



Course Report 2017

Subject	Fashion and Textile Technology
Level	Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It 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.

Section 1: Comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: Assignment (Component 1: Section 1)

Stage 1: Design and plan

1(a) Identifying key themes from the brief

All three briefs for the 2017 examination were popular with candidates.

The vast majority of candidates clearly identified the key themes from their chosen brief, with a large number either using the addition of mind-maps or written explanation to provide further clarification.

However, some candidates did not clearly identify the key themes — they either did not present any or did not clearly identify/pull out the key themes.

All centres used the SQA approved briefs contained in the assignment and practical activity assessment task.

1(b)(i–iii) Using appropriate research techniques from relevant sources to select and summarise main points of information

All candidates used different methods of research techniques to obtain their information. The vast majority of research was carried out to a good standard.

The majority of investigations were well laid out in a clear and concise manner and the information was easy to interpret.

Some investigations were extensive and on occasion a large amount of content was lifted from the source (internet). Candidates should be altering large volumes of data into their own words. On occasion, the content of the investigations was not linked to the aim.

Candidates were generally better at including all the information required for the source. Most investigations clearly identified the sources used, but some candidates omitted the name, position and/or company of the expert who was used for the research.

Most candidates were using the teacher as the only expert for the investigations, particularly to gain information on textiles/construction techniques.

Some candidates are not displaying all results from their investigations — simply stating their findings in their summary. There was no evidence within the investigation to justify their comments, eg questionnaire stating questions asked to target market, but with no data included.

Many candidates are only asking three to four questions in an interview. The interview should contain at least five questions to ensure it provides the candidate with sufficient data.

Literary/internet search requires three different sources for a valid investigation.

This year there were a higher number of centres that carried out high-quality research, with excellent summaries, that allowed for effective progression to the next investigation.

A number of centres presented informative and valid investigations, but did not summarise the findings of the investigation. This prevented candidates from obtaining marks within this element of the assignment.

1(c) Present and justify an appropriate solution for a fashion/textile item based on the information generated from the research

This section of the assignment had been updated for the 2017 exam to include marks for the presentation of the solution.

Presentation of the solution:

Most candidates presented their solution using an annotated drawing, with others using images from patterns/internet or a written description.

The majority of candidates provided sufficient detail to allow for the solution to be visualised and replicated. Some candidates did not include any points of information, ie sizes, textiles, colours, features, age, construction techniques.

A small number of candidates did not attach an illustration of their solution as stated in the coursework assignment task booklet.

Justification of the solution:

This section of the assessment was carried out to a reasonably good standard.

A reasonable proportion of candidates provided the required amount of justifications (minimum four) for the sections: design features, fabric characteristics and properties and construction techniques.

A number of candidates did not include a minimum of four justifications for these sections, which prevented them from obtaining optimum marks.

Some centres chose to list the design features, fabric characteristics and properties, construction techniques and specialist equipment, if any, to be used within the final item. This format tended to benefit the candidates in ensuring they were clearly stating and justifying all the information required.

The justifications provided for these sections were generally linked to the evidence gained from the candidates' investigations. There are still a number of candidates not linking their justifications to the investigations — this is required for candidates to be awarded marks in this section. Candidates in these instances are using personal opinions or inaccurate information from their investigations.

In addition, some candidates simply stated the points without justification, so were not awarded marks. Centres should ensure that all points are clearly justified, using appropriate information generated from the research carried out.

1(d) Prepare a plan for the manufacture of the fashion/textile item

Plans were, generally, well presented in a clear and logical manner, with timings being broken into realistic segments.

Timings should be in 10–15 minute blocks, rather than 50–55 minute blocks/lessons.

Most candidates included pressing/finishing throughout the process.

Some plans were too detailed and rewritten from the commercial pattern instructions. Candidates should write plans that reflect the pattern instructions in a more simplified format.

Almost all plans were written prior to the manufacturing of the item and were used by candidates to assist them throughout the construction process. Some plans had been written retrospectively, which prevents candidates from obtaining some marks in this section.

