



Course report 2025

Higher Media

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: 1,597

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 1,595

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	346	21.7	21.7	66
B	381	23.9	45.6	57
C	397	24.9	70.5	48
D	294	18.4	88.9	39
No award	177	11.1	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 1: Analysis of media content

Question paper 1 performed as expected. Feedback from the marking team and teachers and lecturers indicated that the paper was positively received by centres and was fair and accessible for candidates. Most candidates completed the two required sections in the allocated time.

There was an even distribution of candidates choosing to respond to either question 1 or question 2 in section 1, with no clear preference for one question.

Almost all candidates attempted the film poster pairing in section 2 with very few candidates responding on the magazine covers or advertisements. From next session the film posters will be the only texts in this section.

Question paper 2: Role of media

This question paper largely performed as expected. Feedback from the marking team, teachers and lecturers indicated it was positively received by centres and was fair and accessible for candidates. Most candidates completed the paper in the allocated time.

Assignment

The assignment performed largely as expected.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Analysis of media content

In section 1, most candidates selected an appropriate question for the texts they had studied. In questions 1 and 2, candidates tended to perform better in part (a) of the task where they focused their discussion on just one key aspect. For question 1, successful candidates focused on specific examples of audience factors relevant to their chosen media content. For question 2, they analysed representations relevant to their chosen media content and focused on how these representations had been constructed, and why. In both cases, successful candidates discussed specific examples from media content in their analysis, demonstrating their understanding of the concepts through their discussion. In part (b), successful candidates selected specific examples of relevant key aspects from the media content they had studied which they analysed in relation to the concept already discussed in part (a).

For question 1, successful candidates discussed specific audience demographics and analysed either how that demographic was targeted by the media content or how the demographic might respond to the media content studied. A few successful candidates also analysed the preferred reading of a text. In all cases these candidates grounded their analysis in specific and detailed examples from the media content they had studied.

For questions 1 and 2, most high-scoring candidates selected two concepts relevant to the key aspects named in the (a) and (b) tasks to discuss in depth and detail, provided clear exemplification from media content to back up their points and commented on the examples given. In a few cases, candidates scored well by analysing just one concept in depth and detail which enabled them to get up to 8 out of 10 marks. For part (b), high-scoring candidates combined a detailed analysis of their chosen concepts with comment on the relationship between these concepts

and those discussed in part (a), analysing the relationship between content and context as relevant to the task.

Most successful candidates wrote on just one media text for section 1, and in almost all cases they wrote on moving image texts, either film or TV. Candidates had studied a wide range of texts including feature-length films, individual TV episodes or two or three episodes from a season of a TV series. Texts selected included fiction and non-fiction, although most candidates wrote on fiction texts for this paper.

Popular texts that did well this year included *The Last of Us*, *Thelma and Louise*, *Billy Elliot* and *Children of Men*.

In section 2, almost all candidates chose to write about the film posters. Successful candidates selected clear examples of how language codes had been used in one of the posters, analysing in detail how and why these codes had been used before moving on to compare this to the other poster. High-scoring candidates focused on specific examples, analysing them in depth and detail, discussing the creation of meaning and relating this to purpose, genre and/or audience. Most candidates identified similarities and/or differences between the posters. High-scoring candidates discussed these similarities and/or differences in depth and detail in at least one paragraph. The marking instructions only require a comparison of the posters to be discussed in detail once throughout the response, therefore candidates making developed comment on the similarities and/or differences in the posters in one paragraph were able to access the top mark band. Overall, the film posters were rich with lots available for analysis and they also provided candidates with a good range of differences and similarities to select for their analysis.

Question paper 2: Role of media

Most candidates responded appropriately to the task, making points about how media content they had studied could be said to have influenced attitudes and/or behaviour. The most successful candidates made points that either debated whether these influences were intentional or unintentional; or constructed a line of argument or opinion in response to the task looking at how a text or group of texts might have a range of different influences, both intentional and unintentional.

