



Course report 2023

National 5 Fashion 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: 578

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 632

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	119	Percentage	18.8	Cumulative percentage	18.8	Minimum mark required	70
B	Number of candidates	173	Percentage	27.4	Cumulative percentage	46.2	Minimum mark required	60
C	Number of candidates	163	Percentage	25.8	Cumulative percentage	72	Minimum mark required	50
D	Number of candidates	111	Percentage	17.6	Cumulative percentage	89.6	Minimum mark required	40
No award	Number of candidates	66	Percentage	10.4	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 performed as expected. Feedback from centres suggests it was fair in terms of coverage and overall level of demand.

Assignment

Feedback suggests the separation of the assignment from the practical activity was well received, although some centres continue to make the item designed by candidates in response to the assignment.

There was a bias towards the music festival brief, although candidates who choose the baby shower brief, did equally well. There was improvement in marks achieved this year, with candidates' performance improving in some key areas.

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.

Most centres provided candidates with varying degrees of personalisation in either the choices of fabric, or method of decoration or embellishment.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper

Question 1(a): some candidates could name a regenerated fibre.

Question 1(b): many candidates identified properties and characteristics of their chosen fibre.

Note: where candidates incorrectly identified a fibre as regenerated in question 1(a) but correctly identified properties and characteristics of their chosen fibre in 1(b) marks were awarded to prevent double penalising candidates. This is an update to previous marking policy.

Question 1(c): most candidates could identify two advantages and disadvantages to adding elastane.

Question 1(d): many candidates correctly evaluated at least one characteristic of knitted fabrics however, some candidates associated knit fabrics with wool.

Question 1(e): few candidates could state two factors to consider when cutting out a knit fabric.

Question 2(a): most candidates could explain why at least one of the features might be used on children's dungarees — some candidates failed to achieve marks where the explanation related to dungarees in general and not specifically to dungarees for children.

Question 2(b): Many candidates could explain four advantages and disadvantages of using a 65% cotton and 35% polyester fabric. Some candidates provided general points which did not relate specifically to children's dungarees and subsequently marks were not awarded as they did not relate to the context of question.

Question 2(c): some candidates could identify neither pattern marking. Many candidates could identify the straight of grain, and some could identify both pattern markings.

Question 3(a): many candidates correctly identified ways in which clothing from the 1960s could influence the collection. Candidates who did not link features of the trends to an item for the collection were unable to access the marks for this question.

Question 3(b): many candidates did not evaluate the use of auction sites and instead made general statements about online shopping, which were not evaluative.

Question 3(c): many candidates could explain three factors which the designer would need to consider if designing for teenagers.

Assignment

Some candidates incorrectly interpreted the music festival brief, limiting this to clothing for a music festival and not to an item which included upcycled components.

The baby shower brief was generally used correctly.
Most candidates attempted all sections of the assignment.

Stage 1

Themes

Most candidates were able to identify the two key themes.

Investigations

Most candidates were able to carry out three investigations, although not all were clearly separated. Some candidates focused on only one key theme, for example the recycling theme was missed by candidates who focused entirely on the music festival, and similarly the embellished theme was omitted in relation to the baby shower.

Some candidate investigations consolidated previous findings rather than providing four new points of information. This does not move the development of the item forward and results in candidates having difficulty identifying and justifying sufficient design features. There was more evidence this year of candidates providing points of information for each investigation.

Candidates who have clearly decided upon their design solution prior to embarking on investigations tend to limit the number of marks they can access.

Design solution

Presentation of the design solution was generally well done. Many candidates identified features and were able to justify them based on findings from research. A few candidates used information that wasn't taken from their investigations or relied on personal opinion. Marks are only awarded for features and justification based on the findings of the investigations completed by the candidate in section 1.

A few candidates did not identify potential fabrics, but instead listed characteristics such as stretchy. Candidates were therefore unable to access marks for identifying the properties and characteristics of a potential fabric.

Testing

Most candidates carried out a suitable test and most drew valid points of information from this test. Sometimes the scale used by candidates limited the usefulness of the information obtained.

Evaluation

Some candidates were able to identify points to evaluate, however candidates tend to make statements rather than evaluations.

