



Course report 2024

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 with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2024 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 349

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 296

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	52	Percentage	17.6	Cumulative percentage	17.6	Minimum mark required	70
B	Number of candidates	92	Percentage	31.1	Cumulative percentage	48.6	Minimum mark required	60
C	Number of candidates	100	Percentage	33.8	Cumulative percentage	82.4	Minimum mark required	50
D	Number of candidates	38	Percentage	12.8	Cumulative percentage	95.3	Minimum mark required	40
No award	Number of candidates	14	Percentage	4.7	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

We have not applied rounding 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 statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our 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. There was a good level of discrimination in all components.

Overall performance in the assignment and question paper was higher than last year, and the view was that candidate performance in both externally assessed components was generally stronger 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. This component had an effective level of discrimination and allowed all candidates to access a range of marks. The question paper course component performed as expected.

Most candidates were able to complete all four questions within the time allocated. It was commented by makers and noted statistically that some candidates provided poor responses or no response for questions 3(a), 4(a) and (b).

It was highlighted that many candidate responses demonstrate better subject knowledge than last session, however; some candidates are not meeting the necessary standards for their responses, and some are still not making reference to the person/item/activity within their answer. Candidates approach to answering questions can prevent them from accessing marks. It is essential that candidates make reference to the item/target group such as the jumpsuit/singer otherwise it is a generic response. This is clearly stipulated in the marking instructions within the additional guidance section.

It was highlighted again this session that when answering questions, a few candidates were not following the chronological order and were jumping from one question to another. This prevented some candidates from referencing the person/item within their answer as their focus was not on the item within the question. Furthermore, some of the candidates who used an additional answer booklet did not write the question they were responding to.

It was noted that more candidates this session, struggled to answer describe questions correctly. They did not understand how to apply their knowledge to the format of the answer. Explain and evaluative responses were written to a better standard this year and were generally well laid out.

Assignment

The assignment performed as expected. Many assignments met the assessment requirements for this level. It was evident that candidates had a better understanding of the assignment process.

The 1960's/teenager brief was selected by most candidates. Fewer candidates selected the Scottish Product/Child brief for their assignment task.

Feedback from the marking team and statistical analysis show performance was stronger this year.

Many candidates written responses were more detailed and information gained from investigations was used correctly.

Markers commented that candidates were using their findings from the investigations more effectively to create their design solution.

Some candidate's responses were not progressive and did not use the data gathered correctly 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. There was a good degree of personalisation and choice shown, including centres where candidates all manufactured the same item.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1(a): Many candidates were awarded marks for their responses because they provided three key features from the images, applied an identified feature to an appropriate textile item (which could be visualised), linked it back to the images and an impact was provided.

Most candidates identified three key features from the images. These were overwhelmingly colour, shape and texture. Few candidates identified theme or winter as a key feature.

When candidates selected texture and shape (key features) to provide a discussion point, most met the standard and were awarded marks. In general, candidates were able to provide a better link to fabric, embellishments, construction techniques when discussing texture or shape in comparison to colour.

Question 1(b): Many candidates were able to provide accurate responses linked to sustainability and explain the impact, referring to the designer, fashion brand and winter collection in their answer.

Question 1(c): Many candidates provided accurate evaluations on an influencer promoting the collection. Most candidate responses referred to the influencer and collection.

Question 3(b): Many candidates correctly evaluated the suitability of bespoke production for the toddler's backpack. Most candidate responses referred to bespoke, backpack and toddler within their response.

Question 3(c): Most candidates correctly identified and explained two principles of design in relation to the collection, backpack and toddler. Candidate responses demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of this aspect of the course and applied it correctly to the backpack, collection and toddler.

Candidates who made the link clear between the item, person and activity within their responses were able to access the full range of available marks.

Assignment

Stage 1 — Design

Most candidates correctly identified the two key themes and provided a detailed explanation of their relevance for the assignment. Most candidates gained full marks for this area.

Stage 1 — Research

Many candidates carried out investigations to a good standard. Most candidates completed their research, using a variety of techniques (three different ones) to gain information to assist them in deriving a suitable solution.

The research conducted by many candidates was easy to interpret, concise and factual, and contained an appropriate source.

Many 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. This demonstrates a high level of planning by the candidate and more thought regarding their next steps within stage 1 of the assignment.

Stage 1 — Solution

There was an increased standard within this section of the assignment this year. Many candidates used their investigations to better effect. 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.

The presentation of the solution (design illustrations) was of a better quality with more information provided. This allowed for the design to be clearly visualised, and many could be manufactured using the solution page as guidance.

Stage 2 — Testing

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

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): Markers commented that in general, candidate responses for this question had improved. However, some candidate's responses were very vague, lacked detail and were not making any link or reference to the winter collection.