Some candidates produced high-quality, well-structured responses that showed a strong understanding of the task and of the media content they had studied. High-scoring candidates focused on a small number of texts (typically one to three) and discussed how these texts could be seen to influence attitudes and/or behaviour, showing a sophisticated understanding of how media texts do this. They then built on this by commenting on how specific examples could be seen to have an influence on audiences, to expand on the points made in their discussion.

Most candidates chose to focus on a range of moving image texts, with many candidates choosing two or three shorter texts such as adverts or music videos. Some candidates successfully focused on longer texts such as a feature film or feature-length documentary. This was a more common approach this year than previously. Popular texts that did well this year included music videos by artists such as Beyoncé, Taylor Swift and Childish Gambino; adverts for companies including Lynx, Dove and Mattel; and feature-length films such as Fahrenheit 11/9 and Barbie.

Assignment

Many candidates produced high-quality and well-structured assignments that indicated understanding of the task and familiarity with marking criteria. Candidates tended to perform well when they had written up their responses to section 1 at the same time as doing the required research and planning, before making their content. Candidates who performed well in section 2 showed clear understanding of the process of making media content, reflecting on what they had done and evaluating its effectiveness. Most candidates created moving image texts which work well, as this medium allows candidates to work with a wide range of codes to plan, implement and then evaluate their creative intentions.

Use of a clearly laid out and appropriately labelled structure for the response, using the task order in the coursework assessment task to organise the response, helped candidates to access the full range of marks, particularly in section 1. The use of subheadings, bullet points or clearly separated paragraphs, and page numbers was very helpful in supporting candidates in the construction of their responses.

Centres that set an appropriate brief, allowing candidates space for negotiating and making their own decisions while working within clearly set out parameters, such as a realistic film length of 1 to 2 minutes, a zero budget or using specific technology available to them, enabled candidates to access the full range of marks.

Many candidates performed well in section 1 when they clearly indicated the planning decisions they had made and justified these in terms of the requirements of tasks, relating their plans either to their research findings or to achieving their creative intentions.

In section 2, high-scoring candidates discussed what they'd done in detail and then elaborated on the intentions behind their actions, making detailed points of evaluation throughout their discussion. For section 2(a), successful candidates tended to explain specific tasks they'd carried out or issues they'd overcome, in terms of the institutional context or of the production role they were carrying out. They then reflected on how well they had done in this, evaluating either their part in the process or the outcome of their actions.

For section 2(b), many successful candidates selected a short segment of the text when dealing with a moving image text. They discussed how various codes such as camera, mise-en-scène, editing and sound had been used in that section, and then discussed how they had intended the codes to work together to create meaning or to have an impact on the audience. These candidates went on to evaluate the effectiveness of the segment of their film by making judgements about how well they had succeeded in achieving their desired meaning or impact. Some successful candidates repeated this approach, looking at five different segments of their moving image text. Other candidates did this for two to four paragraphs and then considered codes which ran throughout the film, such as representations or narrative conventions, to make their remaining points. In these cases, candidates discussed in detail how they constructed a representation or used a narrative convention before evaluating its effectiveness in terms of achieving their creative intentions.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Analysis of media content

For question 1, some candidates wrote about audience factors in too vague or generalised a way; or they tried to discuss a wide range of different audiences across their response, which didn't allow for the depth of analysis required by the task. Some candidates named a demographic but didn't fully decode that group in terms of needs, expectations or how they had been targeted, or how they might respond to the text being analysed. This had an impact on the marks they were able to access for both parts (a) and (b).

For question 2, some candidates seemed unsure how to effectively analyse representations, instead treating it as a form of symbolism (for example, 'this character represents...') rather than looking at how a representation had been constructed in the text. This led to a superficial analysis of the text and did not allow candidates to analyse the concept of representations in the depth required by this task. This also had an impact on their ability to access the full range of marks available for both parts (a) and (b).

For question 2(b) some candidates wrote about society factors that were not relevant to the media content they had studied, such as events that happened after the release date of a film so couldn't have influenced the content of the film, or historical events such as the slave trade which happened a long time before either the setting or making of a film like *Get Out* or *Us*, which means it is not a relevant factor to the society context of the film. This had an impact on the marks these candidates were able to access.