1(e) Prepare a requisition for required textiles, components, tools and equipment for the manufacture of the fashion/textile item

Most centres identified all the textiles/components required to manufacture the final fashion/textile item.

The majority of candidates included the measurements of textiles/components used for the solutions in metric measurements.

Stage 3: Evaluation (Component 1: Section 2)

3(a)(i-ii) Using an appropriate test, which relates specifically to the suitability of the textiles and/or components used, to provide relevant information about the item

Section (i-ii) was completed well, with most candidates using appropriate tests to gain valid information, allowing them to progress effectively throughout section 3.

The majority of tests identified the sources used and were laid out in a clear and concise structure.

Some candidates are stating the source as a textile expert, but not including their name/occupation/workplace.

Most candidates carried out the test required to gain data on the suitability of the textile/components used to manufacture their solution.

The majority of candidates used sensory tests and interviews in section (i-ii). Most candidates gained information that allowed them to identify relevant adaptations or amendments of the fashion/textile item.

3(a)(iii) Identifying key information for use in evaluation

This section was generally carried out well. Key information obtained from the tests was identified clearly for use in section 3(b).

3(b) Evaluating the fashion/textile item, based on the results of testing

Evaluations were to a satisfactory standard. A number of centres presented clear evaluative statements which were generated using evidence gained in the tests 3(a).

Some candidates are still not evaluating correctly — these were written as statements and did not link to information obtained from the tests in 3(a).

3(c) Improving or adapting the product

This section was completed to a good standard, with the majority of candidates identifying features of their fashion/textile item that could be improved or adapted. The majority of responses demonstrated clear links to data obtained from either the tests 3(a) or investigations 1(b).

The justification for the improvement/adaption was not completed well by candidates. More emphasis needs to be placed upon these justifications as candidates did not focus on this element and therefore were not awarded marks.

Component 2: Practical Activity

Stage 2: Making the fashion/textile item

2(a) Make and finish a complex fashion/textile item using at least eight appropriate textile construction techniques

The internally-assessed course assessments at Higher showed increasing confidence by centres regarding the assessment criteria, and the projects tackled by candidates.

The majority of candidates manufactured their solution using appropriate construction techniques, as stated in the construction techniques marking tariff grid for Higher level.

A large proportion of candidates carried out this section of the course assessment to a good standard and achieved a high tariff of marks.

Techniques selected were appropriate to the fashion/textile item being manufactured. The techniques allowed for the effective construction of the item with consideration of the fabric choices made by the candidate.

Some centres demonstrated an excellent standard of manufactured items. These items showed a high standard of workmanship and complex skills were used. A number of candidates demonstrated very creative items for their final solution.

There were concerns that some candidates' solutions were not complex enough for Higher level. These items did not have the accurate level of complex construction techniques within the item.

The standard of the finished fashion/textile item was completed appropriately and generally was in line with national standards.

The reviewed marking instructions for the practical element have, to some extent, had the desired impact on the marks for this section, preventing candidates from being awarded

overly high marks. This more realistic range of marks meant a slight adjustment at the grade boundary meeting, bringing the grade boundaries down a little from the compensatory level at which they had to be set last year.

Most centres used the updated Higher Construction Techniques Marking Instructions document correctly. A small number of centres are not fully and correctly applying the marking instructions, and some construction techniques may be being incorrectly identified, meaning candidates' work being generously marked in the 'quality of final item' section.

2(b) Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in a record of work

This section was generally completed to a good standard. There was evidence that most candidates had effectively evaluated their plans of work throughout the manufacturing process. Some candidates evaluated each process.

More focus should be placed on this section of the practical activity, as some candidates had minimal evaluations against their plans.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Assignment

Stage 1: Design and plan (Component 1: Section 1)

1(a) Identifying key themes from the brief

The majority of candidates successfully identified all the correct key themes.

Candidates effectively selected the correct key themes and either highlighted, underlined or pulled the themes from the brief. This allowed candidates to be awarded marks for this section.

A number of candidates used mind-maps to further develop their understanding of the briefs.

