



Course report 2025

National 5 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: 1,528

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 1,539

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	485	31.5	31.5	84
B	396	25.7	57.2	72
C	341	22.2	79.4	60
D	169	11.0	90.4	48
No award	148	9.6	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 performed as expected. Feedback from markers and centres suggests that the question paper was fair with a good coverage of course content.

Candidates were able to access the full range of marks and there was good differentiation for A-C candidates.

Some candidates, however, still have difficulty distinguishing between describe and explain questions, with some answers lacking the detail required at this level.

Assignment

The assignment performed as expected.

The 'Develop a dessert using Fair Trade ingredients that is suitable for a café' brief was more popular than the other brief. Both briefs performed equally well.

Candidates were able to access the full range of marks, however, there were still some candidates who submitted assignments with missing pages.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1(a): most candidates could identify one food source for each nutrient.

Question 1(d): most candidates could identify both an advantage and a disadvantage of modified atmosphere packaging.

Question 1(e): most candidates could explain at least one way in which online shopping can help to reduce food waste.

Question 2(a): performance in this question continues to improve. Most candidates performed well, achieving three or more marks by successfully evaluating the suitability of the cyclist's typical meals, taking account of the dietary reference values for his age group.

Question 2(b): most candidates could identify two nutrients that help to reduce the risk of anaemia.

Question 3(c): most candidates could explain why the faults found by the Environmental Health Officer could cause food poisoning.

Question 3(d): most candidates could name at least one other organisation that protects the consumer.

Question 4(a): most candidates could explain the importance of prototype production in the development of a plant-based ready meal and gave detailed answers to this question. However, many candidates were unable to correctly explain first production run, often mixing this stage up with the product testing stage.

Question 4(c): most candidates correctly described the importance of both a use by date and cooking instructions on the label of a plant-based ready meal.

Question 5(a): most candidates could describe the benefits to a care home of using Ultra Heat Treated (UHT) products and achieved both marks.

Question 5(d): most candidates correctly identified foods that the elderly residents should eat less of to help reduce the risk of the stated dietary diseases.

Question 6(c): most candidates could name a source of each type of fat.

Question 6(d): most candidates could explain why a diet high in fat can increase the risk of obesity. There were some excellent, very detailed answers to this question.

Assignment

Section 1(a): exploring the brief

Most candidates correctly identified three key issues from the brief and could explain why each one was important. Only a few candidates identified 'develop' as a key issue.

Section 1(b)(iii): carrying out research

This section was completed well by most candidates. Most candidates used valid research techniques. The most common techniques used were questionnaire, interview with an expert, and internet research. Most candidates presented them logically and with detailed conclusions. Many candidates who chose to carry out a questionnaire did so accurately and were able to access all of the marks available.

Some candidates found it difficult to carry out internet research that was relevant to the brief and therefore did not produce conclusions that could be taken forward towards developing a product.

Section 3: sensory testing

This section was completed well by most candidates with most candidates carrying out a rating test and making at least three accurate conclusions from the data

gained. However, a few candidates did not give any reasons as to why they chose to carry out this test and therefore were unable to access all available marks.

It should be noted that a few candidates did not give individual results or used percentages in their conclusions and therefore did not gain marks for this.

Section 4(iii): evaluation — improve or adapt the product

This section was completed well by most candidates. Most candidates gave valid improvements or variations which were carefully thought out and explained reasons for them in detail.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 1(c): many candidates did not explain the benefits of using organic produce in prepared fresh fruit bags. Instead, many candidates either described the meaning of organic but gave no benefits or did not relate their answer to the bags.

Question 3(a): some candidates did not evaluate the suitability of the picnic items in relation to dietary advice and instead gave a reason unrelated to dietary advice or suggested a change that could be made. A few candidates also gave incorrect figures when quoting Scottish Dietary Goals which meant they were unable to access the marks.

Question 3(b): many candidates did not evaluate the bottle's suitability for either the cafe or the picnic hampers, as required in the question. Instead, they explained why each aspect would be useful.

Question 4(b): most candidates correctly identified a rating test as a type of sensory test a manufacturer would carry out, and some candidates were able to explain why this would be carried out. However, most candidates could not identify another test, with a few missing this question out.

Question 4(d): most candidates correctly identified one nutrient found in beans; however, many incorrectly identified fibre as a nutrient and so did not access the second mark.

