



Course Report 2018

Subject	Hospitality: Practical Cookery
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

This year saw the introduction of a question paper. All centres used the published SQA recipes to carry out the assignment and practical activity.

This report should be read in conjunction with current supporting documentation. For the 2018–19 session these include:

- ◆ The 2018 past paper and marking instructions
- ◆ Practical activity instructions for centres and for candidates
- ◆ Practical cookery verification key messages

Centres are reminded that they should not confirm dates and times for the practical activity until they have heard from SQA to determine whether they have been selected for visiting verification. This date is usually at the end of January each year.

This year, a number of candidates performed very well in the practical activity.

Component 1: question paper

This year saw the introduction of a question paper to assess candidate's breadth of knowledge from across the course, their depth of understanding, and the application of this knowledge and understanding in a new context. The question paper performed in line with expectations and feedback from the marking team and from practitioners suggested that the question paper was fair in terms of course coverage and overall level of demand.

Candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of course content, but did struggle with the depth of understanding that is required at this level.

Component 2: assignment

This was also the first year that the planning stage of the course assessment was submitted to SQA, in the form of an assignment. Candidates were still expected to write a logical time plan and detailed service details, along with an addition requisition for minimal equipment to be used in the making of the three recipes.

As the marking criteria has not changed for this section from previous years, the expectation was that candidates would achieve similar marks. This however has not been the case. Marking this year was standardised, and the results were lower, with many candidates achieving minimal marks due to a lack of detail in their responses.

Component 3: practical activity

The practical activity was at the same level of demand as that of previous years, and therefore met with expectations. However, some centre assessors were marking generously, as witnessed during visiting verification and by an analysis of the marks submitted to SQA. This has had an impact on the setting of grade boundaries.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper

Most candidates attempted all questions in the question paper.

The areas in which candidates performed well were:

- ◆ question 1(a): most candidates were able to access a range of marks linking to current dietary advice
- ◆ question 3(a): linking to the storage of ingredients
- ◆ question 3(b): where candidates had to calculate the cost of a range of ingredients

Component 2: assignment

Candidates achieved the most marks in the service details for each dish section. Candidates who chose to draw and label their diagrams tended to achieve higher marks than those candidates who chose only to provide a description.

Component 3: practical activity

The overall marks submitted for candidates remain high, and the majority of candidates have performed well.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper

Questions that required the candidate to either explain or evaluate their response were poorly completed, with a high percentage of candidates achieving no marks in these areas.

Very few candidates achieved any marks for question 2(b) linking to cross contamination. Candidates did show good knowledge in this area as they identified important food hygiene practices, but provided no explanation about why this helps prevent cross-contamination, so could not access the marks.

Question 2 (e)(iii), few candidates could identify the impact on taste or texture of using a low-fat cream substitute, and therefore could not access the marks for this question.

Component 2: assignment

Candidates are still finding the writing of time plans very challenging, and the marks achieved by candidates in this area reflect this. Many candidates are writing time plans in a step-by-step format, with no additional information. This is not good practice. Many candidates achieved very low marks for time plans that were constructed in this way.

The equipment requisition section of the assignment is new to marking this year, and was very poorly completed by most candidates. The main reason for this was that most

candidates were not identifying the essential equipment required. Many also used incorrect terminology for the equipment they did list, for example a scraper is not the correct name for a spatula. Candidates tended to list items such as knife with no indication as to whether this was a butter knife, chef's knife or vegetable knife. Candidates also omitted to list items such as scales, which are required to check prepared weights during their practical activity. Most candidates also failed to identify any item to use to wipe their mushrooms, which must be listed. There was also confusion as to what paper to use for the starter and the dessert with many candidates getting confused between greaseproof paper and parchment paper.

For the service details, many candidates forgot to identify a clean service plate as clearly stated on the recipe, or state what temperature it should be at. Some candidates insisted on serving their chicken and rice together, even though the recipe clearly states they were to be served in separate dishes.

It is essential that all candidates are given the opportunity to amend their time plans and service details if needed, to ensure they are workable. This should be carried out after they have been submitted to SQA for marking, in order to ensure they are workable and the candidate is not disadvantaged prior to the commencement of their practical activity. Where a candidate requires a centre-devised time plan, they should be given adequate time to become familiar with it. The candidate should not be given it at the point of starting the practical activity.

Component 3: practical activity

The completion of the practical activity required a high standard of multitasking. Some candidates struggled with the timing of the three dishes, and therefore did not get all components of the three dishes served in the allocated time.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper

Centres need to ensure candidates are better prepared for the question paper, to ensure they know the depth of information required for both 'explain' and 'evaluation' style questions. Candidates in many cases did not create a suitable answer, due to the fact they did not read the question properly.

The term 'healthy' was used by many candidates as an explanation in a number of questions. This is not acceptable as candidates are required to explain why a change to a dish or cookery process is deemed healthy, for example stir-frying is considered a healthy method of cooking, as less fat is used during the cooking process, therefore the total fat in the dish is reduced.

The specimen question paper cannot be used as a prelim paper for candidates and later submitted to SQA as evidence.

Component 2: assignment

Centres should spend more time preparing candidates for the demands of writing a good time plan. It is not acceptable for candidates to write a time plan in a step-by-step format with no other details. The time plan is not only an aid to help candidates organise themselves during the practical activity, it is also there to remind them to carry out those activities which are often forgotten during the practical activity, for example re-weighing of prepared ingredients (where required), clean as you go, tasting and seasoning, pre-heating oven and service dishes (where required), adjusting oven temperatures. These are all tasks that many candidates forget to do during the practical activity. The time plan is a reminder that time must be made for these tasks during the practical activity, to ensure candidates maximise marks.

For the equipment list, at National 5 level candidates are required to know the correct terminology for kitchen equipment as identified in the course specification. They must, for example, specify the type of knife, spoon or brush they plan to use, eg vegetable knife, tablespoon and pastry brush.

For service details candidates must ensure they serve the food as detailed in the recipe. If the recipe states a warm clean plate then this must be specified in the service details. The candidate should also make it clear where the garnish or decoration will be located, whether this be via a drawing or description. The marker and assessor must be able to visualise what the finished dish will look like.

Component 3: practical activity

Centres are reminded that the recipes should only be given to candidates on three occasions:

- ◆ during the one permitted practice of each dish
- ◆ during the planning stage
- ◆ during the implementing stage

Candidates should not have access to the recipes on any other occasion.

Centres are reminded to use the holistic marking instructions as accurately as possible to record performance on the day.

If a candidate decides they cannot continue with the implementing stage, they cannot be given another opportunity, unless on health grounds. They can only be given the opportunity to undertake it on one occasion.

Candidates are permitted to garnish/decorate either their plate or food to access marks. If any part of a finished dish is deemed 'inedible', or is not served, no marks should be awarded for the service of that dish. It is important that this is implemented throughout to ensure fairness to all candidates.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	5648
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	5035
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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	6.6%	6.6%	331	77
B	26.4%	32.9%	1328	67
C	32.6%	65.5%	1641	57
D	21.4%	86.9%	1077	47
No award	13.1%	-	658	-

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.