Course report 2022

Subject	Accounting
Level	National 5

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	855

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	51.2	Cumulative percentage	51.2	Number of candidates	440	Minimum mark required	81
B	Percentage	15.6	Cumulative percentage	66.8	Number of candidates	130	Minimum mark required	66
C	Percentage	11.8	Cumulative percentage	78.6	Number of candidates	100	Minimum mark required	52
D	Percentage	11.6	Cumulative percentage	90.2	Number of candidates	100	Minimum mark required	37
No award	Percentage	9.8	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	85	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

Performance in the question paper this year was within the range observed in recent years.

The number of candidates not attempting to answer questions was higher than in previous years. This was an indication that some candidates were maybe not as familiar with course content this year. This was also suggested by the range of marks candidates achieved this year, which indicated a greater variation in candidate performance than previous years.

Once again, candidate performance in computational questions was stronger than in theory questions.

The grade boundaries were adjusted to account for these factors.

Assignment

The requirement to complete the assignment was removed for session 2021–22. This was taken into account when setting grade boundaries.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Of the two 35-mark questions, candidates answered question 1 slightly better than question 2.

Of the four 15-mark questions, candidates answered questions 3, 4, and 5 significantly better than question 6.

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 2(a)(i) to (iv): candidates carried out basic break-even calculations to a high standard.

Question 3: this was a very straightforward trial balance question, and the vast majority of candidates completed it to a very high standard.

Question 4: this was a fairly straightforward labour and job cost question, which candidates completed to a high standard. In part (a), candidates seemed to find the overtime calculation difficult, but most candidates gained some marks for consequentiality. In part (b), many candidates did not include the labour calculation from part (a), despite the question directing them to use their answer from part (a) in their response.

Question 5(a): this question had the highest-scoring average mark. Candidates handled the layout and procedures involved in inventory control (especially when dealing with the return of goods) very well.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 2(a)(v) to 2(b)(iii): many candidates seemed to struggle with the problem-solving aspect of more complex break-even calculations. Markers applied full consequentiality where they could ascertain the thought process of the candidate through their working. However, many candidates did not provide adequate working to gain marks consequentially.

Question 2(c)(i): although this seemed to be a simple 1-mark question, it was the lowest-scoring question in the paper in terms of average mark. It appeared that many candidates either did not read the stem of the question, where a method of finance other than borrowing funds was asked for, or they did not fully understand the term 'borrowing funds' and did not make the link that this was the same as getting a loan. Importantly, markers applied full consequentiality in part (c)(ii) if candidates answered part (c)(i) incorrectly.

Question 5(c): again, this seemed to be a straightforward 1-mark theory question, but most candidates answered it very poorly. The majority of candidates confused trade discount with cash discount.

Question 6: this was the second time that new HMRC rules on cash discounts were assessed in a question paper. Candidate performance in this aspect of the question has not

improved. Although candidates often struggle with Ledger Account questions, they attempted the first three straightforward transactions (worth 8 marks) reasonably well. However, most candidates were unable to deal adequately with the transaction on 25 October (worth 7 marks). A significant number of candidates did not attempt this transaction.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

In break-even questions, consequentiality is key to attaining marks. Candidates must be more aware of the importance of showing working. Adequate working allows markers the chance to award the full range of consequential marks.

Candidates still need additional support with Treatment of Cash Discount. If teachers and lecturers have not already done so, they should refer to the additional resource on the National 5 Accounting subject page, which provides notes and questions to help them deliver this topic.

Candidates still need to focus on theory as they achieved, on average, just below half marks for this element in the question paper.

Teachers and lecturers should share the advice in this report with candidates when they are preparing for the question paper.

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.