



Guidance on Producing Estimates

This edition: August 2017, version 1.3
Publication code: BA 7316

Published by the Scottish Qualifications Authority
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Estimates

An estimate is a prediction of a candidate's final band across all course components, based on their performance in assessments conducted in the centre. Centres must submit estimates for every candidate entered for externally-assessed graded National Courses to access certain services such as exceptional circumstances consideration.

SQA uses estimates for the following purposes:

- ◆ They play a role in helping SQA make decisions about the grade boundaries for a course — the estimates indicate the grades that centres expect the population of candidates to attain.
- ◆ To help our examiners to prioritise candidates' scripts for re-consideration during the finalisation stage of the awarding procedure — where marks are close to grade boundaries.
- ◆ To support the interpretation of evidence for Exceptional Circumstances Consideration¹ requests.

It is therefore important that an estimate should be a centre's best prediction of the candidate's final attainment in the course assessment.

Guidance on producing estimates

An estimate should be based on the candidate's demonstrated attainment in all aspects of the course (ie all course components) and should reflect the candidate's demonstration of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for the band estimated.

To plan for accurate estimates, you need to have a clear understanding of:

- ◆ the range of skills, knowledge and understanding covered by the course
- ◆ the structure and the assessment requirements of the course
- ◆ the components that contribute to the course award, including weightings where appropriate
- ◆ the grade descriptions for the course

Information on these aspects of each course can be obtained from the course specification, specimen question papers and coursework assessment tasks. The course specifications for National Courses give detailed information on the purpose of each course component. This includes the mandatory skills,

¹ The Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service supports candidates who have been unable to attend an externally-assessed timetabled examination, or whose performance in the examination has been fundamentally affected by an incident beyond their control. This service is available for all examinations that appear in the examination timetable. Further information can be found on SQA's website.

knowledge and understanding that each component assesses, and the structure and broad mark allocations for each component.

Course assessment assesses the added value of the course, so may require integration, challenge or application. Estimates that are based on performance in tasks that are similar to those used for course assessment are more likely to give an accurate prediction of a candidate's final attainment in the course assessment. Questions and tasks that are suitable for course assessment are exemplified in the specimen question paper and coursework assessment task for each course.

Reviewing accuracy

As centres gain experience in delivering National Courses, and increase their understanding of the requirements, we would expect that their ability to produce accurate estimates of candidate achievement might improve.

Regularly reviewing your own practice in producing estimates in the light of results attained is an important and useful part of the process.

National 5

Due to changes in the grade scale being progressively introduced from 2017–18, the following bands / percentage mark ranges will apply to National 5.

Valid estimate bands are 1–9:

Band	Estimated Performance	Notional % Range
1	Band A (upper) range	85 – 100
2	Band A (lower) range	70 – 84
3	Band B (upper)	65 – 69
4	Band B (lower)	60 – 64
5	Band C (upper)	55 – 59
6	Band C (lower)	50 – 54
7	Band D	40 – 49
8	No Award	30 – 39
9	No Award	0 – 29

Higher and Advanced Higher

The grade scale for Higher and Advanced Higher has not changed, and the following bands / percentage mark ranges will apply to Higher and Advanced Higher in 2017–18.

Valid estimate bands are 1–9:

Band	Estimated Performance	Notional % Range
1	Band A (upper) range	85 – 100
2	Band A (lower) range	70 – 84
3	Band B (upper)	65 – 69
4	Band B (lower)	60 – 64
5	Band C (upper)	55 – 59
6	Band C (lower)	50 – 54
7	Band D	45 – 49
8	No Award	40 – 44
9	No Award	0 – 39