Across questions 1 and 2, a few candidates did not integrate their discussion of the concept sampled in part (a) in their discussion of the key aspects in part (b). This meant they were not able to achieve more than 4 marks for part (b).

Some candidates who chose to write on more than one text in either question 1 or question 2 found this approach challenging, and it led to a less coherent response than candidates who wrote on just one text. Where relevant, this was particularly the

case for part (b) in both questions. This was also the case with a few candidates who took a holistic approach to the task, writing an essay-style response which attempted to respond to parts (a) and (b) together. This approach tended not to work in the candidates' favour as it is challenging to cover both parts of the task in sufficient depth and detail and is not advised as an approach.

Many candidates took an approach to question 3 where they attempted to reference both posters in each paragraph they wrote. This typically took the form of making a point about one text, then linking this to a similar point about the other text. This approach resulted in candidates making a range of briefer points about both posters which did not achieve the depth required for a developed point of analysis. Although this approach meant the candidates did make links between the posters, they were not able to develop their analysis in sufficient depth which limited their ability to access the higher mark bands. For some of these candidates, the approach of referring to both texts in every paragraph also led to their points being too thin and therefore was explanation rather than analysis, which at times limited their mark to 4 out of 10. A few candidates used the list of key aspects in the question paper as subheadings for their response, which led to a narrow focus on that key aspect and did not allow for the depth of analysis required by the task. Some candidates attempted to analyse institutions by listing the stars of the films or extracting details such as the names of the production companies from the billing block, but as these are not rich examples, candidates were not able to do more than explain what these signified, meaning there was not the depth of analysis required by the task. A few candidates made a lengthy series of short points which were more like the bullet points typical of National 5 rather than the developed analysis required for Higher. This approach meant that what they said was brief and typically not more than identification with brief explanation at times.

Question paper 2: Role of media

A few candidates did not respond adequately to the concept sampled in the task (influencing behaviour and attitudes). Instead, they discussed the roles of the media in a more general way in relation to the media content they had studied. A few of these candidates appeared to be reproducing an essay they had previously learned,

discussing concepts that weren't sampled in the question paper, while others appeared to be sharing what they had learned in relation to all the possible concepts that could have been sampled, rather than writing a response to the task in the question paper. The marks for this paper are awarded for the candidate's ability to discuss the specific role of media sampled in the paper, in terms of the task set, and the ability to use specific examples of media content to back up these points. If a candidate is not discussing the role sampled in the paper or not discussing the role in the terms of the task, this significantly limits the range of marks available to them.

A few less successful candidates focused on the detail of specific examples of the media texts they had studied, giving lengthy descriptions of specific texts or analysing the codes used in these texts, but didn't use these examples to make points in response to the task. Others only made broad or sparse references to media texts alongside their discussion of the intentional or unintentional influences of media content, or the examples they gave lacked comment to show how they were related to the points being made.

A few candidates focused on a broad range of disparate texts (for example a feature-length documentary, a couple of adverts for very different products, and a music video). This led to a lack of coherence in their response, as they offered several points of information but did not constructing a line of argument or discussion about the way the different texts influenced audience attitudes or behaviour. Others who used a broad range of texts tried to cover too many different points in their response. This led to more superficial discussion and/or references which lacked the detail required. Some candidates discussed texts where social media was shown to have an influence on characters in the media text rather than on the audience. This approach could work if it was linked to a discussion of how seeing the impact on the characters might make audiences reflect on their own attitudes and/or behaviour around social media. However, discussing the influence on a character's attitude or behaviour is not appropriate to the task. This task requires candidates to consider the impact of media content on the audiences consuming that content.

Assignment

The brief set by the centre is a key part of this assessment task. Centres must give candidates a brief that gives clear parameters in which candidates are expected to work, while not being too restrictive. There were improvements on previous years in this area, but there were still a few cases where candidates found a brief too demanding or restrictive and this had a negative impact on their performance. For moving image texts, briefs that required candidates to make films longer than a maximum of 2 or 3 minutes led to candidates doing significantly more work than required for their film, often at the expense of the written response.

