Course report 2025

National 5 Care

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:   155

Number of resulted entries in 2025:   54

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	12	22.2	22.2	84
B	12	22.2	44.4	72
C	12	22.2	66.7	60
D	9	16.7	83.3	48
No award	9	16.7	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

Question paper

The question paper was accessible and fair. It was apparent that candidates completed within the allocated time.

Questions differentiated appropriately and allowed A-grade candidates to develop their answer for full marks, and C-grade candidates to gain marks. Course content was sampled adequately.

The weighting for each section was: Values and Principles 20 marks, Social Influences 10 marks, and Human Development and Behaviour 10 marks.

There were examples of candidates who performed between A and D grades across all centres.

Project

Candidates were given a choice of three project briefs.

The project had examples of candidates who performed between A and D grades across all centres.

In section 2, candidate differentiation across all parts was evident. Candidates working at A grade were able to apply theories and the concepts described, to the brief and the individual. Candidates working at C grade were able to describe with little application to the chosen individual.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Many candidates did reasonably well. There were clear gaps in knowledge and understanding for some candidates, which adversely affected their overall grades. It was also evident that some candidates were not ready to be presented for the question paper component.

Question paper

Many candidates performed well in question 1, describing a life experience in older adulthood.

Many candidates also performed well in question 4, explaining why knowledge and understanding of psychology can help care workers in practice.

Many candidates offered good descriptions of the care planning process in questions 8 and 9.

Project

In section 1, the action plan was well executed overall. Many candidates gained high marks for evidence of 1(a), and most candidates gained high marks for 1(b) and (c). Most candidates scored highly in items 2(a), 2(f) and 3(a).

Candidates chose a diverse range of individuals and centres used innovative ways to engage candidates in selecting an individual in receipt of a care service.

Candidates detailed the tasks and timescales effectively and the majority of candidates referred to their individual in the sources of information section.

Most candidates submitted a log book with their project and these were used with varying degree of effectiveness. Some log books had one or two sentences and others had a weekly account of progress.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Some candidates did not perform well in questions 5(a), 5(b), and 6, as they gave no response to the questions.

Question 1 indicated that a few candidates lacked basic knowledge and understanding of stages of development. Examples of 'life experiences' they identified in older adulthood included, 'getting pregnant' and 'starting a family'. Most candidates did however give more appropriate examples, such as 'bereavement' or 'retirement'.

Project

As in previous years, candidates found item 2(e) to be the most demanding, followed by item 2(d).

C-grade candidates found the following sections demanding:

- 2(b): this section showed a mixed performance from candidates. The main issue was that candidates gave a detailed review of the psychological theory with little linking of the feature identified to explain aspects of development, and/or behaviour of the chosen individual.
- 2(c): some candidates described sociological influences rather than concepts. The area of linking the impact to the individual was applied by A and B-grade candidates but was a challenge for C-grade candidates.
- 2(e): some candidates were not clear about what features of the positive care environment are. This made it difficult for them to access the marks available to explain how these could meet the needs of the chosen individual. This information is available in the additional notes on judging evidence for this item.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidates need to be aware of how to respond to command words, for example describe, explain, identify.

Centres should ensure that candidates understand the care planning process, the different sectors of care, and the principles of the Health and Social Care Standards.

Concepts will include norms, values and roles; the process of socialisation; the influence of agents of socialisation or other relevant social influences including government; prejudice, stereotyping, labelling; discrimination; marginalisation, disempowerment and exclusion; power and conflict; and consensus and dysfunction. Centres should look at this aspect of the course, as similar questions will feature in future question papers.

Candidates are expected to display knowledge of key concepts of the four psychological approaches identified. Candidates are also expected to display knowledge of a range of sociological concepts. The key concepts are listed in the National 5 Care Course Specification on our website in the Stages of development section of 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment'.

Centres should make sure candidates are aware of positive care practice, positive care environments, and candidates should be able to offer knowledge and understanding of the Statutory, Private, and Voluntary Care Sectors.

Centres should direct candidates to the National 5 Care Course Specification on the subject page of our website.

Project

Centres should make sure candidates are aware that the word count is set at 2,500–3,500 excluding references, footnotes and appendices with a penalty applied if the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%.

In terms of the positive care environment, centres should ensure that candidates understand the four features: organisational aspects, physical aspects, therapeutic/interpersonal aspects, and community aspects, and that they are able to refer to them and the description of what each one refers to. This information is available in the additional notes on judging evidence section of the Detailed marking instructions.

Centres must remind candidates that it is mandatory to submit their log book with their project.

Centres should remind candidates to maintain the confidentiality of the individual, particularly if they choose clients they have worked with during their placement or friends or family.

If centres distribute a case study or refers to a DVD for candidates to select their chosen individual, it is important that teachers and lecturers check that it allows the candidates enough scope to develop the project fully and access marks.

Candidates should be made aware of the importance of putting information gained into their own words rather than copying directly from websites.

Centres should ensure that the current project guidelines are being followed by referring to the National 5 Care Coursework assessment task available on the subject page of our website.

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](#).