Many candidates referred to colour (key feature) within their responses, however, within their discussion point their impact was linked to texture rather than colour. For example, a common response was 'The colour red from the berries could inspire the designer to make a red woollen jumper. The woollen jumper will be warm so this will ensure that the person is kept cosy in the winter when wearing it'. Candidates provided an impact of the wool rather than the red colour.

Many candidates identified footwear and jewellery as being part of the collection. Candidates should identify a textile item that they will discuss in their response.

Some candidates provided discussion points that were basic and simply stated a design feature which was applied to an item, for example, the curve line of the fairy lights could inspire the designer to create a top with a Peter Pan collar for the winter collection.

Candidates were not able to discuss the impact of the design feature in any detail or expand their response and therefore were not awarded marks. Due to this some candidates were not awarded marks.

Some responses were repetitive, and a few candidates did not make reference to the spring collection in their answer.

Question 2: Some candidates did not perform well in this question compared to previous years.

Many candidates correctly identified the properties of cotton and applied their knowledge and understanding to the context of the question (singer and performing). However, some candidates then provided a response on the properties of elastane but did not consider the 5% fibre quantity. For example, '...elastane has very good crease resistance therefore the jumpsuit will not crease'. They therefore did not demonstrate an understanding of the blend (95% cotton 5% elastane) and contradicted their analysis on cotton.

Some candidates did not distinguish whether the property and characteristic of the fibre analysed was excellent, good, fair or poor. They simply stated it was absorbent and strong. As the fibre was a blend, it was essential that candidates identify the fibre they were providing a response for. A few candidates did not identify the fibre and could not be awarded a mark.

Many candidates did not correctly identify the type of zip, pockets or sleeve. They simply stated the construction technique. To be awarded the mark, candidates were required to identify the type of zip, sleeve, collar or pocket.

Question 3(a): Most candidates did not perform well in this question. Most candidates attempted the question; however, the responses were not descriptions of the suitable methods of surface decorations. Most candidates identified a surface decoration and provided an impact.

Question 4(a): Most candidates could not identify the correct stages in the development process. Many candidates were awarded marks for their explanation of the process as it was clear which stage they were discussing.

Question 4(b): Most candidates attempted this question, however many demonstrated poor knowledge and understanding of bonded fabrics which was evident in their responses.

A few candidates did not make reference to the wetsuit. They gave predominantly generic responses linked to bonded fabrics. Candidates should have made reference to the wetsuit within their answer to be awarded marks.

Question 4(c): Most candidates attempted to describe three benefits of care labels to the consumer, however many responses were repetitive or general advice on care labels and were not linked to a wetsuit.

Assignment

Stage 1 — Research

It was noted this session that some candidates were providing too much detail for their investigations. Some candidate's investigations were in excess of 8 pages and had at least 10 to 15 summary points (for each investigation). This detail is not required and is not a concise approach to presenting their investigation.

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

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 used this word too often and it did not reflect the data within their investigations. Candidates should consider the wording within their summary point to ensure it is reflecting accurate information. Furthermore, there was an increase this year in candidates quantifying their findings in their summary points. For example, 8/12 images show dresses. Candidates need to be careful and ensuring that the data is accurate as some candidates gave inaccurate information which invalidated the summary point.

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

Some candidates are not using their investigation progressively. This was apparent at investigation 3 where 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.

Most candidates used a textile expert as their source for the interview. The textile expert was at times not providing enough information for the candidate to extract vital information to use in stage 2. This was generally for the properties/characteristics of the chosen textile. A few textile experts did not give any information on the properties/characteristics of the textile therefore information in the next stage was entirely the candidates own opinion and not derived from evidence.

In addition, candidates continue to ask questions which are not valid for the expert to answer. These are questions linked to fashion trends/colours and are not appropriate questions to ask a textile expert/teacher as this is not their expertise.

Stage 1 — Solution

Only a few design illustrations were lacking in detail this session. Information that was omitted was: chosen fabric, hems, seams, type of fastening and specific design features.

Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail within their justifications linked to the design features, properties/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.

Stage 2 — Evaluations

It was highlighted that some candidate evaluations were not meeting the standard and lacked detail and depth. These candidates did not provide a suitable consequence, or they gave the same consequence in all of their evaluative responses.

Stage 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. Centres and candidates can access [past papers and marking instructions](#) on SQA's website.

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

Discuss (question 1a) was answered better this session however many candidates did not provide an impact in their answer and were very vague. Candidates should be given more opportunities to practise this type of question.

It was noted this session that many candidates referred to footwear as an item to be included in the winter collection and a few candidates referred to jewellery. Centres should advise candidates that when selecting an item for their responses in question 1(a), that it should be a textile item, for example, a dress, skirt, coat, shirt. These items will allow the candidate to discuss design features, embellishments, fabrics, silhouettes and fastenings that could be applied to the item.

