



Course report 2023

Higher Fashion and Textile 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: 360

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 349

Statistical information: performance of candidates

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

A	Number of candidates	42	Percentage	12	Cumulative percentage	12	Minimum mark required	86
B	Number of candidates	109	Percentage	31.2	Cumulative percentage	43.3	Minimum mark required	73
C	Number of candidates	100	Percentage	28.7	Cumulative percentage	71.9	Minimum mark required	60
D	Number of candidates	69	Percentage	19.8	Cumulative percentage	91.7	Minimum mark required	47
No award	Number of candidates	29	Percentage	8.3	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

In general, the assessments performed as expected. Feedback from markers and the statistical data indicates that the assessment components differentiated effectively between candidates of differing abilities and levels of understanding.

Overall performance in the assignment and question paper was lower than in previous years, and the view was that candidate performance in both externally assessed components was generally weaker this session.

Question paper

The question paper was well received by candidates, centres and markers. Feedback indicated that it was fair and accessible for candidates in terms of coverage and overall level of demand. Most candidates were able to complete all four questions within the time allocated. However, it was commented by markers that some candidates provided no response for some questions. Many candidates did not attempt question 1(c) and 4(c).

More candidates this session struggled to answer discuss, describe and explain questions correctly. They did not understand how to apply their knowledge to the format of the answer. Evaluative responses were written to a much better standard and were generally well laid out.

Assignment

Many assignments met the assessment requirements for this level. It was evident that candidates had a better understanding of the assignment process compared to last session.

Due to the removal of the practical activity from the assignment, candidates used their findings from the investigations more effectively to create their design solution. However, markers commented that, in general, performance was less strong than in previous years. The marks for the assignment were notably lower than last session. Some candidates' written responses were vague, not progressive and therefore not in line with national standards.

Practical activity

Most candidates correctly manufactured items which met the national standard of eight construction techniques, with a minimum of two techniques from the higher tariff columns.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1(b): many candidates were able to provide accurate responses linked to woven fabrics and made reference to the designer or spring collection in their answers.

Question 2: the marking team commented that responses were of a better standard this session. Most candidates demonstrated good knowledge of fabric properties and characteristics and construction techniques. Most candidates' responses were accurate, and their analysis linked to the pyjamas or sleeping within their response. Some candidates demonstrated a very good understanding of the requirements for sleepwear.

Question 3(a): most candidates were able to provide two principles of design and explain them correctly in context to the question.

Question 4(b): most candidates identified two correct past trends that inspired the costume design.

Candidates who made the link clear between the item and target group were able to access the full range of available marks for this question.

Assignment

Stage 1

Themes

Most candidates correctly identified the two key themes and provided a detailed explanation of their relevance.

Investigations

Many candidates carried out investigations to a good standard. Most candidates completed their research, using a variety of techniques. Most of the research conducted was easy to interpret, concise and factual, and contained an appropriate source.

Some of the investigations were progressive, allowing candidates to effectively gather information, enabling them to create an appropriate solution. It was highlighted that some candidates used the findings from one investigation to help identify what they needed to research in their next investigation, demonstrating a high level of planning by the candidate.

Solution

Some candidates used their investigations to better effect this session. There was evidence that the design features, properties and characteristics of the fabric and construction techniques were carried over from the evidence generated within the investigations.

Stage 2

Testing

Most candidates carried out a suitable test that provided them with the necessary information for evaluations and amendments. Tests were clear and concise, and most candidates gained full marks for this section.

Amendments

Some candidates identified amendments to be made to their solution from evidence generated from the tests. This was valid information.

Practical activity

Visiting verifiers consistently commented on the high standard of practical items being made, and the wide variety of items seen.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 1(a): Overall performance was poor for this question. Most candidate responses were very vague, lacked detail and did not link or make reference to the spring collection.

Most candidates identified three key features however the discussion points were basic and most candidates simply stated a design feature and applied it to an item.

Many candidates did not discuss the impact of the design feature in any detail or expand their response and therefore could not access the full range of marks for this question. Most candidate responses were repetitive.