1(b)(i–iii) Using appropriate research techniques from relevant sources to select and summarise main points of information

The majority of candidates completed their research using a variety of techniques to a good standard. Most of the research conducted was easy to interpret, concise, and factual, and contained an appropriate source. The information contained within the investigations was generally to a good standard.

Most of the investigations were progressive, allowing candidates to effectively gather information which enabled them to select an appropriate final solution. A number of candidates used the findings from one investigation to help identify what they needed to investigate in their next investigation.

1(c) Present and justify an appropriate solution for a fashion/textile item based on the information generated from the research

Candidates performed reasonably well in this section of the course assessment. A variety of approaches were adopted by the candidates in the presentation of their final solution.

The majority of candidates included an annotated illustration of their solution and provided information on the item. The information included was: design features, textiles and components and construction techniques, colours, age of target group and any other relevant information. The candidates that performed well within this section clearly linked and derived all the information presented from the research carried out in 1(b).

A good proportion of candidates successfully justified the design features, construction techniques, properties/characteristics of the textiles chosen and any specialist equipment that they required for the construction of their final item, which was linked to data derived from the investigations.

Most candidates who successfully justified their choices had written their justification separately to the drawing, using a table or separate page. This ensured that they met the assessment standards for 1(c).

1(d) Prepare a plan for the manufacture of the fashion/textile item

The majority of candidates created effective time plans that assisted them with the manufacturing of the fashion/textile item.

Most candidates allocated 10–15 minute blocks to a task.

1(e) Prepare a requisition for required textiles, components, tools and equipment for the manufacture of the fashion/textile item

Candidates included the majority of materials required for the construction of the fashion/textile item.

Generally, areas of information that candidates had omitted were the dimensions of the textiles and zips, and the colours of components, eg zips/thread/embellishments.

Some candidates did not write their requisition in metric measurements. All textiles used to manufacture the fashion/textile item should be written in metric measurements.

Stage 3: Evaluation (Component 1: Section 2)

3(a)(i-iii) Using an appropriate test, which relates specifically to the suitability of the textiles and/or components used, to provide relevant information/identifying key information for use in evaluation

The majority of candidates produced tests that enabled them to gain quality feedback on the finished fashion/textile item.

Candidates used suitable experts to gain information on the suitability of their textiles and components used to manufacture the fashion/textile item.

Most candidates clearly identified the experts used for testing. This is necessary to ensure the investigation is valid.

3(b) Evaluating the fashion/textile item, based on the results of testing

Candidates generally evaluated their fashion/textile item to a good standard with reference to the information gathered in the tests 3(a).

Most candidates used the information effectively to highlight areas that they could carry forward to 3(c).

3(c) Improving or adapting the product

Almost all candidates provided a point of improvement/adaption to their fashion/textile item. The points of change were relevant and linked to evidence obtained in the tests 3(a) or the investigations 1(b).

Component 2: Practical activity

Stage 2: Making the fashion/textile item

2(a) Make and finish a complex fashion/textile item using at least eight appropriate textile construction techniques

The variety of items produced, by a number of candidates, was outstanding and demonstrated their technical ability and skills.

In this year's examination, a number of candidates demonstrated excellent creativity with their final solution. A good range of items were observed, with candidates clearly being allowed personalisation and choice by most centres.

Many candidates focused on the creation of their textile item as the most important part of the activity, and it tends to be the most time-consuming.

A good range of solutions were manufactured by the candidates, with a good level of complex techniques being incorporated into the fashion/textile item — some particular high-tariff techniques were prevalent, such as herringbone stitch and covered buttons. Many items showed creativity and imagination and were generally manufactured to a good quality finish, and candidates effectively demonstrated their skills that they had developed during the course.

Generally, candidates who had progressed from the National 5 Fashion and Textile Technology course produced items that demonstrated more complex skills, and their workmanship was of a very good standard.

2(b) Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in a record of work

Candidates generally performed well in making regular comments against their original plan.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Assignment

Stage 1: Design and plan (Component 1: Section 1)

1(a) Identifying key themes from the brief

Some candidates did not effectively highlight the key themes — they had split the full brief into sections rather than selecting key words/themes.

