



# **Course report 2025**

## **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. For information about the practical activity, which is internally assessed, please refer to the 2024–25 Qualification Verification Summary Report on the [subject page](#) of our website.

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: 296

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 344

## 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	61	17.7	17.7	70
B	105	30.5	48.3	60
C	113	32.8	81.1	50
D	49	14.2	95.3	40
No award	16	4.7	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**

The assessments performed as expected this year. 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.

### **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.

The question paper had a slight decrease in performance and markers noted that there was a lack of depth to candidates' responses, particularly with reference to analyse and explain questions.

The question paper was aligned to the subject course content and the key command words to provide a robust method of assessment.

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 1(c), 2 and 4(b).

It was highlighted that many of the 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 or item or activity within their answer. Candidates' approach to answering questions can prevent them from accessing marks. It is also essential that candidates refer to the item or target group such as the jacket or cheerleader or

party dress otherwise it is a generic response. This is clearly stipulated in the marking instructions in 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 a few candidates from referencing the person or item in 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 identify the question they were responding to.

It was noted that more candidates this session struggled to answer 'explain' questions correctly. Candidates struggled to apply their knowledge effectively within the structure of their responses, resulting in answers that did not meet the standard for Higher level. Many responses to 'explain' questions included a fact but the impact was omitted.

Evaluative responses were written to a better standard this year and were generally well laid out.

## **Assignment**

Overall, performance in the assignment had a slight increase. The view was that candidate performance in this externally assessed component was generally stronger this session.

## **Section 2: comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas that candidates performed well in**

#### **Question paper**

Question 1(a): most candidates were awarded 3 marks as they identified three key features from the images. These were overwhelmingly colour, shape and texture. Few candidates identified 'theme' as a key feature.

Some candidates applied an identified key feature to an appropriate fashion or textile item (which could be visualised), linked it back to the images and provided an impact.

When candidates selected texture and shape (key features) for a discussion point, many candidates were able to access a range of marks. Overall, they were generally more successful in linking these features to fabric, embellishments, construction techniques, or shape than they were when discussing colour.

Question 1(b): many candidates were able to provide accurate evaluative responses linked to the suitability of mass manufacture. Many candidates were able to provide accurate evaluative responses linked to the suitability of mass manufacture and made reference to the manufacturer or collection in their response.

Question 3(a): most candidates provided two past trends that linked accurately to the image of the party dress. Most candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge of eras and provided two past trends that linked accurately to the image of the party dress.

Question 4(a): many candidates correctly identified and explained two suitable surface decorations for the football top. Most candidate responses referred to the football top.

Question 4(c): most candidates correctly identified and explained two principles of design in relation to the football top. The responses demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of this aspect of the course content correctly applied to the football top.

In each of the questions above, candidates who clearly explained the link between the item or person or activity in their responses were more likely to access the full range of available marks.

## **Assignment**

### **Stage 1 — Design**

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

### **Stage 1 — Research**

Many candidates carried out investigations to a good standard. Most candidates completed their research and used three different methods to find information that helped them come up with a suitable solution.

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

Many of the investigations were progressive, allowing candidates to gather useful information and come up with a suitable 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 within their summary points. 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

The presentation of the solution (design illustrations) was of a higher standard this year with more information provided. This allowed for the design to be clearly visualised and many could be manufactured using the solution page as guidance. Many candidates were awarded high marks for this stage. It was noted that many of the design illustrations for the Met Gala were very creative.

The justification section was completed to a suitable standard this year. Some candidates had used their investigations effectively. There was evidence that the justification of the design features, properties and characteristics of the fabric, and construction techniques were carried over from the evidence generated in the investigations. Candidates were considering the activity and person and brief in their justification responses.

## Stage 2 — Testing

Most candidates carried out a suitable test that was clear and concise and gave them the key information needed to evaluate their work and make improvements. Most candidates gained full marks for this section.

## **Areas that candidates found demanding**

### **Question paper**

Question 1(a): markers commented on the noticeable improvement in many candidate responses. However, some candidates' responses were very vague, lacked detail and did not make any link or reference to the autumnal clothing collection.