Exposing candidates to a diverse range of imagery linked to question 1 would be beneficial for all candidates. Supporting candidates by teaching 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.

Understanding Standards materials containing candidate responses and commentaries are available on [SQA's Understanding Standards website](#) which will support centres and candidates in having a clear understanding of the national standards required at Higher level. These resources contain candidate responses and commentaries for the question paper. Centres can use these to help teachers and candidates 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 question 1(a).

Centres should refer to the Summary of fibre properties document which is available on the [Higher Fashion and Textile Technology subject page](#). This has been devised to ensure there is a consistent approach to the teaching of properties and characteristics of the main fibres outlined in course specification. This grid should be used as a teaching and revision resource for candidates. Candidates should use the rating terms; excellent, good, fair and poor when analysing question 2 or evaluating a fibre's properties and characteristic. Candidates must demonstrate some differentiation of a fibre's property and characteristic. For example, candidates cannot simply state that a fibre is strong, durable or absorbent. At Higher level, candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding of the fibre by stating that it has excellent, good, fair or poor strength, durability or absorbency.

Centres should continue to reinforce the importance of referring to the person, activity, item within responses. Many of the candidate's responses this year used this in their answers which was an improvement from previous years. A few candidates' responses this year did not meet the standard due to their generic content and not referring specifically to the person, activity, item.

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 refer to the person, activity and item. This is essential to allow them to be awarded the maximum number of marks. If no reference is made to the person, activity and item, scenario (influencer, jumpsuit, toddler for example) then the answer is generic.

Candidates should be aware of the course content for the subject. This information is outlined in the course specification on the [Higher Fashion and Textile Technology subject page](#) and highlights the main areas of study in preparation for the examination.

Assignment

Investigations

Some candidates continue to not provide an explanation of the purpose of the investigation. They are writing a statement or aim rather than considering the outcome and overall impact that their investigation will have.

All investigations should have at least four points of summary or conclusion that show progression. As previously mentioned, candidates should be advised by centres not to have investigations that are extensive and have an excessive number of summary points. This level of detail can detract from their purpose of the investigation. Good practice would be an investigation that does not exceed 4-5 pages and may have 5-6 summary points. This demonstrates the candidate's ability to select appropriate information, present it in a concise manner and highlight evidence that will assist them in creating a suitable solution.

Some candidates continue to 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 justifying their chosen textile's properties or characteristics and the construction techniques that they will use to manufacture their design solution.

A few candidates are continuing to ask the textile expert questions related to trends or colours which are not valid as the expert is linked to fabric and construction techniques. In addition, candidates are also asking the expert questions about what type of fabric they

should use or where a design feature should be incorporated. At this level, candidates are expected to be asking the expert if a fabric or construction technique is suitable.

The time and effort that some candidates gave to their investigations must have been very time consuming and may have been a demotivating factor in the completion of their work. Candidates should be taught to be more concise when presenting their investigations.

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 — approximately 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
- ◆ Mood board — minimum three different sources, clearly identifying each with the relevant URL or sources, if using magazines (this should be either on the back of the mood board, under the images or on a supplementary sheet)
- ◆ Exhibition visit or museum — name of exhibition or museum clearly identified

Solutions

Candidates can use a number of techniques to present their solutions, the 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 and construction techniques. 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 or 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 or 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 or characteristics of the textile chosen, and the construction techniques selected as this was not completed well this session. Many candidates continue to provide statements as opposed to explanations.

Testing

When completing the table outlining information for the test, the candidates must ensure they refer to the target group and provide detail on the source. Many candidates referred to the 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 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. Many candidates this year did not perform well in this area. Candidates were not using their data correctly and were making changes to an item if one tester had stated they didn't like a particular aspect of the solution. This contradicted the data obtained in the test and their evaluations.

Practical activity

Centres are reminded that the eight highest tariff techniques should be marked, even if this exceeds 30 marks, although candidates can only be awarded a maximum of 30. Centres should also use the [Construction Technique guidance document](#) on the Understanding Standards website to determine a techniques mark.

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.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

During the pandemic, we modified National Qualifications course assessments, for example we removed elements of coursework. We kept these modifications in place until the 2022–23 session. The education community agreed that retaining the modifications for longer than this could have a detrimental impact on learning and progression to the next stage of education, employment or training. After discussions with candidates, teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and others, we returned to full course assessment for the 2023–24 session.

SQA's approach to awarding was announced in [March 2024](#) and explained that any impact on candidates completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, would be considered in our grading decisions and incorporated into our well-established

grading processes. This provides fairness and safeguards for candidates and helps to provide assurances across the wider education community as we return to established awarding.

Our approach to awarding is broadly aligned to other nations of the UK that have returned to normal grading arrangements.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [National Qualifications 2024 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).