



Course Report 2014

Subject	Modern Studies
Level	National 5

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 in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. 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 and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question paper

The National 5 Modern Studies question paper has a total of 60 marks (75% of the overall Course total) and is completed in 1 hour and 30 minutes.

The question paper proved to be very accessible and there was very little evidence of candidates being presented at the wrong level. Both skills based questions and knowledge based questions were answered to a high standard by candidates. Overall candidate attainment was very good with a mean mark of 64%.

The question paper contains three sections, each allowing candidate choice. The most commonly chosen options were Part A, Part D and Part E. Candidate performance in Section 2 and 3 showed very little difference between the two optional 'Parts'. In Section 1, candidates performed slightly better in Part A than in Part B.

Component 2: Assignment

The National 5 Modern Studies Assignment has a total of 20 marks (25% of the overall Course total). The assignment consisted of a written report, based on the individual research of the candidate and written up under supervision in 1 hour.

The assignment proved to be very accessible for candidates. The majority performed well and had been effectively prepared and advised by centres. The mean mark for the Assignment was 73%.

In the 'Research topic/issue' section the vast majority of candidates scored full marks. Some did not gain credit as their answer was simply copied from their source sheets. In the 'Research methods' section candidates scored highly, though some responses were generic in nature and made little or no specific reference to their own research. The 'Research findings' and the 'Research conclusions' sections were sometimes copied from source sheets. Some candidates confused these sections and repeated their responses.

Most candidates used the source sheets appropriately. A minority used these as a plan and, as a result, sometimes failed to gain credit due to copying.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Question paper

Candidate responses to the question paper were very pleasing. Very few candidates had been presented at an inappropriate level. A very small number gained fewer than 20 marks. This is testament to the quality of teaching in centres and the accessibility of the paper. Very few candidates attempted all six parts of the paper, and only a small number completed both options in any of the sections. There was some evidence that candidates had experienced

difficulty in completing the question paper within the allotted time and this was taken into account when setting grade boundaries.

Skills questions were well handled and showed that candidates had been well prepared. Responses to knowledge questions were at times disappointing, especially in the International section where some candidates provided very little by way of specific exemplification either about the World Power or the World Issue they had studied.

Component 2: Assignment

Overall, candidates performed well in the Assignment. The vast majority chose a relevant Modern Studies topic to research.

The vast majority of candidates scored two marks for the first section. Some lost marks by copying answers from their source sheets.

The second section was completed well. Many candidates successfully analysed the effectiveness of their research methods.

Sections three and four of the Assignment were often confused by candidates, and many gained no credit here because of directly copying from their source sheets.

Many candidates provided appropriate evidence of their research methods, both primary and secondary. The main reasons why candidates failed to attract marks in the Assignment were: copying from source sheets, inappropriate topics, and generic answers that did not refer to their own research.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Questions 1A3 and 1B3

Most candidates coped well with the first two conclusions, many gaining three marks by combining information from different sources.

Questions 2C3 and 2D3

Candidates scored highly and were clearly helped by the 'scaffolding' included in the question. Responses suggested that candidates had been well prepared to look for 'links' within and across sources.

Question 1A1

Candidates had good knowledge of Devolved powers/matters and were often able to provide relevant, contemporary examples.

Question 2C2

Candidates were able to explain the causes of poverty rather than simply describing its effects.

Question 2D1

Candidates provided good descriptions of the work of the Children's Hearing System.

Question 2D2

Candidates scored well as the question allowed them to explain both the strengths of alternative sentences and the weaknesses of prison sentences.

Component 2: Assignment

Research topic/issue

The majority of candidates presented this section as a 'Hypothesis' and 'Aims'. Although this is not a requirement, it is good practice and allowed the vast majority to score full marks.

Research methods

Most candidates scored highly in this section. Most used the prompt provided on the template and provided advantages and disadvantages of their sources as well as suggested improvement and alterations for future research.

Research findings

Some candidates provided relevant knowledge regarding their topic and successfully made reference to sources used in their research, which may or may not have been included in the two they analysed in the previous section.

Research conclusions

The candidates who scored best in this section had generally used the 'Hypothesis and Aims' approach and managed to provide conclusions backed by relevant evidence.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Question 1B1

This was a mainstream introduction to the National 5 paper. Some candidates could not distinguish between 'devolved' and 'reserved' powers/matters, and answered in a confused fashion.

Questions 1A3 and 1B3

Many candidates did not tackle the third conclusion well. Some simply copied large amounts of information in the hope of gaining credit.

Questions 2C3 and 2D3

Some candidates had difficulty in analysing the source information. This resulted in answers that consisted of numerous single-mark points. Higher level skills of analysis would have attracted more credit.

Questions 3E3 and 3F3

In these 'Options' questions, many candidates gathered marks by making basic single-mark points using one source at a time. Many failed to analyse statistics, compare different statistics, make evaluative comments about source material etc.

In all types of skills questions, some candidates failed to structure their answers in a logical way and this resulted in markers being unable to give credit. For example:

- ◆ Selectivity — some gave great deal of evidence from the sources but it was impossible to tell which evidence supported the view and which opposed it.
- ◆ Conclusions — some candidates copied a lot of information but did not make it clear which bullet point they were referring to.
- ◆ Options — some candidates wrote long answers including many quotes and references to the sources but did not make it clear which option they had chosen.

Component 2: Assignment

Research topic/issue

Some candidates couldn't access the full range of marks in the assignment as a result of the topic/issue they had chosen. Some topics were too historical, geographical or scientific. Some other focused on issues that would have been better suited to business education or RME.

Research methods

Many candidates made little or no specific reference to their own research. Many provided what appeared to be memorised list type answers of advantages and disadvantages of 'generic' research methods such as 'Surveys'. While this did attract some credit, candidates should have referred to 'their survey' specifically. In this section a small number of candidates did not gain credit as they copied their answers from their source sheets.

Research findings /Research conclusions

Many candidates confused these two sections and wrote very similar answers for both. Candidates who scored best provided points of knowledge which did not directly answer their Aims or seek to prove/disprove their Hypothesis in the findings section. They only directly addressed the Hypothesis and Aims in the conclusions section.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

Centres should re-emphasise the importance of expanding knowledge answers using specific 'real world' current examples.

Candidates should be encouraged to 'compare', show changes over time, show differences between ethnic groups/genders/countries etc and to make 'evaluative comments' when analysing information in skills questions.

Candidates should always explicitly state in their skills answers which option they have chosen, which of the bullet pointed conclusions they are addressing, and whether they are supporting or opposing a point of view.

Component 2: Assignment

Centres should emphasise that candidates must choose their own topic for research without being directed, and that they should not use exactly the same resources as everyone else in their class.

Topics must clearly address a relevant, contemporary Modern Studies issue. Candidates would be best advised not to combine Modern Studies topics with their assignments in other subjects.

Source sheets are intended to provide evidence that the candidate has carried out their own research. Candidates should be discouraged from using the two A4 sheets as a 'Plan'.

Candidates should be encouraged to address their Hypothesis and Aims in the 'Conclusions' section of their report.

Centres should advise candidates to use the 'findings' section of the report to demonstrate knowledge of their topic which may not directly answer their aims or prove/disprove their Hypothesis. Knowledge presented in this section may be drawn from the source which the candidate used during their research but is not included in their submission for analysis in the 'research methods' section.

Centres should emphasise to candidates that direct copying from the source sheets will attract no credit.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	9317
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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 80				
A	39.3%	39.3%	3660	58
B	23.3%	62.6%	2171	50
C	18.2%	80.8%	1695	42
D	6.6%	87.4%	618	38
No award	12.6%	-	1173	-