Practical activity

Visiting verifiers consistently remarked on the high quality of items being manufactured, with many centres making good use of the patterns published on the Understanding Standards website.

Most centres were marking to the national standard and correctly judging the mark to be awarded for each technique.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidate performance was generally poorer than in previous years, due to a lack of knowledge about regenerated fibres and knit fabrics. Whilst it is clear candidates possess relevant knowledge in some areas, they do not apply this knowledge to the context of the question. For example, it was clear many candidates knew what a flat-felled seam was but not why it would be suitable for an inside seam on a child's garment.

In question 3 (c), it is not enough to state cost. As this is an explain question candidates need to provide sufficient evidence of why cost is relevant to teenagers and explain its significance. For example, cost will need to be considered, the designer could use cheaper fabrics to reduce costs as teenagers tend to not have much money and are unable to buy expensive items.

Centres should refer to the Summary of fibre properties document which is available on the National 5 Fashion and Textile Technology subject page. They should encourage candidates to distinguish between fibres using the four-point scale — excellent, good, fair or poor.

Centres should ensure candidates understand the difference between a fibre and a fabric and how each behaves.

Centres should encourage candidates to refer to the item stated in the question rather than use generic terms such as item, clothes, or garment, as this prevents candidates from linking back to the context of the question effectively.

Assignment

Centres are reminded that the briefs are published in September each year on the Fashion and Textiles Technology subject page and are the same for both National 5 and Higher. These could be adapted for National 4 combined unit assessment if centres have a tri-level class.

Centres must ensure they download the correct version of the candidate workbook each year to ensure candidates are not disadvantaged.

Stage 1

Themes

Most candidates correctly identified the two key themes. Centres should remind candidates that no explanation is required at National 5.

Investigations

Candidates should be reminded that both key elements of the brief must be investigated. This allows candidates to access the full range of marks available in the justification and evaluation stages.

Investigations which rely on colour as a key feature should provide evidence in colour as black and white images do not allow for clear visualisation when marking.

Centres should ensure that all three investigations are clearly separated and that points of information to be taken forward are clearly identified at the end of each investigation. Each investigation should provide four new points of information or narrow a range of choices down rather than consolidating previous points, for example the expert interviewee may be asked which of the two preferred fabrics (cotton or polyester) is more suitable and to give reasons as to why it is more suitable to narrow choice.

Centres should encourage candidates not to decide what they are developing too early on and to investigate a wide range of items. Candidates who do not provide a wide range of examples limit their ability to draw valid conclusions. Some candidates investigated only four or five items which made it difficult to identify common features or colours.

Centres are reminded that good practice would be to ensure that one investigation includes research into the properties and characteristics of fibres and construction techniques appropriate to their solution. This allows candidates to access marks for justification of properties and characteristic and construction techniques in section 2.

Centres should avoid teaching the use of formulaic answers for the points of information. For example, I found xxxxx, therefore I will consider this in my next investigation, or I will include this in my design solution. This results in candidate failing to make it clear how they are moving the finding forward and developing the solution.

Design solution

Justifications must be based on the findings contained in the investigations completed by the candidate in section 1. The properties and characteristics must be linked to a particular fabric which has been identified from the investigations.

Testing

Most candidates carried out a suitable test, but some failed to draw valid points of information from the test instead they just rewrote the results. Candidates should be taught not to rewrite results but to come to some conclusion about them.

Candidates must provide a suitable key when presenting test results to allow for valid judgements to be made. Asking additional questions often provides candidates with additional information which enables them to make evaluative statements.

Evaluation

Centres are reminded that an evaluation must include a fact, a judgement, and an impact. The fact should come from the testing carried out in section 3 rather than the investigations carried out in section 1.

Practical activity

A few centres were praised for their excellent use of photographs (taken by candidates), which provided a good record of progress throughout the manufacture of the item. This helps

inform verification, allowing clarification of any techniques which can't be seen once the item is complete.

Marks should be shown in the marking grid for all eight techniques, with the highest tariff technique being shown first and subsequent techniques being listed in descending order.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate techniques which exceed the maximum marks available but cannot be awarded more than 28 marks for National 5.

Centres are encouraged to allow personalisation and choice, even if candidates are manufacturing the same items.

Appendix 1: 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](#).