Again, this year, many candidates referred to colour (key feature) in their responses; however, the impact in their discussion point was linked to texture rather than colour. For example, responses that mentioned using brown colours (based on colours from a building) as design inspiration for woollen items to keep the wearer warm in autumn would not achieve full marks because texture wasn't mentioned.



Some candidates provided discussion points which were basic and simply stated a design feature which was applied to an item. For example, '...the straight line of the bridge legs could inspire the designer to create a dress with a striped fabric for the autumnal collection'. These candidate responses were not awarded marks because they did not provide the impact on the design feature the candidate had identified.

Some responses were repetitive, and a few candidates did not refer to the autumnal clothing collection in their answer. Some candidates used the same impact for all their discussion points. This was generally linked to aesthetic appeal, and almost all candidates identified it as the key impact in their discussion points. A few candidates identified unsuitable fashion or textile items as inspiration for the autumnal collection, for example, cotton sundress and linen trousers. They had not considered the season in their responses.

Question 1(c): a few candidates did not attempt this question. Many candidates did not access full marks for this question as they were unable to explain concept screening within the product development process. Many candidates provided information on concept screening; however, they were unable to provide an impact of its importance when designing the collection.

A few candidates did not receive marks because their responses were not linked to the collection or designer.

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

Many candidates did not use the correct terminology or rating system from SQA's Summary of Fibre Properties grid. Candidates were not awarded marks for stating that wool was warm or durable or crease resistant. At Higher level, candidates must ensure they state the correct rating for the property, for example, wool has excellent warmth. The correct ratings to be used in responses are excellent, good, fair, and poor.

Some candidates focused on the ease of care properties of polyester, for example stating that a polyester lining allows the jacket to be washed easily. However, this showed a limited understanding of the garment as a whole because the outer layer,

made from 100% wool, is not easy to care for. In many cases, this contradicted their earlier analysis of wool's properties.

Many candidates did not correctly identify the type of pocket, collar, cuff, waistband and sleeve. They simply stated the construction technique, for example pocket rather than welted pocket. To be awarded a mark, candidates must identify the type of zip or sleeve or collar or pocket. This is clearly stipulated in the marking instructions.

There was an increase in the number of candidates who did not provide sufficient detail or specify the construction techniques. As a result, marks were not awarded for their responses. A few candidates did not reference the cheerleader or jacket in their response.

Question 3(a): most candidates did not gain full marks in this question.

Most candidates attempted the question and were awarded marks for their identification of past trends from the party dress design. However, many candidates performed poorly in the second half of the question because they did not explain how their identified trend had been used in the design. The responses to this question were vague and did not provide an impact. Some candidates did not provide an explanation.

Question 4(b): a few candidates did not attempt the question.

Most candidates attempted the question; however, many of them demonstrated poor knowledge and understanding of the fabric finishes in their responses. Candidates did not elaborate on the fabric finishes they identified or explain their purpose, for example a stain-resistant finish is a chemical treatment applied to fabric to cause liquids to bead on the surface rather than absorb into it.

Many candidates provided an impact for the football top wearer but did not provide factual information on the finish.

# Assignment

## Stage 1 — Research

It was noted again this session that some candidates were providing too much detail for their investigations. Some candidates' investigations were over six pages and had at least ten 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 a technique or source and explanation for the purpose of their investigations. They provided an aim or a vague explanation which did not detail the purpose and proposed impact of the investigation.

Some candidates continue to refer to the word 'popular' in their summary points when pulling findings from their investigation. This word can be misleading and is not used accurately when summarising a point of importance. Some candidates use this word too often and it does not reflect the data within their investigations. Candidates should consider the wording in their summary point to ensure it reflects accurate information. Furthermore, a few candidates quantified their findings in their summary points for example, 10/15 images show dresses in the colour black. Candidates need to be careful to ensure that the data is accurate as some candidates provided inaccurate information (incorrect numbers) rendering the summary point invalid.

Some candidates' summary points were statements or direct lifts of evidence and did not demonstrate their ability to discuss the importance of the point identified and how they intended to use it. These summary points were not linked.

