



Course Report 2016

Subject	Practical Woodworking
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

Component 1: Practical activity

The National 5 course practical activity assessment demonstrates that the course is more than simply the sum of its constituent units, and centres must make use of the SQA-provided assessments (without alteration) for this purpose. Current versions of these instruments of assessment are available from the secure area of SQA's website.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Practical activity

The verification team reported that there were some excellent examples of practical work being carried out in centres. Centres have developed a sound grasp of the standard required for the unit work which then provides the candidates with the required skills for the course assessment. Candidates showed developed skills in marking out and tool work. This was reflected in the course assessment, where there was a high standard of work consistently within tolerance.

The standard of the finish was generally very good on the course assessment artefacts. Attention to detail, such as removing pencil lines, sanding lines, saw marks etc, was apparent. Centres used a variety of finishes, such as varnish, wax and oil. Centres are reminded that the use of a gloss finish or a finish that obscures the manufacture of the artefact for assessment purposes is not permitted.

The standard of turnery was generally good. Centres are reminded that there must be a template or working drawing provided for assessment purposes, and marks should be awarded in line with the marking instructions provided by SQA.

The candidate diary has provided support for assessors and verifiers to determine when to award marks — centres are reminded that is a requirement of the course assessment.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Practical activity

Candidates found some areas more challenging than others, where there may not have been an opportunity to develop the skills required. Centres should ensure that candidates are well prepared before undertaking the course assessment.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Practical activity

Centres are required to use the course assessments provided by SQA, which can be found on the secure area of SQA's website. Centres are reminded that no changes can be made to the sizes or dimensions specified within these.

A completed candidate diary is a requirement of the course assessment, and provides evidence as to how marks are awarded and assessment judgements made.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	4279
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	4366
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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 - 80				
A	52.6%	52.6%	2297	58
B	24.3%	76.9%	1059	49
C	17.4%	94.3%	761	40
D	2.0%	96.3%	89	35
No award	3.7%	-	160	-

Decision Making Record Statement

The course assessment performed as intended and so grade boundaries were set as intended.

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.