In a small number of cases, candidates did not indicate any key themes that they were to take forward in the assignment.

1(b)(i-iii) Using appropriate research techniques from relevant sources to select and summarise main points of information

Some candidates did not identify the specified expert for their investigations (questionnaires/interviews). Candidates should clearly state the relevant information on the experts used to ensure the investigation is valid. This should include name, occupation and place of work.

In a number of cases, candidates did not obtain marks for their investigations as they did not successfully summarise points of information from the research. They simply repeated evidence and did not show a progressive approach to their conclusions. Candidates must pull information from the investigation, and conclude in the summary as to how it will assist them in moving forward.

Other candidates did not obtain marks as they did not provide any evidence within their investigations. For example, some candidates carried out research using a questionnaire but did not provide data, only the questions that were asked. The summaries were therefore not relevant as they were not factual, but personal statements.

A small number of candidates carried out extensive research but it was not in line with the assessment standards as set out in the 'SQA Assignment and Practical Activity Assessment Information'.

To ensure candidates can gain marks in section 1(c), it would be beneficial to investigate properties and characteristics of fabrics and construction techniques that they may consider for their solution. A number of candidates are not considering this when completing 1(b).

When candidates use a mood board as a research technique, they must indicate the sources of information and include points of summary. A number of candidates included mood boards without appropriate supplementary information, and therefore did not meet the assessment standards for 1(b).

1(c) Present and justify an appropriate solution for a fashion/textile item based on the information generated from the research

Candidates presented their solution in varying formats. Some candidates are not presenting their solution with the required level of detail necessary for this section and are not showing links to the information derived from their investigations.

A larger number of candidates this year did not provide the appropriate number of justifications for the design features, properties and/or characteristics of the textiles and construction and/or finishing techniques within their solution. A minimum of four from each of these sections is required to allow candidates to gain marks.

Some candidates provided relevant points, along with a justification for each.

A large number of pupils justified the points identified, but many of these that linked to the properties/characteristics and construction techniques were not derived from evidence gained from the investigations, so marks could not be awarded.

1(d) Prepare a plan for the manufacture of the fashion/textile item

Some candidates found the planning section difficult. Their plans lacked detail, were difficult to interpret, or were not broken down into manageable tasks.

Dates and a breakdown of time allocation of tasks should be evident within candidates' plans.

Some candidates were rewriting the commercial patterns instructions, which are very detailed. A more simplified version, written in the candidate's words, should be used

Stage 3: Evaluation (Component 1: Section 2)

3(a)(i–iii) Using an appropriate test, which relates specifically to the suitability of the textiles and/or components used, to provide relevant information/Identifying key information for use in evaluation

Some candidates did not correctly identify the expert by stating their name/occupation/workplace. This is required to ensure the test is valid.

Candidates were using only three to four questions for an interview, and did not always present the results of their tests.

3(c) Improving or adapting the product

A number of candidates were not justifying their amendments or adaptations that they had highlighted correctly. They simply stated the point with no justification, or did not link the justification to evidence in the tests/investigations.

Candidates at times did not refer to evidence gathered in the investigations 1(b) or the tests 3(a), to select appropriate amendments or adaptations. The points stated were not from evidence, but were the candidate's opinion.

Component 2: Practical activity

2(a) Make and finish a complex fashion/textile item using at least eight appropriate textile construction techniques

Some candidates found the manufacturing of a complex fashion/textile item challenging and did not use eight or more construction techniques. These candidates' items did not demonstrate enough techniques from the 5–6 mark columns in the Higher Construction

Techniques Marking Instructions. Some techniques were incorrectly identified, impacting on the marks allocated.

Some items produced were detailed but lacked the complex skills to ensure they were suitable for the Higher Fashion and Textile Technology course.

Centres should ensure that the fashion/textile item that the candidates select to manufacture has the level of challenge and complexity required for the Higher qualification.

Some candidates did not finish the item to the correct standard. These candidates did not trim or press the fashion/textile item effectively, so the item was not aesthetically pleasing. Other candidates found some techniques to be too challenging — for example zips, waistbands and collars — which affected the overall finish and appearance. Some of these items were not fit for their intended purpose due to the standard of finish.

