



Course report 2023

National 5 Physical Education

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. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022: 19,179

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 20,022

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	10,878	Percentage	54.3	Cumulative percentage	54.3	Minimum mark required	87
B	Number of candidates	5,455	Percentage	27.2	Cumulative percentage	81.6	Minimum mark required	74
C	Number of candidates	2,718	Percentage	13.6	Cumulative percentage	95.2	Minimum mark required	61
D	Number of candidates	803	Percentage	4.0	Cumulative percentage	99.2	Minimum mark required	48
No award	Number of candidates	168	Percentage	0.8	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

Please note that rounding has not been applied to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

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 and information](#) page of SQA's website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Portfolio

It was felt that the portfolio performed similarly to previous years. Feedback suggests that teachers and lecturers possess a clear understanding of the assessment by attending understanding standards events.

Feedback indicates that it was felt to be fair and accessible for all candidates, with comments suggesting that there were questions within the assessment accessible to C candidates, as well as questions to challenge A candidates. Most candidates understood what was required and were able to complete the whole portfolio.

On the whole, all questions performed as expected.

Performance

The performance component performed as expected. A range of activities was verified.

Centres appear to have embraced the chance to allow personalisation and choice in the activity chosen by candidates. For some centres this represented a challenge as some of their candidates were assessed in activities outwith the centre setting.

The marking instructions allowed for a full range of marks to be accessed.

Some centres were outwith tolerance in their judgements and were required to revisit the marks for the entire cohort and adjust the marks where necessary. Each centre in this situation received feedback and support to ensure they marked to the national standard.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Portfolio

Question 2a — Candidates were able to explain the challenges faced when gathering data and link back to the reliability of the data.

Questions 2b and 2f — Candidates were able to identify methods of data collection and relevant targets.

Question 2c — Descriptions were short and concise, allowing most candidates to achieve marks for the process and the data collection method.

Question 2e — Most candidates described a strength and development need for both factors. Candidates were able to clearly use short and concise descriptions.

Question 2h — Candidates clearly understood how to describe approaches to performance development.

Performance

Candidates performed well in the performance component of the course with many achieving full marks. Verifiers reported some excellent performances where some National 5 candidates were playing against, or with, Higher candidates to enable the National 5 candidate to have an appropriate context for their assessment. It was clear that centres knew their candidates well and were able to provide appropriate contexts for the assessment.

Personalisation and choice contributed to strong performances in this component of the course.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Portfolio

Question 1 — Some candidates found it challenging to give a specific context and then relevant related impact. Some candidates continue to find it challenging when using 'sadness', 'happiness', 'etiquette' and 'team dynamics' to explain the actual context and impact on the performance.

Question 2i — Although there is some improvement in responses, for example when using the principles of practice as a framework, a few candidates found it challenging to justify their decisions. Some candidates still justify decisions directly linked to approaches or do not give enough reasoning for the decision made to access marks.

Question 3d — While candidates are accessing the full mark range, many found it challenging to evaluate relevant aspects of the Personal Development Programme. Responses which do make judgements on relevant aspects of the Personal Development

Programme still lack personal value linked to the performance development process rather than an overall performance impact, resulting in limited access to marks.

Question 3e — Candidates found it challenging to make a judgement and determine the value of its impact on performance. Some candidates found it challenging to demonstrate depth or breadth of knowledge of both factors to access the full mark allocation.

Question 3f — Although there was improvement in responses linked to understanding standards and suggested structure, many candidates still found it challenging to offer a current performance, provide a relevant action, and personal reasoning for their future plans.

Performance

There were few, if any, reports of candidates having difficulty accessing marks from any particular area of the marking instructions.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Portfolio

Question 1a — Candidates should be encouraged to write about more than one factor (demonstrating breadth of knowledge) within each of the mental, emotional, social or physical factors. Similarly, candidates can choose to demonstrate depth of knowledge by giving more information about the factor they have chosen to focus on. For example, a candidate may use power and then use two different performance contexts to explain its impact. This would be acceptable.

Candidates need to make sure that they have an understanding of the factor, the specific context within the performance and the actual impact it can have on performance. For example, 'My motivation when playing volleyball. For example, the other team hit the volleyball to the other side of the court and I couldn't be bothered to run for it even though I knew I could have made it and set it up for my teammates. As a result it hit the ground and the other team won the point.'

Centres should be aware that 'confidence' is an emotional factor and marks will not be awarded in this question if candidates use 'confidence' as a mental factor. Centres should be aware that anxiety can be used for both mental and emotional factors.

Centres should be aware that candidates are not awarded marks if they flip their response from positive to negative within the same body of knowledge (in relation to the impact of factors on performance).

Question 2d — Candidates should ensure that they provide a reason why the method was used and an explanation of its benefits. Candidates should also be aware that reasoning around reliability and validity must have a 'so what?' to ensure knowledge is not repeated from question 2a. A maximum of 1 mark is available if a candidate does not explain the method described in question 2c.

Question 2h — Candidates must be aware that no marks are awarded for the setup of an approach. Description must detail the carrying out of the approach used to develop performance.

Question 2i — Candidates must state what else they would consider and then give personal reasoning as to why they have considered this aspect. Candidates must be reminded that they cannot justify their use of approaches in their response. The justification in question 2i must give a decision, explanation and personal reasoning.

Question 3d — Candidates must identify an aspect from their Personal Development Programme, place a positive or negative judgement and then make a value judgement back to the Personal Development Programme on whether it is effective or not. The value must link back to the impact on the Personal Development Programme or process and not performance.

Question 3e — Candidates need to place a positive or negative value in relation to the factors and then make a judgement on the impact on performance. Candidates must show that they understand that this is the end impact of the performance development process. Most candidates accessing high marks in this question evaluated two different aspects of performance for each factor.

Question 3f — Candidates must state where they are in their current performance, the action they will take, and their personal reasoning as to why to access marks. Candidates may write about any factor related to their chosen activity. No marks are awarded for responses that directly contradict evaluations made in question 3e.

Performance

A key aim of the National 5 Physical Education course is to develop candidates' ability to perform in physical activities by enabling them to acquire a comprehensive range of movement and performance skills in a variety of activities.

The modifications within this component have been removed for session 2023-24.

Centres are reminded that candidates must choose two activities which allow them the opportunity to display a significantly different range of movement and performance skills. The assessment of these performances must take place in a context which is suitably challenging for a National 5 Physical Education candidate.

To set it apart from normal learning and teaching activities, the assessment of these single performances must take place in a context which is suitably challenging for a National 5 candidate. Guidance can be found on SQA's website to help teachers and assessors decide which activities are acceptable for assessment.

Appendix: 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 was developed to support learners and centres. This included modifications to course assessment, retained from the 2021–22 session. This support was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while recognising a lessening of the impact of disruption to learning and teaching as a result of the pandemic. The revision support that was available for the 2021–22 session was not offered to learners in 2022–23.

In addition, SQA adopted a sensitive approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining

standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams continue to do so in different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019 and 2022.

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 2023 and the ongoing impact the disruption from the pandemic has had on learners. 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 the removal of revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2023 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 2023 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).