For print texts, briefs that allowed candidates to create content using the work of others (such as photos of celebrities taken by professionals which candidates then took credit for, discussing mise-en-scène, framing, lighting etc) penalised candidates as they couldn't gain credit for evaluating creative decisions that weren't their own. In other cases, the print texts created were too simplistic in their execution which led to candidates not having a sufficient range of codes to evaluate in section 2(b).

Candidates who wrote up their responses to section 1 after making their media content tended to make the connections between research and planning less clear. This made it harder for them to access marks as they had already carried out their ideas and were writing this at a point where they could no longer fully recall the justifications for their decisions. A few candidates were still using the 2019 structure for their assignment. This meant they were doing significantly more work than required, and also led to repetition of points which was self-penalising. By the later parts of section 1, some candidates began to repeat plans that had already been credited in 1(a) or 1(b) which meant they weren't able to access all the marks available as the credit is given for the justification of new plans in relation to the relevant part of the task. The use of this structure for section 1 also meant candidates were spending more time than required on this section at the expense of time spent on section 2, which was then short and didn't meet the standards required to access the higher mark bands.

For section 2(a), some candidates wrote an account of what they had done, similar to a production diary, or for 2(b) they wrote an analysis of their film. In both cases,

this was done without much reflection or evaluation of how well they had carried out the processes they were describing, and this made it harder for them to access the higher mark bands that require candidates to take an evaluative stance throughout their responses. For 2(a), some candidates spent time describing problems that had occurred, and described solutions they had found to these problems, but the lack of evaluation of the impact or success of these solutions meant they were not able to access the higher mark bands. For 2(b), some candidates described the codes they had used to achieve their creative intentions without evaluating how effective these were. Conversely, other candidates simply evaluated sections of their product without also discussing their creative intentions. In both cases this meant they were not able to access the higher mark bands as these require both discussion of the creative intentions and evaluation of how effective the implementation was.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Analysis of media content

For section 1 questions 1 and 2, teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to write separate responses for parts (a) and (b), as this helps candidates to focus on addressing what is required by each part of the task. Teachers and lecturers should also encourage candidates to focus on just two concepts from within the key aspect being sampled by the question, and to write on these in depth and detail. For part (b), teachers and lecturers should spend time looking at ways in which the different contexts and key aspects of content can be seen to integrate with each other, so that candidates are comfortable with analysing these connections in response to that part of the task in the question paper. Exemplification of this is available on the [Understanding Standards](#) website.

Teachers and lecturers should also ensure candidates are comfortable with their understanding of all the terminology that might arise in the question paper, and that candidates are familiar with applying these concepts correctly to the texts they have studied.

Currently most centres focus on feature-length films for this section, although there is a growing number of centres using TV — either single episodes or in some cases two or three episodes across a full season from a TV series. Both films and TV shows are appropriate for this paper, as moving image content offers candidates a wealth of material from which to draw exemplification. (The Higher Media course specification on [our website](#) has more detail on the types of texts that would be appropriate for the various sections of the course assessment.) Teachers and lecturers should spend time with candidates exploring how best to select and use evidence from the texts studied in their responses. They should also ensure candidates have a firm understanding of all seven key aspects that could be sampled in the question paper and should support candidates in developing their analysis skills in relation to these key aspects. This will enable candidates to use

specific and detailed evidence from the texts they study to give a meaningful response to the question paper tasks.

In preparation for question 3, teachers and lecturers should spend time analysing a diverse range of film poster pairings, covering different genres, eras, styles and so on. Teaching should focus on showing candidates how to analyse specific elements of the individual texts in some depth and detail, and also on how a point of comparison can be made in depth and detail (exemplification of this from the [Understanding Standards](#) website could be used to support teaching points). In teaching this element of the course, teachers and lecturers should place emphasis on depth of analysis of specific and detailed examples from a single poster, as well as discussing the posters as a pair, focusing on picking out similarities and differences between the texts to discuss in depth. Teachers and lecturers should emphasise that there is no requirement for candidates to make comparisons in every paragraph, as this can be counter-productive.

