



Course report 2023

National 5 Health and Food 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: 1,807

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 1,652

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	477	Percentage	28.9	Cumulative percentage	28.9	Minimum mark required	70
B	Number of candidates	422	Percentage	25.5	Cumulative percentage	54.4	Minimum mark required	59
C	Number of candidates	383	Percentage	23.2	Cumulative percentage	77.6	Minimum mark required	48
D	Number of candidates	225	Percentage	13.6	Cumulative percentage	91.2	Minimum mark required	37
No award	Number of candidates	145	Percentage	8.8	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

The course assessment, again with modifications, was accessible to most candidates. Some candidates still chose to complete the whole question paper; however, this was a significantly lower number than in 2022.

Question paper

The question paper mostly performed as expected, however some of the more accessible questions did not work as intended and had a slightly higher level of demand. This was taken into consideration when setting the grade boundaries.

Candidates had the opportunity to display a range of skills, and to show and apply their knowledge and understanding of course content. Markers commented that most candidates made a good attempt at answering the questions and that the depth of responses improved from last year.

Some candidate responses to 'explain' and 'evaluate' questions lacked detail.

Assignment

Both briefs gave candidates an opportunity to apply knowledge and skills from across the course, and both performed equally well.

'Develop a high energy snack for an athlete' was slightly more popular than 'Develop an international dish for a restaurant using organic ingredients'.

Candidate performance in the assignment improved from last session. Many candidates performed well in most sections.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1(a)

Most candidates could identify two ways to reduce the risk of dental cavities.

Question 1(b)

Most candidates stated the function and sources of vitamin A and a source for sodium; however, some struggled with the correct function of sodium.

Question 3(b)

Most candidates gave good reasons why a teenager may choose a vegetarian diet.

Question 3(d)

Most candidates could identify two pieces of current dietary advice and explain the importance of each to health. Some candidates did, however, give vague explanations for the importance of increasing fruit and vegetable intake.

Question 4(a)

Most candidates who attempted this question performed well, evaluating the meal kit delivery box thoroughly and relating it to the young couple.

Question 5(a)

Most candidates who attempted this question could describe at least two ways a Trading Standards Officer protects the consumer.

Question 6(b)

Most candidates who attempted this question achieved both marks for identifying the nutrients found in cheese.

Assignment

Section 1(a): exploring the brief

Most candidates identified the issues in the brief, and many went on to accurately explain why each key issue was important.

Section 1(b): carrying out research

Most candidates completed this section well. Most candidates used valid research techniques — questionnaire and internet research were most popular. Many candidates who carried out a questionnaire did so accurately and accessed all available marks.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 1(c)

Candidates described what UHT products are, but many did not describe benefits for the elderly.

Question 1(d)

Many candidates did not fully explain their answer, gave a vague answer, or did not relate their answer to the elderly.

Question 2(a)

Although many candidates performed well in this question, many did not achieve full marks because they did not relate their answer to the person or activity in the question. They used vague terms like 'she'.

Question 2(b)

Many candidates did not attempt this question, and a large number who did, seemed to misunderstand the term 'allotment' and gave several wrong answers or did not explain how it would affect food choice.

Question 3(a)

Many candidates did not explain the importance of each stage in the development process. Instead, they gave descriptions of what the term meant. Some candidates mixed up prototype production with first production run and many candidates struggled to explain the purpose of a marketing plan.

Question 4(b)

Many candidates did not fully explain their answer and gave only vague responses about the purpose of market research.

Question 4(d)

Many candidates gave the function of the nutrients but were vague when explaining why they are important to pregnant women.

Question 5(b)

Very few candidates could explain the effect of the given changes to ingredients on the finished biscuits. Answers were either very vague or were related, incorrectly, to health.

Question 6(c)

Most candidates did not correctly name a sensory test. Instead, they gave vague terms, such as 'taste test'. Some also incorrectly identified a star diagram as a type of sensory test (when this is a way of displaying results of a ratings test). However, many could explain at least one reason why this test would be carried out.

Assignment

Section 2(a): describing the product

Some candidates used imperial or other measurements instead of metric. Some candidates used incorrect terminology in relation to ingredients and could not access the available marks.

Many candidates made mistakes in the method, including:

- ◆ omitting ingredients
- ◆ adding different ingredients (possibly where they had changed an original recipe)
- ◆ not transferring measurements accurately
- ◆ including an instruction to carry out a process twice

Candidates should check the recipe carefully before moving on.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessments

Question paper

Candidates should practise answering exam-type questions in the correct time allocation. This will help them structure their time and help them respond effectively to the question paper.

Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the command words used in the question paper and should support candidates with training in exam technique throughout the course.

Teachers and lecturers should highlight the difference in depth required between 'describe' and 'explain' questions and give candidates opportunities to practise answering both types of question. Many candidates were disadvantaged this year as they did not fully explain their answers. Evaluation answers should include a judgement and an impact relating to the detail in the question.

Centres should encourage candidates to take time to read each question carefully, so they do not miss important information. Candidates should be aware that some questions may revisit a context introduced in a previous question.

Centres should use the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification to ensure that candidates cover all areas of course content.

In this year's question paper, candidates struggled to give detailed answers about food product development, particularly the functional properties of food and the specific stages in the product development process.

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to write as clearly as possible so that markers can read their handwriting.

Assignment

Centres should check carefully that they are using the most up-to-date candidate workbook and candidate instructions at the correct level. This year, some candidates missed out on available marks because they used out-of-date, incomplete, or incorrect instructions or workbooks.

Centres should ensure that they present all sheets belonging to candidates for marking. This year, markers noticed a significant number of assignments with pages missing. Numbering sheets and performing a final check with the candidate before signing the flyleaf can prevent this.

Centres should check that all information and diagrams are easy to read. Centres should print diagrams or pie charts that rely on a colour key to display information in colour to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged.

Candidates should avoid formatting paragraphs of word-processed text with bold colours or highlighting as it can be difficult for markers to read in the printed version. It may also make it more difficult for candidates to spot mistakes when reading over their final printed drafts.

Centres should ensure that candidates pick one brief and stick to it throughout the assignment.

At National 5, each investigation should have **one** valid source — more than one source is acceptable, but not essential. Candidates do not need to have aims for each investigation, although it is good practice.

Candidates should ensure that they cite internet sources clearly. They should include a valid address (URL) for the web page. After copying a URL from the address bar of a web browser and pasting into a document, candidates should label the URL with '(hyperlink)' so that markers can easily identify all internet sources.

Candidates should complete investigations independently of each other even if they are using the same source. For example, if several candidates are conducting interviews, they should use different questions and draw individual conclusions.

Candidates should ensure that they select and carefully summarise all relevant information, particularly if they are going to use it in their justifications. Some candidates have missed out on marks by using information that does not feature in their investigations.

Candidates should ensure that the expert they choose to interview has relevant knowledge and experience. If an expert's knowledge and experience is not immediately obvious, candidates should state this, for example they might interview a home economics teacher who has previous experience in industry or catering.

Candidates should include recipes with realistic proportions, metric measurements, and British ingredient terminology. This is important for a product development exercise because the recipe should be able to be reproduced numerous times with identical results.

Candidates should link each justification for ingredients or features to a different source of information included in their investigations. Candidates should not use the same source for more than one justification. Candidates should cover more than one key issue in this section.

Candidates should not use a key issue as a feature for the justification section.

Candidates should be aware that a star diagram is a method of displaying the results of sensory testing (usually a rating or profile test) and is not the name of the actual test.

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](#).