



Course report 2022

Subject	Childcare and Development
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	215
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	14.0	Cumulative percentage	14.0	Number of candidates	30	Minimum mark required	91
B	Percentage	24.9	Cumulative percentage	38.9	Number of candidates	55	Minimum mark required	77
C	Percentage	31.9	Cumulative percentage	70.8	Number of candidates	70	Minimum mark required	63
D	Percentage	19.5	Cumulative percentage	90.3	Number of candidates	40	Minimum mark required	49
No award	Percentage	9.7	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	20	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

The question paper covered the three mandatory sections of the course. The mark allocation was child development 15 marks, child development: theory 10 marks, and services for children and young people 15 marks. Questions used a balance of command words to allow candidates to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content.

Questions that required evaluation in the question paper continue to be challenging for some candidates. These questions are intended to allow for differentiation between an 'A' candidate who should be able to infer knowledge and support further discussion whilst a 'C' candidate may demonstrate some of the skills of analysis and evaluation but might not be able to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and understanding.

The grade boundary was lowered slightly to take account of the higher demand in some questions.

Project

All candidates were asked to respond to one brief 'How can literacy development be supported for children and young people?'. The brief performed as intended to allow candidates to demonstrate their breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content of the Higher Childcare and Development course.

Most of the projects presented this year were, generally, well referenced and included a reference page as an appendix.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

In section 1: child development, candidates were able to describe age-appropriate cognitive milestones for a child aged 3–5 years and in question 2, most candidates were able to describe age-appropriate activity for a child of the same age.

In section 2: child development: theory, question 5(a) many candidates identified and described an appropriate theory of social and emotional development relevant to the identified age range in the question. If the candidate had identified an appropriate theory, then some were able to explain how knowledge of the theory identified could be implemented in practice.

In section 3: services for children and young people, question 6(a) many candidates identified and described an appropriate piece of current Scottish legislation relevant to working with children and young people. Question 7 was answered well by many candidates, giving effective responses to the question.

Project

Most candidates included a relevant case study, allowing them to effectively address prompts and in most cases, relate to the one brief 'How can literacy development be supported for children and young people?'.

Generally, candidates performed well in prompts that required them to explain or describe (prompts A, C, E, F and G). Candidates performed well in prompts A, E, F and G, where they were required to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of course content and relate this to the identified target child and to the brief.

For prompt C, some candidates identified the relevant theory in relation to the target child and prompt. Candidates who made connections between the child, brief and prompts, allowing effective triangulation of information, generally performed well.

Most candidates included a relevant reference page, with many making an attempt to include in-text referencing with a resulting reduction in referrals for plagiarism.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

In section 1: child development, question 3, many candidates did not identify an age-appropriate method of assessing a child aged 8–12 years; many candidates described methods that would be used to assess younger children. In question 4, many candidates did not discuss environmental influences, instead explaining socio-economic factors that impact on child development.

In section 2: child development: theory, question 5(b) had a dependency on question 5(a) and the correct identification of a theory of social and emotional development. If an incorrect theory was identified and described in question 5(a), then candidates could not be awarded marks for either of these questions.

In section 3: services for children and young people, if candidates discussed strategy or legislation that was not relevant to the brief or target child in case study, this had an impact on allocation of marks for 6 (b).

Project

Prompt A(i) required candidates to explain two aspects of development and then, in (a)(ii) explain the inter-relationship of these aspects of development. The lack of discussion of the inter-relationship of aspects of development meant some candidates did not achieve high marks.

The evaluation and analysis aspect of the project prompts continues to be challenging for some candidates. This is reflected in the marks awarded for prompts B, D and H, with some candidates achieving less than 50% of the potential marks.

Candidates were asked to explain two theories of development relevant to the brief and literacy development (prompt C and D). Some candidates identified and discussed theories that were not relevant to the brief, therefore a potential combined mark of 20 could be lost.

In the analyse prompts (prompt B and D) many candidates lacked supporting data to allow for effective analysis of the findings or comparison of the findings. Similarly, some candidates experienced difficulty in expanding points of evaluation and relating to the developmental age of the child identified in prompt A. Some candidates evaluated the theory with a lack of balance between the strengths and weaknesses and advantages and disadvantages of the chosen theory in relation to their chosen brief.

Some candidates found it challenging to evaluate the effectiveness of partnership working (prompt H). Prompt H requires candidates to evaluate partnership working of two professionals identified in prompt G, in some cases, candidates chose to discuss alternative professionals and therefore did not gain marks. Prompts B, D and H (15, 10 and 6 marks respectively) are still challenging for many candidates as they are required to analyse or evaluate their research findings. This had an impact on the potential distribution of marks.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

The question paper is intended to allow candidates to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content not addressed in the project. The following points may enhance candidates' application of knowledge and understanding further.