Question 1(c): many candidates did not attempt this question. Some candidates did attempt the question, but their response demonstrated poor knowledge and understanding of lyocell.

A few candidates did not make any reference to the collection. Responses were predominantly generic links to lyocell. Candidates must make reference to the collection in their answer to be awarded the marks.

Question 3(b): most candidates did not perform well in this question. Most attempted the question, however the responses were generic and did not refer to the elderly person within the answers. Many candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of mass manufacture however omitted the reference to the elderly in their answer.

Question 3(c): Most candidates did not perform well in this question and did not provide a Higher level response. Some candidates did not demonstrate accurate knowledge of the fabric finishes in relation to how the finish is applied. Many candidates did not fully explain the fabric finish and moved to the advantage of the finish for the elderly person's clothing.

A few candidates did not refer to the elderly person in their response.

Question 4(a): it was highlighted that some candidates had a lack of subject knowledge relating to market research to successfully answer this question.

Many of the candidates did not refer to the theatre production or costumes in their answer, therefore responses were generic.

Question 4(b): many candidates were not able to fully explain the impact of the identified past trend to the costume design. Candidates struggled with their explanation.

Question 4(c): many candidates did not attempt this question. Most candidates that did attempt the question did not refer to the theatre production or costumes within their response and instead provided generic answers related to the pattern markings.

It was highlighted that many candidates had good knowledge and understanding of the pattern markings and could identify them, however they were not linked to the importance of the costumes.

A few candidates demonstrated poor knowledge and understanding of pattern markings which was evident in their responses.

Assignment

Section 1

Design

A few candidates identified the key themes correctly however they did not explain the theme, instead they provided bullet points or statements which did not meet the marking standards.

Research

Some candidates did not provide an explanation for the purpose of their investigations instead they provided an aim or a vague explanation which did not detail the purpose of the investigation.

Most candidates used a textile expert as their source for the interview. Candidates continue to ask questions which are not valid for the expert to answer. These are questions linked to fashion trends or colours and are not appropriate questions to ask a textile expert or teacher as this is not their expertise.

Many candidates referred to the word 'popular' within their summary points when pulling findings from their investigation. This word was not used accurately when summarising a point of importance. Many candidates use this word too often and it does not reflect the data within their investigations. Candidates should consider the wording within their summary point to ensure it is reflecting accurate information.

Many candidate's summary points were general statements or direct lifts of evidence and did not demonstrate their ability to discuss the importance of the points identified and how they intend to use them.

Some candidates did not use their investigation progressively. This was apparent at investigation 3 when a few candidates were still stating 'I would consider...'. Candidates should be identifying their design features, construction techniques and fabric choice by investigation 3 summary points.

Solution

A few design illustrations were lacking in detail this session. Fabric information and specific design features were omitted.

Many candidates did not provide sufficient detail within their justifications linked to the design features, properties and characteristics of their chosen fabric, and the construction techniques to be used. The justifications were predominantly statements of information lifted from investigations and did not demonstrate the candidates' higher order thinking skills.

Some candidates were only providing 12 points of justification; (four within each section) therefore were unable to gain full marks for this section.

Section 2

Amending the solution

It was noted that some candidates did not have evidence to justify the amendment to the solution. Instead, they provided changes from personal opinion meaning they were not awarded a mark.

Practical activity

Where there was difficulty with the assessment approach it was due to centres limiting candidates' marks by trying to make techniques add to 30 at Higher, rather than marking the eight highest tariff techniques.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidates should be given more experience of answering exam-style questions. This will allow candidates to develop their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the course in an approach that meets national standards.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the technique to answer each command word within the question paper, for example explain, describe, analysis, discuss and evaluation. This specifically applies to the following command words that were not answered particularly well this session — ‘discuss’ (question 1) ‘describe’ and ‘explain’ type questions.

