



Course report 2023

Care 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. 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: 178

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 141

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	30	Percentage	21.3	Cumulative percentage	21.3	Minimum mark required	84
B	Number of candidates	23	Percentage	16.3	Cumulative percentage	37.6	Minimum mark required	70
C	Number of candidates	40	Percentage	28.4	Cumulative percentage	66	Minimum mark required	57
D	Number of candidates	30	Percentage	21.3	Cumulative percentage	87.2	Minimum mark required	43
No award	Number of candidates	18	Percentage	12.8	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 was accessible and fair. It was apparent that candidates completed it within the allocated time.

Questions differentiated appropriately and allowed A-grade candidates to develop their answer for full marks, and C-grade candidates to gain marks. Course content was sampled adequately.

There were examples of candidates who performed between A and D grades across all centres.

Project

Candidates in 2022–2023 were presented with one project brief.

The project had examples of candidates who performed between A and D grades across all centres.

In section 2, candidate differentiation across all parts was evident. Candidates working at A grade were able to apply theories and the concepts described, to the brief and the individual.

Candidates working at C grade were able to describe with little application to the chosen individual.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Most candidates did reasonably well in the question paper and project. There were clear gaps in knowledge and understanding for a few candidates, which adversely affected their overall grades.

Question paper

Most candidates performed well in question 11. This was encouraging, as knowledge of statutory care was highlighted as a candidate weakness in the 2021–22 report.

Many candidates had a good understanding of agents of socialisation in question 5(a).

Many candidates offered good descriptions of one stage of the care planning process in question 8(b), which was stronger than the answers to the purpose of the care plan in question 8(a).

Project

In section 1, the action plan was well executed overall. Many candidates gained high marks for evidence of 1(a), (b) or (c). Most candidates scored highly in items 2(f) and 3(a).

The range of individuals chosen was diverse, with centres using innovative ways to engage the candidates in selecting an individual in receipt of a care service.

Candidates detailed the tasks and timescales effectively and the majority referred to their individual in the sources of information section.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 3(a), (b) and question 7(a), (b) were the most demanding questions.

Question 3(a) asked candidates to describe two key concepts of the psychodynamic approach. Some candidates could not offer a description of any key concept. This meant they were unable to go on and answer question 3(b).

Responses to question 7(a) and (b) indicated that many candidates lacked knowledge and understanding of regulatory bodies for care professionals in Scotland.

Project

It was noted again this year that a few of the projects submitted fell significantly short of the word count. This limited the ability of most of these candidates to access the marks available in each section.

Item 2(e) was the section that candidates found to be the most demanding.

C-grade candidates found the following sections demanding:

- 2(b) This section showed a mixed performance from candidates. The main issue was giving a detailed review of the psychological theory with little linking of the feature identified to explain aspects of development, and/or behaviour of the chosen individual.
- 2(c) Some candidates described sociological influences rather than concepts. The area of linking the impact to the individual was applied by A and B-grade candidates but was a challenge for C-grade candidates.
- 2(e) Some candidates were not clear about what the features of the positive care environment are. This made it a difficult task to access the marks available to explain how these could meet the needs of the chosen individual.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidates need to be aware of how to respond to command words, for example describe, explain, identify.

Centres should strive to ensure that candidates understand the Care Planning Process, the different sectors of care, and the principles of the Health and Social Care Standards.

Candidates are expected to display knowledge of key concepts of the four psychological approaches identified. Candidates are also expected to display knowledge of a range of sociological concepts identified therein. The previous report highlighted that many candidates were unable to describe any one key concept from either a behaviourist or humanistic approach.

The key concepts are listed in the psychological theories part of 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section of the National 5 Care Course Specification. Centres should look at this aspect of the course, as similar questions will feature in future question papers.

Centres should direct candidates to the [National 5 Care subject page](#) of SQA's website.

Project

In terms of the positive care environment, centres should ensure that candidates understand the four features: organisational aspects, physical aspects, therapeutic and interpersonal aspects, and community aspects, and that they are able to refer to them and the description of what each one refers to. This information is available in the additional notes on judging evidence column in the detailed marking instructions in the coursework assessment task.

Centres must remind candidates that it is mandatory to submit their log book with their project. Most candidates submitted a log book with their project and these were used with varying degree of effectiveness. Some log books had one or two sentences and others had a weekly account of progress.

Centres should remind candidates who choose clients they have worked with during their placement or friends or family to maintain the confidentiality of the individual. If a centre distributes a case study or refers to a DVD for candidates to use as their chosen individual, it is important that teachers and lecturers check that it allows the candidates enough scope to develop the project fully and access marks.

Candidates should be made aware of the importance of putting information gained into their own words rather than copying directly from websites.

Centres should ensure that the current project guidelines are being followed by referring to the National 5 Care Coursework assessment task available on the [Care subject page](#) of SQA's website.

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](#).