To prepare for this task, candidates could practise writing developed points of analysis of a specific combination of language codes selected from one of the texts and relate the use of language to other key aspects such as genre, purpose, representations, audience targeting, and so on. They could then make separate points where they either further develop this analysis in comparison to the other poster or select a new point of analysis for a developed comparison between the pair of posters. This comparison should be done as a separate point in a separate paragraph. Teachers and lecturers should discourage candidates from focusing on isolated codes and instead encourage them to look at how a range of the codes in one or both posters work together to create meaning. When comparing the posters, candidates should write in detail about the significance of the difference or similarity they have highlighted, focusing on the reasons for that difference or similarity. It may be helpful for candidates to think about how the example they are focusing on is designed to achieve the similar or different purposes of the posters, or how it may appeal to similar or different audiences.

Teachers and lecturers should discourage candidates from using the key aspects list in the question paper task as subheadings, and should emphasise that there is no requirement to cover all seven key aspects. For candidates to achieve full marks

there is only a requirement that they cover two of the key aspects. It would be counter-productive for candidates to try to cover all seven key aspects, as this is likely to lead to responses which don't go into sufficient depth and detail to access the full range of marks. The list is there as a reminder of what could be discussed and is only there for reference.

Question paper 2: Role of media

Candidates should respond to the specific task in the question paper. This is of key importance for the discussion element of the marking instructions. Teachers and lecturers should teach candidates to develop a line of argument or opinion, making detailed points of information to back up their argument, in a single essay-style response. Teachers and lecturers should also teach candidates to provide specific and detailed evidence from texts they have studied to back up points they make in response to the task, commenting on how this evidence backs up their points. Candidates should also spend time thinking about how to draw one or more conclusions in relation to the task and the evidence they have selected.

Candidates must understand the importance of responding to the question paper task and not using a pre-prepared essay, as marks are awarded for their ability to discuss the task in the paper.

Studying a variety of texts in class can allow candidates to select from a range of evidence and ensure they are able to respond to the specifics of the task set in the question paper. However, teachers and lecturers should remind candidates not to refer to too wide a range of texts in one essay as this could limit the depth of their discussion. Two or three shorter texts is sufficient to provide a wealth of evidence and discussion, or one longer text such as a feature-length film is also appropriate. The texts studied by candidates should provide them with a range of evidence which will allow them to construct a line of argument in relation to any of the three roles of media which could be sampled. Many successful candidates had studied a variety of shorter texts such as adverts or music videos which meant they were then able to select evidence that was relevant to the task in the question paper and could be used to exemplify the points they make in their argument. Other successful

candidates selected a range of evidence from one longer text, which is also an appropriate approach. When preparing for this paper, teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to reflect upon how the texts they have studied might fit into the three roles of media, and also encourage them to learn about the sub-concepts in each role. Teachers and lecturers should ensure that the text or range of texts studied in class will allow candidates to do this.

Time should also be spent in class thinking about how an argument might be constructed within and across the different roles of media. This should involve looking at how the texts might intentionally or unintentionally influence attitudes and/or behaviour, as sampled in this year's paper. Time should also be spent considering how the same texts might achieve the different purposes of profit, promotion and public service or how the texts studied might be seen to meet audience needs for information, education or entertainment. Teachers and lecturers should spend time getting candidates to consider more than one perspective for each of the roles of media that could be sampled in the question paper. This will encourage candidates to think about how they can construct an argument in response to the task in the question paper.

This year more candidates successfully discussed a single, longer text such as a feature film or feature-length documentary. Provided the text is rich enough to offer a range of evidence that can allow candidates to discuss any of the three roles of media and the sub-concepts in detail, this is also a valid approach. Similar to using a range of shorter texts, if candidates are working with a longer text, teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates are able to discuss how the text might fit into any of the three roles of media. They should spend time selecting appropriate evidence from across the text to support the different arguments that would be relevant for each of the roles of media that could be sampled.