Some candidates used unstable textiles which they found challenging to work with. This had an impact on the finished quality and appearance of the item. Candidates should consider the chosen textiles characteristics and their own capabilities/skills to ensure that the item manufactured is completed to an appropriate quality.

2(b) Evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in a record of work

Evaluating their plan was an area of weakness for many candidates. Most candidates had made regular comments on their plans, but few of these were fully evaluative in nature.

The responses demonstrated good referencing to facts but did not indicate the candidates' opinion or a consequence.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Assignment

The following information will provide centres with guidance on preparing candidates for the completion of the assignment and practical activity assessment task.

Stage 1: Design and plan

1(a) Key themes

Centres must use the SQA briefs that are published annually and accessed from the SQA secure site.

Candidates should ensure that they clearly highlight the chosen themes of the brief. This can be achieved by underlining, or alternatively candidates have also created mind maps of the selected themes or identified and explained each of the themes.

1(b) Investigations

All candidates should clearly state the identified expert in all investigations. For example, if a candidate is interviewing a fabric shop manager, they should state the interviewee's name, job title and place of work. (A. Burns, fabric shop manager, Mandors Glasgow).

A large number of candidates are referring to the source as a 'textile expert', which does not provide sufficient information. Further information on their suitability is required.

All investigations should have at least four points of summary/conclusion that show progression. Candidates should not simply repeat information found in the investigation; they should indicate how the point highlighted will assist them with their selection of the final fashion/textile item.

Candidates should be encouraged to choose their own methods of research and sources, which will allow them to select and produce a personalised solution. Candidates should not have selected the solution they will manufacture prior to any research. All research should be progressive and lead to the final solution.

A large proportion of candidates are using mood boards as part of their investigations. It is essential that all sources — eg magazines/websites/journals — are stated, to ensure that the investigation is valid. In addition, a number of candidates, when using a mood board, do not summarise their findings, so they are not meeting the assessment standards for 1(b).

To ensure candidates are meeting the standards in 1(c), it would be of benefit if one investigation is linked to the property and/or characteristics of textiles/components/ construction techniques. This will assist the candidates in 1(c) when justifying their chosen textiles properties/characteristics and construction techniques that they will use to manufacture their chosen item.

All results from investigations should be clearly laid out. Some candidates are not including the responses from interviews/questionnaire/sensory tests/internet/literary searches, but a summary of the findings in their own words. This does not accurately represent the findings of the investigations. The candidate has the opportunity to summarise their findings at the end of each investigation.

Recommendations for investigations:

- ◆ interview — minimum five questions, clearly stating the source/expert
- ◆ questionnaire — 20 respondents, clearly stating the target group
- ◆ internet research — minimum three different sources, clearly identifying each with the relevant URL

1(c) Present a solution

The presentation of the solution should provide sufficient information to 1) visualise it and 2) replicate the item in the future.

Candidates can use a number of techniques to present their solutions; most popular is an annotated illustration or an image of the item. Any format selected by the candidate must

include detailed information on the solution. This could include design features, colours, textiles, components, construction techniques etc.

When candidates are justifying their solution, they must ensure that there is a minimum of four points, with justifications, for design features, properties/characteristics and construction techniques. If there are less than four points in a particular section, eg design features, marks cannot be awarded for that section as it has not met the assessment standards for 1(c).

Candidates should ensure that they link design features, properties/characteristics of their chosen textile and construction techniques from evidence derived from 1(b).

Candidates should ensure that they clearly justify the reasons for the design features on their fashion and textile item, properties/characteristics of the textile chosen, and the construction and specialist techniques selected.

Specialist equipment can be overlockers, embroidery machines, tailor's dummy etc. There is no quantity against this section, unlike the others that require a minimum of four.

1(d) Plans

Plans should not be written retrospectively. They should be broken into realistic time blocks for tasks, rather than 50–55 minute periods.

1(e) Requisition

Candidates should include as much detail as possible when completing section 1(e).

