



# Guidance on Producing Estimates

This edition: November 2016, version 1.2

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 performance in assessments conducted in the centre. Centres must submit estimates for every candidate entered for externally-assessed graded National Courses in order 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 as 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 Consideration<sup>1</sup> requests.

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

## Guidance on producing estimates

An estimate should be based on a 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.

In order to plan for the production of 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 the above can be obtained from the relevant course specifications, course assessment specifications, specimen question papers and coursework information.

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<sup>1</sup> The Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service supports candidates who have been unable to attend an externally-assessed timetabled examination, or whose performance in the examination may have been fundamentally affected as a result of 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.

In particular, the course assessment specifications for National Courses from National 5 to Advanced Higher, contain detailed information on the purpose of each course component. This includes the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding that each component assesses and the structure and broad mark allocations for each component.

Tasks or questions that are used for course assessments are likely to be in a different format, or may adopt a different emphasis, to those that are used in unit assessments. This is because the course assessment assesses the added value of the course and so may require integration, challenge or application. Estimates which are based on performance in similar tasks 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 suitable for course assessment are exemplified in the specimen question paper and coursework information for each course.

### **Reviewing accuracy**

For the reasons given above, it is important that an estimate should be a centre's best prediction of a candidate's final attainment in the course assessment.

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.