Course report 2022

Subject	Graphic Communication
Level	Higher

This report provides information on candidates' performance. 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 appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	3170

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	19.6	Cumulative percentage	19.6	Number of candidates	620	Minimum mark required	81
B	Percentage	28.4	Cumulative percentage	48.0	Number of candidates	900	Minimum mark required	66
C	Percentage	26.8	Cumulative percentage	74.8	Number of candidates	850	Minimum mark required	52
D	Percentage	17.2	Cumulative percentage	92.0	Number of candidates	545	Minimum mark required	37
No award	Percentage	8.0	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	250	Minimum mark required	N/A

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

In this report:

- ‘most’ means greater than 70%
- ‘many’ means 50% to 69%
- ‘some’ means 25% to 49%
- ‘a few’ means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the statistics page of SQA’s website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

As part of the modifications to assessment for session 2021–22, 15 marks were removed from the question paper and it did not sample 'drawing standards, protocols and conventions'.

Overall, candidates appeared to find the question paper more demanding than in previous years, particularly 'explain' questions. Grade boundaries were adjusted to reflect this.

Assignment

No modifications were made to the assignment.

We were made aware of a software issue relating to part 1 of the assignment. We issued a communication to centres to provide guidance, and the issue was taken into account during marking.

The assignment performed as expected, with candidates able to access the majority of grade-C marks. Candidates were less able to achieve marks for high-quality desktop publishing work and sketches. Grade boundaries were adjusted to reflect this.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper

Questions 1(c)(i)(ii), 2(g)(i)(ii)(iii), 4(f), and 4(h)

Many candidates did not respond well to these 'explain' questions. They did not give a cause and effect, so did not access all of the marks available. Where candidates gave valid effects, for example they could say why particular things were done, they were awarded marks.

Question 1(e)(i)

Many candidates used incorrect terminology for the type of array being used (a box array).

Question 1(e)(ii)

Most candidates did not correctly calculate the spacing required in the box array. They divided the total distance by the number of instances rather than the number of gaps.

Question 1(f)

This question was not answered well. Candidates should practise breaking a complex model into simple primitives. This would be beneficial for models that require candidates to use more than one modelling technique.

Questions 1(f), 2(e), and 2(f)

Some candidates were not able to access the full range of marks for these questions as they did not read orthographic and pictorial drawings fully or they misinterpreted them.

Question 2(c)

Although it was highlighted as an area to study in the revision support for learners, most candidates did not correctly name intersect as the modelling edit between Step 1 and Step 2.

Question 2(f)

Many candidates shelled the steam wand to make it hollow rather than extruding the two concentric circles of Ø4 and Ø8. In doing so, it was necessary to state a wall thickness of 2 mm and to identify that both ends of the solid would need to be removed to ensure an accurate shell.

Question 2(g)(i)

Many candidates did not accurately describe how alignment had been used. They gave generic responses, such as 'the coffee cups have all been aligned' rather than specifics, like 'the coffee cups have been centrally aligned and evenly distributed along the rows, creating a grid, which makes the layout easier to follow'.

Question 4(a)

Many candidates did not refer to symmetrical or asymmetrical balance and did not give an accurate description of what balance is.

Assignment

Candidate responses to Task 1 were very good. Candidates were well prepared for the computer-aided design tasks.

Task 1(d)

Some candidates completed their title blocks with relevant information. If providing templates, centres should ensure they are accurate and do not take up a significant amount of space on the layout. Centres should also ensure that the third-angle projection symbol used in the template is to British Standards.

Task 2(a)

The quality of desktop publishing produced by many candidates was not at Higher level. Many candidates did not consider how effective their edits of flow text along a path, transparency, and reverse were. Many candidates applied transparency to the images of the cozzlebot toys they were trying to advertise. Candidates should carefully consider how they apply edits.

Task 2(b)

The quality of renders candidates produced for this task varied. Some candidates submitted screen grabs. These do not constitute a high-quality render.

Tasks 3(a) and (b)

The quality of sketching submitted by many candidates did not meet Higher standard. Centres should ensure that they are preparing candidates adequately for all aspects included in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding from the course assessment' table in the course specification.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

The marking instructions for past papers are designed for markers who attend a markers' meeting to discuss the marking instructions. These marking instructions take the form of bullet points for ease of reference during the meeting and during the marking period.

Centres must work with candidates to ensure that they are able to turn bullet-pointed reference materials into fully structured sentences.

Assignment

We recommend working with candidates to support their understanding of correct modelling order. Some candidates 'overrode' incorrect dimensions to make the modelling appear correct in their technical graphics in Task 1. This is not good practice.

At Higher level, candidates should be able to produce a render of a scene using either inbuilt or stand-alone rendering software to produce and export a high-quality render that can be placed on an A4 or A3 sheet at full size without pixelation or evidence of grain. The choice of materials and colours should be appropriate for the context of the scene, scaled appropriately, and allow for high-quality shadows, highlights, and reflections to be seen, for example, using photorealistic renders.

A few candidates used digital sketching methods for Task 3. Centres must ensure that candidates do not use shape tools while working on sketching tasks as they are the equivalent of using drawing equipment. Similarly, candidates must not use software that creates 3D models and converts them to 2D sketches.

Appendix 1: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade 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 for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in very different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2022. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the National Qualifications 2022 Awarding — Methodology Report.