Only a few candidates did not link their investigations. This was apparent when reading the summary points of investigation 3 where a few candidates stated, 'I would consider...'. At this stage, the candidate should have identified their design features, construction techniques and fabric choice. In addition, a few candidates still asked the textile expert questions about which fabric, design features and fastenings they should use in their solution. At Higher level, candidates should have identified these and made decisions based on their evidence from investigation one and two.

Most candidates used a textile expert as their source for the interview. At times, the textile expert did not provide enough information for the candidate to extract vital information to use in section 2. The expert's feedback was generally on the properties and characteristics of the chosen textile. A few textile experts did not give any information on the properties and characteristics of the textile, so information in the next section was entirely the candidate's own opinion and not derived from evidence.

In addition, candidates also asked questions that fell outside the expert's area of knowledge or expertise. These are questions linked to fashion trends or colours and are not appropriate questions to ask a textile expert or teacher as this is not their expertise.

#### Stage 1 — Solution

Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail in their justifications linked to the design features, properties and characteristics of their chosen fabric, and the construction techniques to be used. The justifications were predominantly statements of information lifted directly from investigations and did not demonstrate the candidates' higher order thinking skills.

Some candidates did not link the justification to their solution (Met Gala outfit or child's educational toy). Those responses lacked depth and did not provide any impact or connection to the design brief.

#### Stage 2 — Evaluations

It was noted that some candidate evaluations did not meet the expected level and lacked detail and depth. Some evaluations also did not provide a consequence or the consequence was repeated in all evaluative responses given.

Some candidates used the same statement for their consequence, for example, 'the evidence from the test means I have been successful in meeting the design brief'. This is not the standard expected at Higher level.

#### Stage 2 — Amending the solution

Some candidates did not have evidence to justify the amendment to the solution. Instead, they provided changes based on their personal opinion and therefore were not awarded a mark.

## Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

New Understanding Standards materials containing candidate responses and commentaries specifically for question 1(a) are available on SQA's [Understanding Standards website](#). These will support centres and candidates to gain a clear understanding of the national standards required at Higher. Centres can use these to help teachers and candidates understand how the question paper is marked, and the level of response required.

### Question paper

To ensure that candidates are prepared and meet the standard for the question paper, centres should ensure that candidates are frequently given the opportunity to experience exam-style questions. This will allow candidates to develop their answering technique and their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the course at the correct standard. Centres and candidates can access past papers and marking instructions on the [Fashion and Textile Technology subject page](#) of SQA's website.

Most candidates will benefit from this experience, and particular emphasis should be placed on the technique to answer each command word in Higher question papers (identify, explain, describe, analysis, discuss and evaluation). This specifically applies to the analyse and explain questions that were not answered particularly well this year.

'Discuss' (question 1a) was answered slightly better this year and most candidates identified three key features. However, many candidates did not provide an impact and/or were very vague. Candidates should be given the opportunity to have more practice answering this type of question.

Centres should advise candidates that when identifying an appropriate item for question 1(a) that it should be a textile item, for example a dress, skirt, coat or shirt. These items will allow the candidate to discuss design features, embellishments,

fabrics, silhouettes, and fastenings that could be applied to the item. Candidates should be deterred from using footwear or jewellery in their responses.

In addition, centres should encourage candidates to take into consideration the season outlined in question 1(a), if applicable, and identify suitable clothing.

Centres should make sure candidates are clear on the format of the answering technique for question 1(a). Candidates must identify a key feature (shape/colour/texture), apply it to a fashion or textile item (with detail so that it can be visualised, for example ‘...the arch shape from the bridge could inspire a circular shape full skirt...’) and provide an impact ‘... it will create shape at the hips and highlight the waist or create an interesting silhouette or create volume..’ which links back to the key feature.

Candidates would benefit from being exposed to a diverse range of imagery linked to question 1(a).

Centres should ensure that candidates are aware of the correct terminology of construction techniques. In question 2, candidates will be asked to identify construction techniques that are visible on the fashion item. This generally refers to sleeves, fastenings, pockets, waistbands, cuffs, collars and surface decoration.

