



Course Report 2018

Subject	Care
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: project

The Higher Care project largely performed as expected. Project item prompts, briefs and marking instructions did not change from the previous year. Feedback from the marking team, teachers and lecturers, and statistical analysis indicates that the project was fair and that the majority of candidates understood the requirements. However, candidate responses generally appeared to be of a poorer standard compared to last year.

The Higher Care project consists of eight item prompts (A to H) totalling 100 marks. Candidates choose from three briefs published by SQA, and are expected to relate each item of the project to their chosen brief. The briefs remained unchanged from previous years.

Similar to previous years, the majority of candidates demonstrated research skills, and took the opportunity to personalise their work. Candidate responses overall contained evidence of a wide variety of care services and individuals in receipt of care services.

Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the project requirements. However, in many instances, candidate's answers lacked depth and provided repeated, generic links to their chosen brief rather than specific links related to the brief and appropriate to each item within the project.

Again, this year, the majority of candidates selected Brief 1, *'Is it always better for people requiring care to be cared for at home?'* Many candidates provided a good interpretation of the brief, relating each project prompt item appropriately to the brief.

Many of the candidates who chose Brief 2, *'Choose a current initiative, strategy or campaign relating to care. Why is the initiative, strategy or campaign required?'* attempted it well. However, as in previous years, some candidates submitted work based on existing long-established care services. Candidates should select a current initiative, strategy or campaign, rather than a well-established service.

As in previous years, many of the candidates who selected Brief 3, *'Why is it important for people to have choices about the care they receive?'*, did not discuss the importance of choices in the care received. Instead, they discussed generic repeated issues regarding personal choice.

This year saw an improvement in adherence to the word limit. Some candidates attempted to avoid the 10% penalty by placing additional information in the appendices. Information in the appendices is not marked. Centres should continue to offer guidance based on the information in the *Higher Care Project Assessment Task*.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component: project

- Item A: Candidates performed strongly and explained the needs of care service users in relation to the brief. Average marks for this item were high.
- Item C: The majority of candidates demonstrated an understanding of psychological theories and were able to apply these to their brief. However, some candidates provided overly descriptive responses. These candidates did not achieve high marks because they did not evaluate the relevance of theory in relation to the brief.
- Item G: Candidates performed well and reached conclusions in relation to their chosen brief.
- Item H: The vast majority of candidates presented references appropriately. Average marks were very high for this item.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component: project

- Item B: Many candidates performed well in this item. However, as in previous years, many candidates found this item demanding. These candidates did not achieve high marks because they did not analyse aspects of human development. The detailed marking instructions in the *Higher Care Project Assessment Task* explain the requirements for this item. Candidates who provided repetitive information, specifically, additional explanation of 'needs' from item A and 'psychological theory' from item C, did not achieve marks for this.
- Item D: Some candidates provided overly descriptive responses of three social influences in general. These candidates did not achieve high marks as their responses did not provide an analysis of the social influences. In many cases, candidates made little, or no, connection to the brief.
- Item E: Some candidates provided overly descriptive responses regarding sociological theories. These candidates did not achieve high marks, as their responses did not explain the relevance of theory in relation to the brief.
- Item F: As in previous years, many candidates found this item demanding. This was because they did not respond appropriately to the item prompt. They did not relate features of positive care practice to appropriate legislations, Codes of Practice, National Care Standards and/or NMC guidelines. Candidates must evaluate these features within the actual care service accessed by the chosen individual(s) receiving care. Candidates who gave a description of services that a care service simply provides, or a generic description of the positive care practice approach unrelated to a specific care service, did not gain marks. Candidates must evaluate within a care service to gain marks. Candidates who repeated common features across the three care services did not gain additional marks.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Changes to assessment in Higher courses come into effect from session 2018–19. The course assessment for Higher Care will have two components: a question paper and a project. Teachers and lecturers must use the revised materials from SQA's website.

Component: project

Information about the revised project will be available on SQA's website. The revised project has 90 marks out of a total of 130 marks for the course assessment.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates are clear about the requirements of the project from the outset. They should discuss project briefs with candidates to clarify their understanding before they start their project. Teachers and lecturers should guide candidates to develop their own research skills.

Candidates should use appropriate language in their projects. Projects should not include discriminatory language, which conflicts with care values and principles.

Centres should use anti-plagiarism software wherever possible. This addresses plagiarism and promotes good practice for candidates. Teachers and lecturers should explain the penalty for exceeding the word limit to candidates.

Component: question paper

A specimen question paper and marking instructions for Higher Care is available on SQA's website. Teachers and lecturers should use this to help candidates prepare for the question paper.

The question paper has 40 marks out of a total of 130 marks for the course assessment.

There are three sections in the question paper:

- ◆ Human Development and Behaviour — 12 marks
- ◆ Social Influences — 12 marks
- ◆ Values and Principles — 16 marks

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	1181
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	1285
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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	11.1%	11.1%	143	70
B	17.0%	28.1%	218	60
C	26.8%	54.9%	344	50
D	12.5%	67.4%	161	45
No award	32.6%	-	419	-

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.