly identified the appropriate panels on the surface development.
- Question 1(d): Most candidates identified the correct elevation from the choice provided.
- Question 1(h): Many candidates explained why it is important for the environment to carefully layout different parts.
- Question 2(b): Most candidates described the environmental benefits of digital publishing over physical print media.
- Question 2(c): Almost all candidates identified the type of graph provided.
- Question 2(d): Most candidates described one way the designer graphically communicated the data.
- Question 2(f)(i): Most candidates identified the most suitable type of graphic to present the data provided.
- Question 6(a)(i): Most candidates identified the correct DTP technique to improve the visibility of the article title.

Component 2: assignment

- Task 1(a): Many candidates produced accurate 2D CAD component drawings of the product.
- Task 1(b): Many candidates produced accurate 2D assembly drawings of the product.
- Task 2(a): Most candidates achieved high marks producing their 3D CAD renders.
- Task 2(b): Many candidates produced informative preliminary thumbnail sketches of the advert for the product.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper

- Question 1(b): Few candidates could state the meaning of A/F.
- Question 1(g)(ii): Few candidates identified the correct surface development when the model was opened out at generator B.
- Question 2(e)(i): Few candidates identified the most suitable type of graphic to present the data provided.
- Question 3(f)(iii): Few candidates correctly identified the use for the line type provided.
- Question 5(a)(i): Few candidates correctly described how the graphic designer had used line to enhance the layout.
- Question 6(a)(ii): Few candidates identified the correct DTP technique that should be used to make the improvement.
- Question 6(a)(iv): Very few candidates identified the correct DTP technique that should be used to make the improvement.
- Question 6(d): Few candidates accurately described the advantages of using guidelines.

Component 2: assignment

- Task 3(a): Few candidates accurately produced the sketches to the appropriate proportions.
- Task 3(b): Many candidates failed to accurately produce the required assembled views and project them appropriately.
- Task 3(c): Some candidates lost marks for rendering, as their response did not reflect the requirements of the task.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper

Where appropriate, centres should encourage candidates to support their responses with sketches. Although sketching is not a requirement, some candidates find it challenging to express their responses in writing. This is particularly evident in 3D CAD modelling questions. However, although candidates can use pencil to construct a sketch, any final sketch should be in blue or black ink.

There were examples of good practice this year, where candidates used annotations to support their responses to many questions. Candidates who struggle to express themselves could benefit from using annotations on a graphic, where appropriate.

Centres should ensure that candidates are using the correct terminology, as detailed in the National 5 Graphic Communication course specification. This is particularly important when responding to 2D and 3D CAD modelling and drawing standards, conventions and protocols questions.

Candidates were well prepared in the new content introduced to National 5 (CAD and DTP). However, candidates' performance is still poor in the more traditional content (orthographic projection, surface developments, CAD library, graphs and charts, drawing types, and British Standard). Centres should focus on all areas to prepare candidates for the 2018–19 question paper.

If candidates use the 'additional space for answers' section of the question paper booklet, they should ensure that the question they are responding to is clearly identified.

Centres should ensure that they encourage candidates to respond to the command word used in each question, for example state, explain, indicate, and describe.

Component 2: assignment

Candidates should ensure that the different elements of their sketches — and their sketches as a whole — are in proportion.

Candidates should ensure that all relevant centre lines are included in their technical drawings. There were many instances this year where candidates did not include centre lines in any of their views.

Centres should also ensure that candidates follow instructions closely when doing the assessment task. There were many instances this year where candidates carried out work unnecessarily or did not follow the instructions given. For example, some candidates used drawing boards for task 3, when the task stated that there would be no marks awarded if drawing boards were used.

Candidates should ensure that they clearly label each page they submit with the corresponding task.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	6301
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	5434
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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	20.5%	20.5%	1115	84
B	26.3%	46.8%	1427	72
C	25.6%	72.4%	1393	60
D	16.9%	89.3%	920	48
No award	10.7%	-	579	-

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.