Assignment

For the assignment, centres must set a suitable brief. The brief should provide candidates with some form of creative stimulus but should not restrict their ability to negotiate and/or make their own decisions. There is still evidence of some briefs

being too restrictive and not allowing candidates to have the necessary creative freedom to do well. Teachers and lecturers should carefully consider the impact that any restrictions imposed by the brief might have upon candidates' ability to complete all the tasks required of them in section 1. Teachers and lecturers should provide candidates with two or more possible stimuli to choose from and some room to negotiate things such as genre, target audience, purpose, and so on. It should also take into account the technology available to candidates in that centre, and any other institutional restrictions that may have an impact. The brief should give candidates some parameters to work within but not be too restrictive. This means candidates will be able to make plans which they can fully justify, allowing them to access the full range of marks available in section 1. There are sample briefs with commentaries available on the [Understanding Standards](#) website to help support teachers and lecturers in creating a brief appropriate to their context.

We highly recommend that the brief specifies that moving image texts are no longer than a maximum of 2 to 3 minutes, and that print texts should be part of a campaign of at least three posters or adverts. This encourages candidates to use a sufficient range of codes in their texts to allow developed discussion in their written response. We also recommend that candidates should be making media content similar to content they are studying in other areas of the course — for example, if they are studying film for the analysis paper they could make short films, or if they are analysing print ads for the role of the media paper or film posters for the unseen task in question paper 1, then the brief could be for a range of ads or film posters for a print advertising campaign.

Candidates can work as part of a group to produce their media content, but clear parameters in terms of individual roles and responsibilities should be set from the outset. All the written responses relating to planning, research and evaluation should relate to the work the individual candidate has carried out in relation to the areas of the group production they have taken responsibility for. They will not be able to gain credit for plans or evaluation of the contributions of others in their group.

For section 1, teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to complete the written response discussing their plans and justifications as they go along.

Candidates do not need to complete the tasks in the order given in the coursework

assessment task document, but it may be helpful to do so as centres should submit them to SQA in this order. Candidates should record their plans and decisions, along with their justifications for these, as they work their way through the planning phase. Candidates should complete their written responses for this section as they work through each stage of the process, and they should complete their full write up before they create their media content. This then gives them a logical progression into section 2 where they evaluate how effective their plans were when put into effect. Candidates should also redraft section 1 once it is complete, focusing on avoiding the repetition of plans and making sure each plan is clearly justified, to ensure they can access the full range of marks.

For section 2, candidates must discuss their creative intentions and the processes they implemented to achieve these intentions in detail, and they then must evaluate how effective or otherwise these were.

For task 2(a), candidates should focus on discussing in detail specific opportunities and constraints relating to the institutional context in which they were working, and specific tasks they carried out in their production roles. They should then evaluate how effectively they worked with these opportunities and/or constraints, and/or evaluate the impact of their actions, when carrying out their production roles in relation to the process and/or the finished content. It is the combination of detailed discussion of the development process, along with the evaluation of how effective any action they took was, that is being assessed.

For task 2(b), candidates should discuss, in depth and detail, specific examples of how they hoped to achieve their creative intentions for the finished piece of content. They should then evaluate, in detail, how effective the finished piece is in terms of their original intentions. In the discussion of their intentions, candidates should give details demonstrating how they have used a range of technical and cultural codes to create their intended meaning, and what impact they intended to have on the audience when using these codes. They should then evaluate how effectively they achieved these intentions in their finished product. Their intentions do not need to have been successfully implemented, and this can be discussed in their evaluation. It is the combination of detailed discussion of the meanings and/or impact the

candidates hoped to create, along with the evaluation of how effective this was in the finished content, that is assessed.

The use of the digital portal allowing centres to upload the candidates' products, both moving image and print texts, was very successful and we strongly recommend that centres continue to submit candidate work (the media product only) in this way.

When uploading the candidate's work, for moving image products a standard format that can be easily read by media players such as VLC or Quicktime should be used, and for print a PDF format should be used. A physical printout of print texts is also acceptable and can be submitted along with the written response. Some centres omitted to submit a copy of the brief with candidates' responses this year. Due to the change to the flyleaf, the brief must now be submitted as a separate printed document along with the candidates' written response.

It continues to be the case that storyboards, hand drawings or sketches are not suitable products for the Higher Media assignment. Candidates must submit a finished product along with their written responses.

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](#).