Candidates are not required to analyse any construction techniques that are not visible, for example, seams or linings.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of a variety of construction techniques during both theoretical and practical lessons. SQA’s Textile Construction Techniques guidance, available on our [Understanding Standards website](#), can provide support to both candidates and centres.

Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with SQA’s Summary of Fibre Properties grid. Candidates must use the rating outlined on the grid (excellent, good, fair and poor) when answering any question linked to fibre properties. This is a requirement at Higher level.

Centres must provide candidates with support with their exam technique. Practice in selecting appropriate questions, structuring responses and managing their time will help candidates respond effectively to the question paper and be fully prepared for the exam.

Some of SQA's [Understanding Standards resources](#) are specifically centred on question 1(a), to support understanding and assist teachers and lecturers in teaching to the necessary standard.

Candidates must demonstrate some differentiation of a fibre's property and characteristic. For example, candidates cannot simply state that a fibre is strong or durable or absorbent. At Higher level, candidates must demonstrate their understanding of the fibre by stating that it has excellent, good, fair or poor strength or durability or absorbency.

Centres should continue to reinforce the importance of candidates referring to the person or activity or item in their responses instead of giving generic responses.

Candidates should be encouraged to read and use the scenario information from each question. This will ensure they effectively relate their responses back to the context of the question and refer to the person or activity or item. This is essential for candidates to achieve full marks. If no reference is made to the person or item or scenario (for example, the designer, cheerleader, football top, party dress) the answer will be too generic.

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



## Assignment

### Investigations

Candidates may need to be reminded to make sure they provide an explanation of the purpose of the investigation. They need to consider the outcome and overall impact that their investigation will have, rather than simply writing a statement or aim.

All investigations should have at least four points of summary or conclusion that are linked. Candidates should be advised by centres not to create investigations that are extensive or have an excessive number of summary points. This level of detail can detract from their purpose of the investigation. Good practice would be for candidates to produce an investigation that does not exceed three to four pages and may have five to six 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.

Candidates must not 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 linked 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 in the solution section, it would be beneficial if one investigation is linked to the properties and/or characteristics of textiles or components and includes some reference to construction techniques to be used in their solution. This will assist candidates when they come to justify their chosen textile's properties and characteristics and the construction techniques they will use if the solution is manufactured.

Candidates should not ask the textile expert questions related to trends or colours because the expert is linked to fabric and construction techniques.

In addition, candidates should not ask the expert questions about what type of fabric they should use, where a design feature should be incorporated, the type of

fastening they should include etc. These are not Higher-level questions. At this level the candidate is expected to ask the expert if a fabric or construction technique is suitable.

If candidates interview a textile expert in their centre, the expert should ensure that they provide adequate detail in their answers. This will allow the candidate to have evidence that they can refer to in their justification section.

### **Recommendations for investigations**

- Interview — minimum of five questions, clearly stating the source or expert, consider the questions in relation to the 'expert', explanation of purpose of investigation, linked summary points, not statements of results.
- Questionnaire — approximately 20 respondents, clearly stating the target group, clear explanation of purpose of the investigation, linked summary points.
- Internet research — minimum three different sources, clearly identified with the relevant URL.
- Mood board — minimum three different sources, clearly identified with the relevant URL or sources if magazines (this should be either on the back of the mood board, under the images or on a supplementary sheet).
- Exhibition visit or museum visit — name of exhibition or museum clearly identified.

### **Solutions**

Candidates can use a number of techniques to present their solutions. Any format selected by the candidate must include detailed information on the solution. This could include design features, colours, textiles, components, construction techniques etc. 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 and 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 and 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 or textile item, properties and characteristics of the textile chosen, and the construction techniques selected. Candidates must provide explanations and not just statements.

It is vital that candidates consider the brief when writing their response and demonstrate their understanding of why their chosen design feature, fabric and construction techniques will be suitable for the item, occasion or target group.

### **Testing**

When completing the table outlining information for the test, candidates must ensure they refer to the target group and provide detail on the source. Many candidates are referring 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', 'as', 'and so' may be useful triggers for candidates to develop their responses into evaluative points.

Candidates should justify all amendments and adaptations that they highlight. These points should reflect evidence gathered in the test and should not be from their personal opinion.

# 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](#).