Understanding Standards materials containing candidate responses and commentaries are available on SQA’s website. Teachers can use these to help candidates to understand how the question paper is marked and the level of response required. A number of these resources have been specifically developed to assist in the teaching of Q1a. Teachers and candidates can access the specimen question paper, past papers and marking instructions on SQA’s website.

Exposure to a diverse range of imagery linked to question 1 would be beneficial for all candidates throughout the course. Support with exam technique is also essential. Practice in selecting appropriate questions, structuring responses and managing their time will help candidates respond effectively to the question paper.

Centres should reinforce the importance of referring to the person, activity, item within their response. Many candidates’ responses this year did not meet the standard due to their generic content and not referring specifically to the person, activity, item. It is essential that candidates make reference to the item and target group, for example the uniform, child and school, running top and runner otherwise it is a generic response. This is stipulated within the marking instructions in the additional guidance section.

Candidates should be encouraged to read and use the scenario information from each question. This will ensure that they effectively relate their responses back to the context of the question and make reference to the person, activity, item. This is essential to enable them to access the maximum number of marks. The answer is considered generic if no reference is made to the scenario.

It was highlighted this session that when answering questions, some candidates were not following the chronological order and were jumping from one question to another, for example question 3(a) to 3(c). This prevented some candidates from referencing the person and item within their answer.

Candidates should be aware of the course content for the subject. This information is outlined in the course specification and highlights the main areas of study in preparation for the examination.

Assignment

Many candidates are not providing an explanation of the purpose of the investigation. They are writing a statement or aim rather than considering the outcome and overall impact that it will have.

All investigations should have at least four points of summary or 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 final fashion or textile item. In addition, the summary points should be progressive and by the third investigation candidates' language should change from 'I am considering using...' to 'I will therefore use...' as this demonstrates that the candidate has used higher order thinking skills to progress their investigations to create a suitable solution.

To ensure candidates are meeting the standards within the solution section, it would be beneficial if one investigation is linked to the properties and/or characteristics of textiles or components and the suitable construction techniques to be used in their solution. This will assist candidates when they come to justify their chosen textile's properties and characteristics and the construction techniques that they will use to manufacture their design solution.

At Higher level, candidates are expected to ask the expert if a fabric or construction technique is suitable, rather than asking about trends and colours.

Recommendations for investigations:

- ◆ interview — minimum five questions, clearly stating the source or expert, consider the questions in relation to the 'expert', explanation of purpose of investigation, progressive summary points, not statements of results.
- ◆ questionnaire — approx. 20 respondents, clearly stating the target group, clear explanation of purpose of the investigation, progressive summary points.
- ◆ internet research — minimum three different sources, clearly identifying each with the relevant URL.

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. The illustration should be clear and easily visualised.

When candidates are justifying their solution, they must ensure that there are a minimum of four points, with justifications, for design features, properties and characteristics and construction techniques. If there are less than four points in a particular section, for example design features, the candidate will be unable to obtain full marks for that section as it has not met the standards for the solution.

Candidates should ensure that they link design features, properties and characteristics of their chosen textile and construction techniques from evidence derived from the investigations.

Candidates should ensure that they clearly justify the reasons for the design features on their fashion and textile item, properties and characteristics of the textile chosen, and the construction and specialist techniques selected as this was not completed well this session. Candidates are providing statements as opposed to explanations.

When completing the table outlining information for the test, candidates must ensure they make reference to the target group and provide detail on the source. Many candidates are referring to target group from investigation 2. This is not detailed enough, and the target group should be explicit.

When evaluating their items, candidates need to be encouraged to make use of, and refer to, the evidence from their test in order to support their evaluative comments. The use of expressions such as 'therefore' or 'and so' may be useful triggers for candidates to develop their results into evaluative points.

Candidates should justify all amendments or adaptations that they highlight. These points should reflect evidence gathered in either the investigations or the test and should not be from personal opinion.

Practical activity

Centres are reminded that candidates should be marked for eight different construction techniques. Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate techniques which exceed the maximum marks available but cannot be awarded more than 30 marks for Higher.

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](#).