



## Course Report 2018

Subject	Childcare and Development
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 1 — project**

This was the fourth year of delivery for Higher Childcare and Development, with 703 candidates presented. Candidates responded to one of three briefs, set by SQA, to demonstrate their breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the Higher Childcare and Development course. Generally, candidates performed as expected, with centres presenting some good examples of candidate work.

In general, candidates were well prepared. This allowed them to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of child development, theory, and the services that support children and young people.

Centres should support candidates to choose a suitable child or young person for their case study, and ensure that there is adequate opportunity to explore the needs of the identified child or young person effectively. Candidates who made connections between the child, the brief and prompts – allowing effective triangulation of information – generally performed well.

Candidates performed well and achieved good marks in prompts that required them to explain (prompts A, C, F and G). Centres should ensure that candidates describe specific aspects of development and relate these to the age of the case-study child. Centres should also ensure that candidates identify theories of development relevant to the case-study child.

Candidates also performed well in discussion of services, strategies and professionals who support children and young people. The evaluation and analysis aspect of the project continued to be challenging for some candidates

Some candidates still have difficulty in managing the word count of their project effectively. Failure to adhere to the word count results in a penalty being applied.

## **Section 2: Comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1 — project**

Many candidates addressed prompts A, C, F and G well (12, 15, 10, 8 marks respectively). These prompts asked candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in relation to aspects of development, theories of development, and initiatives and strategies that support child development. Candidates would have gained higher marks in their discussion of the aspects of development by relating milestones and normative development (prompt A) to the target child.

Prompt C (15 marks) required candidates to explain theories of child development. Candidates identified both classical and contemporary theory for discussion, with many choosing theory relevant to the age of the case-study child they had identified.

Prompt F (10 marks) asked candidates to explain current services that support children and young people. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of this.

Prompt G (8 marks) required candidates to explain roles and responsibilities of professionals who work with children and young people. Many candidates were successful in describing the roles of these professionals and could relate the identified roles to the needs of children and young people.

There continues to be an improvement in referencing, with many candidates referencing both within text and on a reference page.

### **Areas which candidates found demanding**

#### **Component 1 — project**

Many candidates still found prompts B, D and E (20, 15, 12 marks respectively) challenging. These prompts required candidates to evaluate and analyse their research findings. Candidates may have presumed they met the brief, but closer analysis showed a lack of knowledge and understanding of the key components of analysis and evaluation, and how to apply these to their chosen brief.

Where candidates were asked to analyse (prompts B and E), a lack of supporting data meant that they did not analyse or compare findings effectively. Similarly, some candidates experienced difficulty in expanding points of evaluation and relating this to the developmental age of the child identified in prompt A. Where candidates did evaluate theory, in some cases there was a lack of balance between strengths/weaknesses, and advantage/disadvantage of the chosen theory in relation to their chosen brief. Some candidates had difficulty making a value judgement about a theory with regards to the identified child or young person.

Candidates who chose to discuss children and young people with complex needs put themselves at a disadvantage if they could not effectively address the prompts in relation to the child or young person.

Prompt B (20 marks) asked candidates to analyse factors that influence development. Instead of analysing, candidates gave some good descriptions of these factors, resulting in a lower allocation of marks.

In prompts E (12 marks), F (10 marks) and G (8 marks), candidates lost out on potential marks for not being specific or failing to make distinctions between services and professionals who care and support children and young people. Centres should continue to reinforce this area with candidates, encouraging them to be precise in the difference between services, professionals and the roles of these, and ensuring they identify relevant professionals for discussion. Similarly, strategies and initiatives should be distinct from services and professionals who support children and young people. Centres should encourage candidates to refer to government policy, guidance, initiatives and strategies from a Scottish perspective.

An effective conclusion (prompt H) allows candidates to gain up to 5 marks; centres should encourage candidates to make a reasoned opinion of their findings. Continued focus on effective referencing allows many candidates to gain up to 3 marks; centres should continue to embed this in their project support for candidates.

## Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

### Component 1 — project

- ◆ The inclusion of a relevant case study allows candidates to contextualise their discussion in relation to the chosen brief. Centres should continue to encourage candidates to keep case studies brief and relatively simple, introducing the identified child and some background information. Case studies should be at the start of the project and not included as an appendix.
- ◆ Similarly, centres should discourage candidates from discussing children with complex family/home environments as they may not have the knowledge and understanding to do this effectively. Candidates who discussed aspects of development and related this to the age of the case-study child, and to normative development, gained good marks. When discussing children with identified support needs, candidates should be sensitive to this and use appropriate terminology that shows knowledge and understanding of the identified support need.
- ◆ When identifying and discussing relevant theory of development, candidates generally chose appropriate theory and performed well. Candidates demonstrated a sound ability to discuss knowledge and understanding of childcare and development, but many found it difficult to apply analysis and evaluation findings of their research. This was a recurring issue throughout many of the projects presented, with a lack of evaluation and analysis resulting in poor allocation of marks for prompts B, D and E. Centres should encourage candidates to use data from relevant sources to support analysis and make measured, objective judgements with regard to their chosen child or young person.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates identify and discuss strategies, initiatives and services that are relevant to the child/young person in the response to the project brief. The strategies and initiatives should be from a Scottish perspective. Centres should ensure that the professionals and services candidates discuss are relevant and appropriate to the child identified in the case study.
- ◆ Centres should support candidates to refine their research skills and apply their findings to their discussion of prompts that require analysis: effective research helps discussion. This research should be from a range of sources, including books, the internet, and academic journals. Candidates must produce original work for their project, and must not plagiarise from other sources. Centres should continue to support candidates to research on their own effectively, and provide guidance on effective text referencing and the inclusion of a reference page.
- ◆ The majority of candidates provided a conclusion to their work. However, in some cases, the candidate failed to give a reasoned opinion of their findings in relation to the child and chosen brief.
- ◆ Centres should encourage candidates to consider total word count to take account of mark allocation per prompt. Some candidates still use a large part of the word count at

the start of the project, and then find it challenging to complete the project within the allocated word count. Being more than 10% over the word count results in a penalty being applied.

- ◆ To facilitate effective discussion of the chosen brief, candidates need to refer back to their chosen brief and the age of the child, and centre their discussion round this.

## Grade boundary and statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	714
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	767
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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	14.2%	14.2%	109	70
B	26.1%	40.3%	200	60
C	28.6%	68.8%	219	50
D	8.3%	77.2%	64	45
No award	22.8%	-	175	-

## 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 SQA's management team.

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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.