Candidates should state all textiles and components in metric measurements.

All dimensions of textiles used should be included.

Colours of all trimming, components and embellishments should be stated.

Stage 3: Evaluation

3(a–c) Tests/evaluations/adaptions

Ideally, candidates should complete their evaluations using the fact, opinion, consequence format, as this will assist candidates to successfully fulfil the assessment standards of 3(b).

Candidates should justify all amendments/adaptions that they highlight. These points should reflect evidence gathered in either the investigations 1(b) or the tests 2(a).

Good practice

Some centres created a pro forma for their candidates. When this was used candidates were generally more successful in meeting the assessment standard for the coursework assessment.

Centres should ensure that candidates are producing different fashion/textile items. A number of centres had all candidates manufacturing the same solution. Centres should ensure that there is personalisation and choice available to all candidates when they are

completing their coursework assessment and practical activity. The investigations should guide the candidate in creating an individual and personalised item. The item should reflect the key points summarised in each investigation.

It would be useful for centres to ensure candidates number the pages of coursework activity.

The majority of centres/candidates used photographic/video evidence to good effect. Some centres have submitted images of all construction techniques carried out by the candidate during the manufacturing of their solution.

Ensure there is photographic evidence of resources and components prior to construction of the final solution.

Component 2: Practical Activity

Stage 2(a-b) Making the fashion/textile item

In stage 2, candidates are being awarded marks for the construction techniques selected and the quality of the finished item. Some of the fashion/textile items selected by the candidates were at times not complex and challenging enough for the Higher course.

Centres must ensure that candidates are manufacturing an item that is complex, as stated in the Higher coursework assignment. The item to be manufactured by the candidate should demonstrate complex skills, reflecting more detailed construction techniques and a higher quality finish.

Centre marking of Section 2 was generally in line with SQA guidelines.

Assessors need to make sure that they have fully read and fully understood the most up-to-date versions of the marking documentation. In particular, the marking instructions for the construction techniques need to be carefully considered.

Candidates need to be encouraged to choose the appropriate number of techniques, including the specified number from the high tariff columns, otherwise there is a cap on the number of marks to be gained in this section. Assessors also need to make sure that they are correctly identifying construction techniques, and applying appropriate marks according to the accuracy with which the candidate has carried them out. For example, a covered button with puckers in the fabric, or threads fraying out of the back, should not be given the full mark allocation for this process. Herringbone stitch should be accurate and evenly spaced to gain high marks.

When selecting a suitable textile for the solution, candidates should have used information derived from investigations, in particular the investigation that refers to the appropriate textile.

The centre/candidates should ensure that the solution can be manufactured within an appropriate timescale. Some candidates are making very complex items, running out of time to complete section 3, which then has an impact on the quality of the written aspect of the assignment. The current weighting of the assignment for Higher is 60% written (externally assessed), 40% practical (internally assessed with visiting verification).

The majority of centres are correctly awarding marks in 2(b) for the evaluation against the plan. When evaluating their plans, candidates need to be encouraged to make evaluative comments rather than simple observations.

Good practice

The majority of candidates were presented at the correct levels.

Centres had made good judgements on the practical course assessment and consistently applied the correct standards to ensure candidates were fairly marked.

The majority of centres used the Higher assignment and practical activity assessments records effectively, for the recording of marks and candidate's performance, for each section of the practical activity.

Whilst it was pleasing to see that the conditions of assessment for coursework were adhered to in the majority of centres, there were a small number of examples where this may not have been the case. Following feedback from teachers, we have strengthened the conditions of assessment criteria for National 5 subjects and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher. The criteria are published clearly on our website and in course materials and must be adhered to. SQA takes very seriously its obligation to ensure fairness and equity for all candidates in all qualifications through consistent application of assessment conditions and investigates all cases alerted to us where conditions may not have been met.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	305
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	282
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	39.4%	39.4%	111	77
B	25.5%	64.9%	72	66
C	17.7%	82.6%	50	56
D	8.5%	91.1%	24	51
No award	8.9%	-	25	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.