



# **Course report 2023**

## **Advanced Higher Health and Food Technology**

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. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

# Grade boundary and statistical information

## Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022: 69

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 28

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

<b>A</b>	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	3.6	Cumulative percentage	3.6	Minimum mark required	70
<b>B</b>	Number of candidates	10	Percentage	35.7	Cumulative percentage	39.3	Minimum mark required	59
<b>C</b>	Number of candidates	8	Percentage	28.6	Cumulative percentage	67.9	Minimum mark required	48
<b>D</b>	Number of candidates	7	Percentage	25	Cumulative percentage	92.9	Minimum mark required	37
<b>No award</b>	Number of candidates	2	Percentage	7.1	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

Please note that rounding has not been applied to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

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 and information](#) page of SQA's website.

## **Section 1: comments on the assessment**

### **Question paper**

The question paper sampled knowledge and understanding from a range of topics from the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding in the course specification.

Feedback from the marking team suggested the question paper was fair in terms of overall demand and course coverage and that candidates were able to complete it in the allocated time.

### **Project**

Candidates performed as expected in the project and achieved a range of marks. There were some interesting and informative project topics from all areas of the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding.

All candidates provided a research question, backed up with two valid objectives, which helped to focus the research. This allowed them to carry out the research using the appropriate methods. This year, all candidates used interviews and questionnaires as their main forms of research to gather qualitative and quantitative data.

Many candidates generally performed well in stages 1 and 2 but were weaker in stage 3. Most candidates adhered to the 4,000-word limit. Some candidates exceeded the word limit and could not access all of the marks available.

## **Section 2: comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas that candidates performed well in**

#### **Question paper**

##### **Question 1**

Most candidates who chose this question performed well and applied their evaluation skills to a high standard to link a range of ways in which food packaging and labelling can affect consumer choice of food.

##### **Question 2**

Many candidates who chose this question had good knowledge of colourings, flavourings, and preservatives. They used the evaluation answering technique well; however, a few linked their answer to the manufacturer rather than the consumer and did not access all of the marks.

##### **Question 5**

Many candidates who answered this question generally performed well. They identified a range of micronutrients and were specific in their answers in relation to the diet of babies and toddlers. Candidates missed out on marks in this question if their answers did not contain a direct link to the benefits for the target group.

#### **Project**

##### **Stage 1(a)**

All candidates performed well in this stage by providing a clear, concise, and informative literature review that focused on the chosen topic. Many candidates backed up the literature review with credible and current sources of information, which they cited correctly.

##### **Stage 1(b)**

All candidates provided a research question and two valid objections that allowed them to prove or disprove the research question. All research questions were relevant and based on the topic of the literature review. Markers noted some excellent and different research questions this year.

##### **Stage 1(c)**

All candidates accessed some marks for providing a clear and concise outline plan for how they were going to carry out their research. Plans included explanations and valid reasons.

##### **Stage 2(a)**

Most candidates completed this stage to a very high standard. They accessed marks for carrying out their research using the techniques and sources they outlined in their plans. Many candidates used interviews and questionnaires as their methods of research. The candidate interviews featured some very interesting people.

### **Stage 2(b)**

Many candidates accessed the marks in this stage by providing sufficient relevant evidence for analysis. They made sure the type of research they carried out was clearly linked to the research question. Those who linked their questions clearly to their objectives covered their research question in more detail, which gave them more information to analyse in stage 3.

### **Stage 3(a)**

The candidates who performed best in this stage carried out their research to a high standard and clearly interpreted the results and the importance of the results by linking them to evidence from the literature review. Many candidates demonstrated good analysis skills.

### **Stage 3(b)**

Many candidates accessed the marks in this stage by evaluating their research process and explaining appropriate next steps. Some evaluations were particularly interesting.

## **Areas that candidates found demanding**

### **Question paper**

#### **Question 3**

Although we saw a slight improvement in responses to 'analyse' questions, many candidates struggled to provide analysis in their answers. Some candidate responses also lacked knowledge of food allergies and intolerances.

#### **Question 4**

Many candidates answered this question very poorly. This was a straightforward 'explain' question about the functional properties of carbohydrates.

### **Project**

#### **Stage 3(a)**

This is still the stage where candidates do not access all the available marks. Many candidates did not fully analyse the results and link what they had found out from their research to the results. Some candidates introduced new information at this stage, which was not backed up by their research. Many candidates repeated the results at this stage, without offering any extra information. Advanced Higher level requires more depth, especially as it is the technique of analysis that this stage assesses.

## **Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment**

### **Question paper**

Candidates should be aware of the knowledge and understanding that the question paper can assess. This information is in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section of the course specification.

Candidates should have experience of answering exam-style questions in the correct time allocation.

Candidates and centres should look at the marking instructions for past papers. These contain model answers and guidance on responding to different command words.

Candidates should be clear on how to apply each command word and know to make clear links to the question in their answers.

### **Project**

Centres must follow the information on SQA's website about submitting projects.

The [understanding standards](#) information about projects may also be useful.

Candidates must adhere to the word limit, otherwise they will receive a penalty.

Candidates should make their projects easy for markers to read. Applying line spacing of 1.5 and a minimum font size of 11 point throughout improves legibility.

Projects should include a bibliography. Many projects this year lacked a bibliography.

Candidates should not refer to themselves throughout the project. They should use a phrase like 'The researcher found that...'.

Candidates should use up-to-date and credible research material and make sure they cite it correctly.

## Appendix: 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 was developed to support learners and centres. This included modifications to course assessment, retained from the 2021–22 session. This support was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while recognising a lessening of the impact of disruption to learning and teaching as a result of the pandemic. The revision support that was available for the 2021–22 session was not offered to learners in 2022–23.

In addition, SQA adopted a sensitive approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining

standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams continue to do so in different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019 and 2022.

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 2023 and the ongoing impact the disruption from the pandemic has had on learners. 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 the removal of revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2023 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 2023 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).