



Course report 2025

Advanced Higher 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 with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 44

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 37

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	5	13.5	13.5	77
B	13	35.1	48.6	66
C	6	16.2	64.9	55
D	5	13.5	78.4	44
No award	8	21.6	100%	Not applicable

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 or equal to 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

Question paper

The question paper sampled content from a broad range of knowledge and understanding topics drawn from the mandatory skills, knowledge, and understanding in the course specification.

Feedback from the marking team indicates the paper was fair in terms of its overall level of demand and coverage of the course. Candidates were able to complete the paper within the allocated time.

Project

Many candidates selected engaging and informative topics, clearly demonstrating their enthusiasm and interest.

The vast majority of candidates included a well-defined research question supported by two valid objectives, which helped to focus their investigations effectively. As in previous years, candidates once again focused on collecting data through questionnaires targeting appropriate groups, alongside interviews with specialists in the chosen research areas. These approaches enabled candidates to gather qualitative and quantitative data.

Some candidates did not adhere to the maximum word count of 4,400 words. Those candidates received a six-mark penalty.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1(a)

Many candidates answered this question well and were able to apply the answering technique required for discuss questions. Many candidates had good knowledge of current dietary advice and were able to give an accurate piece of advice and relate it correctly to either food manufacturers or supermarkets.

Question 1(b)

Many candidates responded well to this question, demonstrating a solid understanding of the health impacts associated with a diet high in fat, sugar, and salt. They effectively applied evaluative skills and made clear, relevant links to adult health. Some candidates achieved developed marks by demonstrating a strong depth of knowledge in their responses.

Question 3

Candidates demonstrated a strong understanding of food additives and their role in the food manufacturing process, with many candidates providing clear and relevant examples to illustrate their use.

Project

Candidates performed in line with expectations, achieving a broad range of marks.

Stage 1(a)

Many candidates performed strongly in this section, producing clear, concise, and well-focused literature reviews aligned with their chosen topics. These were effectively supported by relevant, up-to-date sources, which were accurately cited throughout.

Stage 1(b)

Nearly all candidates provided a research question that was both relevant and closely linked with the topic of their literature review. This was supported by two valid objectives, allowing them to maintain a clear focus throughout their research. Once again, a range of excellent and original research questions were provided as the focus of the research.

Stage 1(c)

All candidates gained some marks by presenting a clear and concise outline of their intended research approach, supported by well-reasoned explanations.

Stage 2(a)

This section was completed to a high standard. Candidates successfully gained marks by conducting their research using the methods and sources detailed in their plans. As in previous years, many candidates opted for interviews and questionnaires as their research methods. Overall, the results were presented in a clear and concise manner which made them easier to interpret.

Stage 2(b)

Candidates achieved marks in this section by presenting sufficient, relevant evidence to support their analysis. Candidates who carefully considered their research questions and ensured a clear link to their objectives were able to explore their topics in greater depth. As a result, they had more substantial information to analyse in stage 3.

Stage 3(a)

Candidates who performed well in this stage conducted high-quality research and demonstrated a clear ability to interpret their findings and their significance, effectively linking them to evidence from the literature review. It was evident that many candidates are now more able to carry out the skill of analysing in this section, by being able to link everything together.

Stage 3(b)

Many candidates achieved marks in this section by effectively evaluating the research process and clearly outlining appropriate next steps for further investigation.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 2

Some candidates achieved high marks by demonstrating a clear understanding of the 'analyse' question answering technique, however, many candidates continued to struggle with this type of question. Additionally, some candidates lacked a full understanding of socio-economic factors and failed to link their responses to consumer food choices, which limited their ability to access the available marks.

Question 4

Candidates generally demonstrated their evaluative skills to a high standard; however, many did not gain marks, due to limited understanding — particularly regarding genetically modified food and seasonality.

Project

Stage 3(a)

This remains the area in which candidates struggle to achieve the marks. In many cases, results were not fully analysed or clearly linked to findings from the research. Some candidates introduced new, unsupported information at this stage, while others simply repeated their results without adding further insight. At Advanced Higher level, greater depth is expected, as marks in this section are awarded specifically for demonstrating the skill of analysis.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidates should be made aware of the knowledge and understanding that may be assessed in this component of the course. This information is outlined in the 'skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification, available on [our website](#).

To improve performance, candidates would benefit from more practice in answering exam-style questions within the allocated time.

It is recommended that candidates and centres review marking instructions from past question papers, as these include helpful model answers and guidance, particularly in relation to the different command words.

Candidates should have a clear understanding of how to interpret and apply each command word when responding to exam questions and ensure their answers are directly linked to the question.

Project

Centres must follow the guidance provided on our website about submitting the project. There is also useful information on the [Understanding Standards website](#) that will help with project submission.

It is essential that candidates adhere to the word count, as exceeding the limit of 4400 words will result in a penalty. The word count must be clearly displayed on the flyleaf and on the project itself.

Project presentation varied across submissions. To ensure clarity and consistency, it is recommended that a line spacing of 1.5 and a minimum font size of 11pt be used throughout.

Several projects were submitted without bibliographies. These should be included as standard.

Results of research should be presented in the body of the project as any results which are presented in the appendix will not be awarded marks.

Some candidates included conclusions section 3, despite this no longer being a requirement.

Many candidates wrote in the first person throughout their project. Where possible, candidates should instead use objective phrasing, such as ‘the researcher found that...’.

Finally, candidates must ensure that they use up-to-date and credible sources, cited accurately and consistently across the project.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim 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, we hold 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 our 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. We 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.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).