



# **Course report 2023**

## **National 5 Administration and IT**

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: 5,411

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 5,467

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

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

<b>A</b>	Number of candidates	1,737	Percentage	31.8	Cumulative percentage	31.8	Minimum mark required	80
<b>B</b>	Number of candidates	1,457	Percentage	26.7	Cumulative percentage	58.4	Minimum mark required	67
<b>C</b>	Number of candidates	1,180	Percentage	21.6	Cumulative percentage	80	Minimum mark required	55
<b>D</b>	Number of candidates	685	Percentage	12.5	Cumulative percentage	92.5	Minimum mark required	42
<b>No award</b>	Number of candidates	408	Percentage	7.5	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**

All questions functioned as intended. Some candidates achieved high marks in the question paper, however a few candidates attained very low marks. Candidates performed well in question 1(a) in particular. Centres commented that candidates had sufficient time to complete the paper. Most candidates submitted printouts for all questions. Most candidates truncated formulae in the spreadsheet printouts.

Most candidates attempted all parts of the theory question and candidate performance was higher than in previous years.

### **Assignment**

All tasks functioned as intended. Many candidates attained high marks, however a few candidates attained very low marks. Most candidates attempted all tasks. Candidates did not attain the top few marks because of keying-in errors and inconsistencies.

Many candidates used the snipping tool to evidence internet research tasks. Most of these candidates did not attain the criteria marks for the research as they truncated their snip, or the snip was so small the evidence was illegible.

Most candidates attempted all parts of the theory task and candidate performance was higher than in previous years.

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

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

#### **Question paper**

##### **Question 1(a)**

Most candidates attained highly in this question.

##### **Question 1(b)**

Most candidates gained 1 of the criteria marks.

##### **Question 2(a)**

Most candidates attained most marks for the value view.

Most candidates attained the 3 marks for formulae in the Entry Fees Breakdown table.

##### **Question 2(b)**

Almost all candidates attained the marks for increasing the size and inserting the grant amount in the value view.

Most candidates attained the marks for the total and the surplus/deficit formulae.

##### **Question 3**

Most candidates attempted all parts of the theory question and attained some marks.

#### **Assignment**

##### **Task 1 — Presentation**

Most candidates scored well in this task, with the vast majority attaining more than half marks. Almost all were able to create a new presentation, choose correct slide layouts and insert a background/design. Almost all candidates populated the first slide correctly and copied and pasted the correct information to the correct slides. Most candidates correctly inserted a footer and action buttons.

##### **Task 2 — Theory**

Some candidates performed well in this task.

##### **Task 3 — Business Card**

Most candidates attained most marks for this task.

##### **Task 4 — Brochure**

Most candidates attained around half marks for this task. Almost all candidates attained the heading and insert new table marks.

### **Task 5 — E-mail**

Most candidates attained most marks for this task.

### **Task 6 — E-diary**

Most candidates attained at least half the available marks for this task. Almost all candidates were able to insert the all-day meeting for the Open Day on the Saturday and most candidates were able to set a 30-minute reminder for the meeting.

### **Task 7 — Internet**

Most candidates were able to find the details of an aerial/drone photographer in the correct location.

### **Task 8 — Booking Form**

Most candidates performed very well in this task, with many attaining full marks.

### **Task 9 — Mail Merge**

Almost all candidates attained at least half marks for this task. Most candidates included all the essential information, used various fonts and text formatting and attained the logo mark along with the print mark.

### **Task 10 — Press Release**

Most candidates inserted the new paragraphs in the correct place and printed the document on one page following the template.

## **Areas that candidates found demanding**

### **Question paper**

#### **Question 1(a)**

Many candidates did not attain one of the field heading marks because they were inconsistently capitalised.

#### **Question 1(b)**

Many candidates did not attain the heading mark, either because it did not have all three key pieces of information required (competitors, under 18 and medical conditions) or it was incorrectly capitalised. Many candidates did not attain both marks for the double sort, as they did not sort on two fields.

Some candidates included the correct name fields, but they were not together, or were in the wrong order. A few candidates exported their database report into a word processing document. These errors meant the print mark was not attained.

### **Question 2(a)**

Some candidates did not change the text direction. Many candidates keyed-in numbers, instead of formulae, for the number of entries. Many candidates who inserted formula truncated cell E38.

### **Question 2(b)**

Some candidates did not attain the formatting mark in the value view because they did not format the figures they inputted, or they formatted them inconsistently.

Some candidates did not name the H6 cell, or they did not name it 'Fees' as instructed. When creating the IF statement some candidates inputted speech marks around the figures eg =IF(Entries!B39>"650","540"). This meant the figure generated was treated as text in the spreadsheet, instead of a number, so the value was not included when adding up the numbers for the total. Some candidates did not use cell references for the T-shirts formula, and some truncated this complex formula.

Most candidates did not attain the print mark, usually because in question 2(a) (value view) they printed the whole worksheet, not just the extract as requested in the question.

