



Course report 2022

Subject	Practical Cookery
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	6885
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	26.3	Cumulative percentage	26.3	Number of candidates	1810	Minimum mark required	73
B	Percentage	34.7	Cumulative percentage	61.0	Number of candidates	2395	Minimum mark required	63
C	Percentage	24.4	Cumulative percentage	85.4	Number of candidates	1675	Minimum mark required	53
D	Percentage	9.9	Cumulative percentage	95.3	Number of candidates	685	Minimum mark required	43
No award	Percentage	4.7	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	320	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

Following feedback from centres, modifications introduced for session 2020-21 were removed, and all components reverted to their previous formats. As a result, the assessment performed well.

Question paper

This year's paper was fair in terms of course coverage and overall level of demand. However, some candidates did not perform well and seemed to struggle with the depth of understanding that is required at this level. Explain questions still seem to cause the most difficulty for many candidates.

Assignment

All centres used the published SQA recipes to carry out the assignment.

This component was marked by SQA, and required candidates to write a logical plan of work, requisition minimal equipment and give details on how they would prepare and serve the three recipes.

This year did see an improvement from 2019 in the marks achieved by candidates in all three sections of the assignment, with the biggest improvement being in the time plans.

Practical activity

All centres used the published SQA recipes to carry out the practical activity.

The practical activity was of similar demand to previous years. Candidates were well prepared for the practical activity, and achieved slightly higher marks than those in 2019.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Most candidates attempted all questions in the question paper, with good performance being noted in questions 1(a), 1(d), 2(e), 3(a), 3(c), 3(d) and 3(e).

Assignment

There was a noticeable improvement in the equipment requisition section this year, with candidates using the correct terminology for equipment.

Practical activity

The overall marks submitted for candidates remained high, and most candidates performed well.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question paper

Most candidates found this component more demanding and did not perform as well. Questions that required the candidate to either explain or evaluate their response were poorly completed, with many candidates achieving few marks in these areas.

Very few candidates achieved any marks for question 2(a) as they did not appear to know the preparation technique blending or how to explain it in relation to adding cornflour to a liquid. A large number of candidates did not even attempt this question.

Other questions that candidates found demanding were:

Question 1(b): Very few candidates achieved any marks linking to the use of breadcrumbs in the meatballs.

Question 2(c): Some candidates showed minimal understanding of how to defrost chicken correctly.

Question 3(b): Many candidates tended to make statements linked to seasonality as opposed to explaining the benefits of seasonal foods. It is important that candidates are clear about what the differences are between local foods and seasonal foods, as these are not necessarily the same thing.

Assignment

Candidates tend to fall into two categories when writing time plans. There are those who write very little and there are those who copy the recipe word for word. Neither are good practice and fail to meet the assessment standard for this component.

This year many candidates had their rice and curry ready too early, which resulted in a cold dish being served and reduced the number of marks available to the candidate.

It is essential that all candidates are given the opportunity to amend time plans and service details once they have been submitted to SQA. This is to ensure they are workable, and the candidate is not disadvantaged prior to carrying out the practical activity. Where a candidate requires a centre-devised time plan, they should be given adequate time to become familiar with it. The candidate should not be given it at the point of starting the implementing stage.

Practical activity

Garnishing and decoration of each of the dishes seemed to cause some confusion this year.

Some candidates seemed unaware that if the garnish or decoration in the recipe is stipulated, it is not appropriate for additional garnishes or decorations to be added to a dish.

Some candidates also seemed to be unaware that garnishes/decorations can be prepared in the preparation time prior to their assessment starting, unless it states otherwise in the recipes.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Centres must ensure that candidates are well prepared for the question paper by ensuring that they know how to respond to each command word, in particular, 'explain' and 'evaluate'.

Categories such as preparation techniques, safe and hygienic storage of food, and sustainability are all topics that candidates should be well prepared for, and can appear in the question paper, year on year.

Please note, the specimen question paper or any of the past question papers must not be used in their entirety as a prelim for candidates and later submitted to SQA as evidence. This is due to the fact these papers are freely available on SQA's website and could have been accessed by candidates.

Assignment

Centres should spend more time preparing candidates for the demands of writing a logical time plan, and ensure that dishes are served at the required time at the correct temperature.

The time plan is not only an aid to help candidates organise themselves during the practical activity, it is also there to remind them to carry out those activities which are often forgotten, for example, re-weighing of prepared ingredients (where required), cleaning as you go, tasting and seasoning, pre-heating oven and preparing service dishes correctly (where required).

These are all tasks that many candidates forget to do during the practical activity. The time plan is a reminder that time must be made for these tasks during the practical activity, it is not a re-write of the recipes. By including these activities, candidates will have the opportunity to access all marks available.

For service details, candidates must ensure they serve the food as detailed in the recipe. If the recipe states a warm clean plate, then this must be specified in the service details. The candidate should also make it clear where the garnish or decoration will be located, whether via a drawing or description. The marker and assessor must be able to visualise what the finished dish will look like in order for the candidate to be awarded the marks.

Centres are reminded that candidates must not have access to an electronic copy of the recipes when completing this assessment component, this is clearly stated in the National 5 Practical Cookery assignment and practical activity instructions for centres.

Practical activity

Centres are reminded that the recipes should only be given to candidates on three occasions:

- ◆ during the one permitted practice of each dish
- ◆ during the planning stage

- ◆ during the implementing stage

Candidates should not have access to the recipes on any other occasion. Under no circumstance should candidates be given access to the SQA PowerPoint on SQA's secure site, as this is to aid the marking of the assessment and is not for candidate use.

If a candidate decides they cannot continue with the implementing stage, they cannot be given another opportunity, unless on health grounds. They can only be given the opportunity to undertake it on one occasion.

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](#).