# Course report 2022

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| Subject | Business Management |
| 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 | 8920 |
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## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

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| **A** | Percentage | 40.9 | Cumulative percentage | 40.9 | Number of candidates | 3650 | Minimum mark required | 86 |
| **B** | Percentage | 23.4 | Cumulative percentage | 64.3 | Number of candidates | 2085 | Minimum mark required | 71 |
| **C** | Percentage | 18.9 | Cumulative percentage | 83.2 | Number of candidates | 1685 | Minimum mark required | 56 |
| **D** | Percentage | 10.7 | Cumulative percentage | 93.9 | Number of candidates | 955 | Minimum mark required | 41 |
| **No award** | Percentage | 6.1 | Cumulative percentage | N/A | Number of candidates | 545 | 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 modified question paper still covered a good breadth of course content and was accessible to candidates. The revision support for learners also helped to ensure the accessibility of the question paper.

It mainly performed as expected, however, a few of the more accessible questions were judged to have a slightly higher level of demand than intended, and one of the more demanding questions was judged to be more accessible than intended. This was considered when setting the grade boundaries.

## Assignment

The assignment performed as expected. Most candidates submitted reports within the word count. Reports were well presented, using a wide variety of topic areas and a range of businesses from different sectors of the economy.

# Section 2: comments on candidate performance

## Areas that candidates performed well in

### Question paper

#### Section 1

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| Question 1(a)(i) | Most candidates showed sound knowledge of ethical production. |
| Question 2(b) | Candidates performed well in this question, with most able to describe the benefits of gaining awards. |

#### Section 2

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| Question 3(c)(i) | Most candidates successfully identified stakeholders of a charity. |
| Question 5(b) | Candidates showed a sound knowledge of the purpose of inventory control diagram. |
| Question 6(c)(i) | Most candidates were able to accurately identify a source of finance for a sole trader. |
| Question 7(c)(i) | Candidates responded well to identifying methods of advertising. |

### Assignment

Most candidates who used appropriate headings and layout performed well. Most assignments were within the word count and included appropriate graphics and appendices. Analysis of result statistics shows that candidates 'analysis of findings' are improving. Many reports focused on marketing mix and customer service.

Candidates performed well in:

- background information
- research methods and sources
- collating and reporting

## Areas that candidates found demanding

### Question paper

#### Section 1

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| Question 1(b)(i) | Candidates found it difficult to discuss methods of market research. Many candidates described how it was used rather than stating advantages and disadvantages. Some candidates talked generally about field research, which is a type of market research, without identifying or describing a method of market research. |

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| Question 2(a)(ii) | Some candidates did not explain the advantages and disadvantages and only described them. |
| Question 2(f) | Candidate descriptions were poor and many only identified methods of selection. Some candidates confused selection with recruitment. |

**Section 2**

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| Questions 3(c)(ii) | Some candidates found it difficult to explain the influence of stakeholders. |
| Question 6(a) | Some candidates found it difficult to outline the purposes of a cash budget, with some candidates referring to profits. |
| Question 6(b)(i) | Statistical analysis of results shows that some candidates could not identify the financial statement, showing a lack of knowledge of income statements. |

## Assignment

### Background information

Some reports still had background information sections that were overly long and used up unnecessary words from the candidate's overall word count.

### Research methods and sources

Some candidates continued to list generic, theoretical points that did not clarify how the research method was beneficial to their assignment.

### Findings, analysis and interpretation

Some candidates did not give analysis of their findings, which meant the maximum mark allocation available to them was 6 marks. A few candidates gave findings that were not relevant to their topic, so these were not awarded credit.

### Conclusions and recommendations

Some candidates could not justify reasons for their conclusions or recommendations. Conclusions and recommendations without a justification gain a maximum of 1 mark across this section of the report. Some candidates gave new information in this section that they had not previously mentioned in findings analysis and interpretation. This could not be credited.

### Collating and reporting

Some candidates used the title 'introduction' rather than 'background information', so could not be credited with the heading mark. A few candidates did not include any graphics or only gave one graphic. Some candidates gave more than the maximum two pages of appendices, which was unnecessary.

# Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

## Question paper

In light of the modifications this session, the question paper performed as intended. However, to prepare for future assessments, centres should ensure the following.

Candidates should read questions carefully, taking account of the command words. They must make sure they apply command words accurately. For example, with 'distinguish', many candidates did not give both sides, meaning they missed out on marks. Centres should encourage candidates to split up each point rather than write two lists. This will ensure that they have matching distinguishing points. For example, 'on the job training is where employees are trained in the workplace, whereas off the job training is where employees training is carried out away from the workplace', or 'on the job training can be shadowing, whereas off the job training can be at a college.'

Some candidates had difficulty answering questions that asked them to 'explain', often confusing this command word with 'describe'. You can find examples of valid responses to command words in the general marking principles within the marking instructions.

Candidates should look at how many marks each question is worth before they begin their answer. This will ensure they do not waste time writing overly long and descriptive answers to short answer questions. For example, a 2-mark question should produce a shorter response than a 6-mark question. Candidates can practise structuring an appropriate response length by using published past papers and marking instructions.

Understanding Standards materials are available on the SQA website. These include evidence of candidate responses, together with commentaries on why candidates were or were not awarded marks. This is a useful source of information for preparing candidates for future assessments.

You should spend time in class differentiating between recruitment and selection.

## Assignment

Centres should continue to follow SQA guidelines when preparing for the assignment. Centres must use the most up-to-date template provided by SQA. Centres can use this to pre-set fonts, sizes and line spacing, but the template should not include the headings. Candidates gain 1 mark for appropriate use of headings; therefore, this must be the candidate's own work.

Centres with bi-level classes should note that the headings differ slightly between National 5 and Higher. When choosing a topic, candidates should avoid using double or overly complex topics. This can make it challenging for candidates to collect information and, more importantly, difficult for them to interpret. Centres should encourage candidates to look at the mark allocation for each section to ensure candidates do not write overly long background information sections.

It is important that candidates justify their conclusions and recommendations. Candidates should state their conclusion or recommendation and then explain why they are stating it. They must be able to link it back to the research they used in the analysis and interpretation section. If their justification is new information, they will not gain marks. Candidates should not exceed the 1,300 word limit and they must declare the word count accurately on the flyleaf. Appendices do not contribute towards the word count; however, there should be no more than two pages of appendices.

# 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.