### **Question 3**

Some candidates confused customer service and corporate image. Some candidates were not specific about the features of spreadsheets; instead, they gave vague references such as 'help with calculations'. A few candidates incorrectly described database features.

## **Assignment**

### **Task 1 — Presentation**

Many candidates did not attain the bullet mark because there were also bullets on slides 3-5. Some candidates did not attain one of the copy and paste marks because they did not include the full stop at the end of the paragraph, or they included the heading twice. Few candidates attained keyboarding marks, many omitted the address in the final slide and had other keying-in errors. Many candidates did not attain the print mark because they only printed five slides in the handout format.

### **Task 2 — Theory**

Some candidates did not know the principles of the General Data Protection Regulations. Some candidates outlined ways of keeping people secure and some candidates incorrectly described security of information and property. Some candidates did not explain consequences of poor file management.

### **Task 3 — Business Card**

Many candidates did not attain the keyboarding mark for this task due to a keying-in error.

#### **Task 4 — Brochure**

Many candidates included the print border on the printout, and some deleted the footer when inserting their name. Most candidates had some keying-in errors and many candidates had capitalisation errors when using the find and replace function.

#### **Task 5 — E-mail**

Few candidates attained the keyboarding mark for this task. Many candidates inserted 'first Monday of next month', omitted the year in the date, showed a poor e-mail layout and had keyboarding errors.

#### **Task 6 — E-diary**

Many candidates did not insert the meeting correctly, by using incorrect spelling, inconsistent spelling or omitting the word 'meeting'. Many candidates did not insert a recurring meeting; instead, they inserted a meeting from 1015 hours on the Wednesday until 1215 hours on the Friday. Many candidates struggled to show a task on the correct day; instead, they set up a new meeting in the calendar and some candidates inserted meetings and printed the weekly view for the wrong week.

#### **Task 7 — Internet**

Most candidates attained less than half marks for this task. Though candidates were sometimes able to find the correct bus, many did not show the required places, dates and times in their printouts because they did not snip enough of the page.

#### **Task 8 — Booking Form**

A few candidates did not attain the keyboarding mark for this task.

#### **Task 9 — Mail Merge**

Most candidates did not attain the keyboarding mark for this task and some candidates did not attain the first merge mark because they did not include the title merge field.

#### **Task 10 — Press Release**

Many candidates did not justify the text, and some candidates did not change the margins. Many candidates did not attain either of the keyboarding marks because they had keyboarding errors and did not interpret the manuscript correction signs correctly.

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

### **Question paper**

Centres should refer to the marking instructions and general marking principles on SQA's website when preparing candidates for future assessment.

Database reports should be printed from the database file, not exported to a word-processing document.

Where candidates are asked to include a name, they must have title, first name and surname in the correct order. Centres must ensure that candidates have practised all required features, for example, sorting on two fields.

If a name is given for a cell, that name must be used.

Candidates must check that they hand in printouts for each question, including formula printouts. They should check all printouts for truncation, especially formula printouts, which often require columns to be elongated. All printouts must be proofread before submission.

If candidates are composing their own heading (for example in a report, form or chart), this heading should include all key pieces of information so it accurately describes the data displayed. Good practice is to use block capitals for main headings in databases and spreadsheets; this ensures consistent capitalisation.

Centres should remind candidates to answer theory questions by addressing the command word used. An outline response needs more than one word and usually includes a verb; a describe response needs more detail than an outline response; and an explain response must include a cause and effect.

### **Assignment**

Centres should refer to the marking instructions and general marking principles on SQA's website when preparing candidates for future assessment. Any ICT issues encountered by candidates during the assignment, that might have an impact on marking, should be communicated via the ICT issues form which will be available on the Administration and IT page of SQA's secure website. Teachers and lecturers should not write notes on candidate evidence.

There was evidence of poor keyboarding and inconsistent formatting across all tasks in the assignment. Sometimes two formatting instructions are given for text, for example embolden and centre. Candidates must ensure that they action all these instructions, not just the first one.

If there is an instruction to increase the font size, it is recommended that it is increased substantially, not just by 1pt or 2pts, so that the increase is very clear to see. Candidates must proofread their work carefully before submission.



If there is a footer already in a word processing document, it is advised that candidates insert their name/SCN in the page header, or below the existing footer text.

Internet searches tend to be poorly completed. If screenshots or snips are used, candidates must ensure that all the information required is visible and legible. Marks cannot be awarded if information cannot be read. Candidates must ensure that they show all the criteria that has been requested. If options of different accommodation or travel are given, candidates must clearly identify which one they are selecting. Candidates should be prepared to research all methods of travel.

A describe theory response needs more detail than an outline response (outline plus more) and an explain response must include a cause and effect.

The layout of e-mails continues to improve year on year. All e-mails must have a subject, start, sensible message and close, along with open punctuation. It is good practice for candidates to use the Cc function when copying in additional recipients to an e-mail. All e-mails should be proofread carefully.

If a recurring meeting is being assessed, it should be entered using the recurring function.

Centres should practise the creating tasks function using to-do lists, not inserting a task as an event.

## 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](#).