Course report 2023

Childcare and Development Higher

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:   216

Number of resulted entries in 2023:   224

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	32	Percentage	14.3	Cumulative percentage	14.3	Minimum mark required	91
B	Number of candidates	51	Percentage	22.8	Cumulative percentage	37.1	Minimum mark required	77
C	Number of candidates	82	Percentage	36.6	Cumulative percentage	73.7	Minimum mark required	63
D	Number of candidates	40	Percentage	17.9	Cumulative percentage	91.5	Minimum mark required	49
No award	Number of candidates	19	Percentage	8.5	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 allowed candidates to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content not addressed in the project.

Questions used a balance of command words to allow candidates to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content.

Questions that required description and explanation in the question paper were challenging for some candidates. This type of question allows candidates to demonstrate and apply their knowledge. This allows for the differentiation between an A candidate who should be able to demonstrate knowledge fully in their explanation, whilst a C candidate may demonstrate a basic understanding of their knowledge but might not be able to provide an explanation of any depth.

Project

All candidates were asked to respond to one brief 'How can literacy development be supported for children and young people?'.

SQA provided centres with examples of how to respond to prompts B–E within the project. Examples were provided as a guide rather than instructions for centres on how to deliver the project.

The brief performed as intended to allow candidates to demonstrate their breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content of the Higher Childcare and Development course. Most of the projects presented this year were, generally well referenced.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Generally, candidates performed well in section 1: child development.

In question 1, most candidates identified appropriate physical milestones for a child aged 0–3 years. In question 2, most candidates were able to describe experiences that promoted physical development in children aged 0–3 years. In question 3, most candidates were able to explain family influences that affected holistic development. In question 4, many candidates were able to evaluate an appropriate method of assessment for a chid aged 3–5 years.

Project

♦ Prompt A — Most candidates explained aspects of development and their interrelationship.
♦ Prompt C — Many candidates explained theories of development related to the child and the brief.
♦ Prompt E — Many candidates explained strategies and initiatives that were relevant to the child and the brief.
♦ Prompt F — Many candidates explained how current services support the child.
♦ Prompt G — Most candidates explained the role and responsibilities of two professionals.
♦ Prompt I — Many candidates were able to provide a conclusion to the question posed in the brief.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

In section 2, question 6, a few candidates were not able to explain how theory assists in planning outdoor play experiences for children aged 5–8 years. Candidates were not able to specifically explain in detail how the chosen theory would inform the planning of outdoor experiences.

In section 3, question 7(a), some candidates did not correctly identify and describe an appropriate piece of legislation. Candidates were not specific in their description of how the legislation guided practice in early learning and childcare settings. In question 7(b), some candidates did not explain the impact of legislation on children and young people in early learning and childcare settings. Candidates were not specific in their explanation of the impact of the legislation in early learning and childcare settings. Where candidates provided incorrect legislation in question 7(a), this also meant they risked accessing the marks in question 7(b). In question 8, some candidates did not describe how the SSSC codes of practice influenced practitioners. Candidates were not specific in their description of the codes of practice being a guide for standards of professional practice and behaviours.

In question 9, a few candidates did not describe the benefits of partnership working in the third sector. Candidates were not specific in their description of benefits in terms of tackling inequality, poverty and increasing resource availability for children and young people.

Project

In Prompt B, some candidates did not analyse factors of development. Candidates were not specific in their analysis of one positive and two negative factors. Candidates were not specific in analysing the relationship between factors, and their relationship to the brief and the chosen child.

In Prompt D, some candidates were not specific in their analysis of theories of development. Candidates were not specific in showing the relationship between the theories and their relationship to the child or young person. Candidates were not specific in exploring contradictions, comparing and contrasting, or inconsistencies and different views relating to theories of development.

In Prompt H, some candidates were not evaluating the effectiveness of partnership working. Candidates were not specific in their evaluation in terms of making a judgement about the effectiveness of partnership working. Candidates were not specific in their evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and/or advantages and disadvantages in relation to the chosen child.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Centres should ensure candidates have a sound understanding of all aspects of development and can effectively discuss and relate them to children.

In section 2: child development: theory, candidates should ensure they can effectively explain how theories of development inform practice and specifically apply theories of development to play experiences. In a few cases, this lack of explanation led to candidates losing marks.

In section 3: services for children and young people, candidates should ensure that they can describe appropriate legislation and explain the impact of this legislation on children and young people in early learning and childcare settings. In some cases, this lack of explanation in question 7(b) led to candidates losing marks. Candidates should ensure that they are able to describe how the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) codes of practice influence practitioners. Candidates should ensure that they are able to describe the benefits of partnership working in the third sector.

Centres should continue to ensure that candidates are specific in their description of theories and that they are specific to the area of development in question. They should also ensure that candidates are specific on how theory of development can be applied to learning experiences for children.

Centres should ensure that candidates are correctly identifying appropriate legislation and are specific in their explanation of how legislation impacts practice in early learning and childcare settings. Centres should ensure that candidates have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and how codes of practice influence practice in early learning and childcare settings. Centres should continue to ensure that candidates are specific in their descriptions of the Third Sector and how partnership working specifically benefits children and young people.

Centres should ensure that candidates are specific in their analysis of factors that influence development (Prompt B). They should also ensure that candidates are identifying appropriate theories of development (Prompt C) relevant to the case study, child and brief. Centres should continue to ensure that candidates are specific in their analysis of their chosen theories and to effectively relate this to the child and brief (Prompt D).

Centres should continue to ensure that candidates are specific in their explanation of two professionals and ensure that the professionals chosen are correct for the child and the brief (Prompt G). Centres should continue to ensure that candidates are specific in their evaluation of effective partnership working between two relevant professionals who support the child (Prompt H).

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.