For section 1: child development, teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates have a sound understanding of all aspects of development and can effectively discuss and relate them to children and young people. It is important that candidate's knowledge and understanding covers the full age range of the course encompassing different methods of observation and assessment relevant to different ages. A sound understanding of the factors and influences that impact on child development will enhance candidates' understanding of the holistic development of children and young people.

In section 2: child development: theory, candidates should ensure they can effectively discuss theories of development. There are many classic and contemporary theories of child development that could be considered when preparing candidates for external assessment. Theory discussed in preparation for external assessment should also include relevant play theory. If candidates are asked to identify and explain a theory, they should consider both a description of the relevant theory and the inter-relationship of this theory in any explanation of the theory. For example, identification of theory in the first part of child development: theory question, should have a relevance to the explanation of this theory and any potential scenario candidates are asked to refer to.

In section 3: services for children and young people, candidates should have a good understanding and knowledge of legislation, strategies and initiatives that are current and relevant to children and young people in Scotland today. When discussing legislation, candidates should ensure they are familiar with the full title and date of a piece of legislation and have an understanding that strategies and policies can sit within a piece of legislation, for example, the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 supports the GIRFEC approach within it, but GIRFEC is not a piece of legislation. It would benefit candidates to understand the need for effective regulatory bodies for professionals working with children and young people and how this supports practice.

Centres should ensure they refer to the specimen question paper, past papers and marking instructions on the Childcare subject page of SQA's website to support candidates to prepare for exams.

Project

As in previous years, teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates include a relevant case study which allows candidates to contextualise their discussion in relation to the chosen brief. Similarly, candidates should be encouraged to keep case studies brief, and relatively simple, introducing the identified child along with some relevant background information to allow effective discussion of prompts. Candidates should be encouraged to write their own case study and avoid using centre-generated case studies, this allows for personalisation and choice.

Case studies should be at the start of the project and not included as an appendix. Candidates should be discouraged from discussing children with complex family or home environments, as they may not have the knowledge and understanding to do this effectively.

When candidates are deciding on a brief for their project, teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates address the brief and include relevant theory, strategies and initiatives, services and professionals in relation to their chosen brief.

Candidates should be reminded that prompt A(ii) requires them to discuss the inter-relationship of the two aspects of development identified in A(i). Prompt B requires candidates to analyse factors that influence development. Many candidates find this challenging, and give good descriptions of factors, but lack analysis of these. Supporting candidates in developing this skill will enhance their project and show a deeper knowledge and understanding of the impact these factors can have on children and young people's development. This was a recurring issue throughout some of the projects presented, with a lack of evaluation and analysis resulting in candidates not achieving potential marks for prompts B, D and H.

Teachers and lecturers should continue to encourage candidates to use data from applicable sources, for example, relevant Scottish or British publications and websites, to support analysis and make measured, objective judgements about their chosen child or young person.

Candidates should be encouraged to research a range of theory relevant to the chosen brief and age of the child. This can be supported by ensuring a suitable range of classic and contemporary theory is discussed and researched in child development theory and candidates can analyse and apply this theory to the child discussed in their case study.

Teachers and lecturers should direct candidates to ensure that strategies, initiatives and services identified and discussed are relevant to the child or young person in the response to the project brief and their case study. Identified strategies and initiatives should be from a Scottish perspective; initiatives relevant to the geographic locality of candidates can be particularly effective if used in relation to the case study child.

Similarly, teachers and lecturers should continue to ensure that a wide range of services are discussed to prepare candidates to effectively explain relevant services in prompt F and ensure that these services are relevant to the age of the child identified in the case study and would be appropriate services for the child or young person. In prompt G, candidates should ensure they explain the roles and responsibility of professionals who would support the case study child. This is particularly relevant to prompt H, where candidates are required to evaluate the effectiveness of partnership working in relation to the two professionals identified in prompt G.

The development of effective research will aid candidates in their discussion of prompts that require analysis and evaluation. Teachers and lecturers can support candidates to refine their research skills and apply their findings to their discussion.

This research should be from a range of sources including books, online sources and academic journals. With the development of good research skills, candidates will gain an understanding of the importance of referencing and acknowledging sources. Most of the

projects presented this year were, generally, well referenced and included a reference page as an appendix.

The [Understanding Standards website](#) has examples of commentaries of projects that may support teachers and lectures to deliver targeted support to candidates.

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](#).