# Course report 2025

# National 5 Accounting

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:        755

Number of resulted entries in 2025:        933

## 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 | 508 | 54.4 | 54.4 | 127 |
| B | 172 | 18.4 | 72.9 | 109 |
| C | 114 | 12.2 | 85.1 | 91 |
| D | 61 | 6.5 | 91.6 | 73 |
| No award | 78 | 8.4 | 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 performed as expected. Feedback from markers and centres suggested that the paper offered the appropriate level of demand and allowed candidates to use the subject knowledge and skills they had developed throughout the course.

Performance in the question paper was lower than in session 2023–24, which was expected, as last year's paper was slightly less challenging (particularly for grade-A candidates).

'Backwards' ratios were assessed for the first time since 2014. This had been mentioned in the previous two course reports so teachers could prepare candidates accordingly. The candidates who attempted the question performed above expectations. However, there was a significantly higher than usual level of 'no responses', meaning candidates did not attempt the question. In some parts of the question, 'no response' rates were close to 30%. This indicates that some candidates were unprepared for questions of this nature and did not understand how to work a ratio back to its constituent parts.

Once again, candidate performance in theory questions was poor. Of the 12 theory marks in the paper, the average candidate score was below half the available marks.

## Assignment

This was the second year that the assignment component of the course had been assessed since it's reintroduction. Candidates answered the assignment well. This component was slightly less challenging than expected. The 2025 assignment performance was better than in 2024, mostly due to it having more accessible topics and a lack of theory.

Although most candidates used formulae well, many candidates were unable to access marks, as they inserted numbers instead of cell referencing. Similarly to

2024, truncation of formulae in 'formula view' printouts seemed to be less prevalent than in earlier assignments.

# Section 2: comments on candidate performance

## Question paper

There was disparity in the 35-mark questions, with question 2 (Cash Budgets) performing significantly better than question 1 (Ledgers and Correction of Errors). Of the four 15-mark questions, candidate performance was highest in question 3 (Income Statement) and question 5 (Trial Balance). Candidates answered both questions significantly better than question 4 (Ratios) and question 6 (Decision Making).

## Areas that candidates performed well in

Question 2(a): Many candidates attained high marks in the 32-mark Cash Budget question. This not only reflects good candidate performance, but also that markers applied full consequentiality to candidate responses.

Question 3: Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the layout and content of Income Statements, and fewer than usual including irrelevant Statement of Financial Position items.

Question 5(a): Most candidates were able to correctly classify entries as Dr/Cr to a high level.

## Areas that candidates found demanding

Question 1 Part A (a): Although there was no cash discount or bankruptcy included in the question, many candidates once more found Ledger Accounts very demanding. A common error made by a significant number of candidates was to open a Molly Chambers account. Any entries put into wrong accounts score 0 marks, therefore those candidates who used a Molly Chambers account for a number of transactions did not achieve those marks.

Question 1 Part B: The Correction of Errors question averaged around half marks, and, as in previous years, there appeared to be an element of guesswork in some candidate responses.

Question 4(b)(v): This was the lowest scoring computational question, with only 1 in 4 candidates gaining the 2-mark 'all or nothing' award. The majority of candidates either multiplied the Profit for the Year by 30% rather than dividing, or did not attempt the question at all.

# Assignment

## Areas that candidates performed well in

Task 1: Most candidates understood the layout and balance requirements of inventory control. However, most candidates are still not totalling the balance box when there are two more inventories at different values, which means they are not awarded a mark.

Task 2: Candidates performed very well in this question, with the most challenging element being the calculation of the baking department wages.

Task 3: This was the top-performing question in the assignment, with most candidates performing very well. Candidates appeared comfortable with apportioning and re-apportioning overheads in an assignment setting.

## Areas that candidates found demanding

Task 4: Some candidates struggled to bring though the correct figures calculated in Tasks 1 to 3. In particular with the materials, some candidates brought through 'amounts', rather than values.

Formulae: Across all four tasks, most of the marks not achieved by some candidates were due to their not using cell referencing. Every figure the candidate is required to

use for calculations is contained in the spreadsheet, so candidates had no need to key-in numbers into their formulae.

# Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Teachers and lecturers should share the advice in this report with candidates when they are preparing for assessment.

With regards to Ratio Analysis, after including it in this year's question paper, all teachers should now be aware that working ratios backwards is an assessable element at National 5 and should adapt teaching materials accordingly, if necessary.

For the assignment, despite last year's course report flagging that all data would be included in the spreadsheet file to aid cell referencing, candidates still did not attain a number of marks because they inserted numbers into their formulae. Teachers should ensure that candidates are aware of the importance of cell referencing.

# 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](#).