Question 5(b): most candidates did not accurately explain why either of these faults occurred in a quiche. Some candidates described reasons why the pastry was greasy, or the filling was runny; however, they did not relate their answer to the functional property of the ingredient. Some candidates incorrectly identified that the filling consisted of a white sauce rather than an egg-based mixture.

Question 5(c): many candidates gave a description of the function of dietary fibre or described why increasing consumption of dietary fibre would be of benefit generally; however, they did not apply their answers specifically to elderly residents.

A few candidates gave ways to increase fibre rather than explaining why it should be increased.

Question 6(b): most candidates could explain a disadvantage of using fair trade ingredients; however, they found it difficult to explain an advantage. Many candidates gave a description of what fair trade means rather than an advantage of using fair trade ingredients.

Assignment

Section 1: planning

Section 1(b)(iv): food product ideas

Some candidates did not give an accurate description of their ideas, either giving complete recipes, links to recipes with no description, or very limited information about their ideas.

Some candidates did not relate the reasons for their ideas to the brief and/or their investigations.

Section 2: the product idea (recipe)

Some candidates gave ingredient lists that included imperial measures or used vague terminology such as 'small amount' or 'pinch'. As this is a product development exercise, these terms may not give accurate results each time they make it.

Section 2: justifications

Many candidates either did not fully justify the ingredients and features or repeated the same justifications multiple times. When justifying the cooking process used, many candidates used their own knowledge of this process and not information generated from the research.

Section 4(iv): evaluation

This section requires candidates to make final conclusions about how well the product meets the needs of the brief. Many candidates did not give conclusions for all their stated key issues, instead they gave several conclusions relating to one or two key issues. Where candidates had identified 'develop' as one of their key issues, this was rarely mentioned in this section.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

The course specification explains the overall structure of the course including its aims and purpose as well as information on the skills, knowledge and understanding required. The appendix gives valuable information regarding requirements for the assignment.

Centres must ensure that they are using the most up-to-date versions of all documents which are available on the [Health and Food Technology subject page](#) on our website.

Question paper

Centres should use the 'skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification to ensure that they cover all areas of course content. This is found on the [Health and Food Technology subject page](#) of our website. This will help candidates to fully access all marks in the question paper. This section could also be used as a revision tool or checklist to help candidates plan their revision.

Centres should support candidates with training in examination technique throughout the course to ensure they are familiar with the different command words used and the level of detail required for each. It is recommended that centres support candidates by giving examples of ways to structure answers. Markers commented that candidates who used structure in their answers were more likely to access the available marks.

[Past papers](#) and detailed marking instructions are available on the subject page of our website and are a useful tool in this respect.

Centres should encourage candidates to take time to read each question carefully, including the number of marks assigned to each question. This will benefit them as they will not miss important information or continue with a thread from a previous question which has not been asked for.

It was evident that while most candidates can describe environmental and ethical issues relating to food, these descriptions lack the depth required at this level. Candidates should be able to describe these issues in detail and explain why they are important and how they impact consumer choice.

Candidates should have knowledge of the functional properties of ingredients including egg, flour, sugar, fat and milk. They should be able to explain how these properties impact the foods they are incorporated into, including the impact of using too much or too little. They should be able to relate this knowledge to a variety of products.

Assignment

A checklist has been included on the front page of the candidate workbook to help candidates check that all sheets belonging to their assignment are submitted for marking.

Candidates should number their sheets and teachers and lecturers could perform a final check with the candidate before signing the flyleaf to help to flag pages that have been missed or printed incorrectly before the assignment is submitted.

A photograph of the product is required, and some parts of the following sections may not be marked if no photograph is included. It is good practice to check that the photograph has printed in full and has not been obscured by a formatting issue.

Centres should ensure that the appropriate amount of scaffolding is used and that candidates are not being given too much support when completing the assignment.

Each investigation should be completed separately. Candidates should also complete these independently of each other and, although it is recognised that candidates may have to use the same source, for example an interview, they should have different layouts, different questions should be used, and different conclusions should be drawn.

Candidates should ensure that there are enough respondents for a questionnaire and that the minimum number of relevant questions have been asked (see appendix 3 of the course specification).

Candidates should ensure that the expert chosen for the interview has the relevant knowledge and experience — this should be stated where it is not immediately obvious.

When carrying out internet research, it is recommended to use British websites as the information is often more relevant. Candidates should select and summarise relevant information from each source and display it clearly. If they choose to provide a list of foods, they should only make one conclusion from this list.

Recipes included should contain all necessary ingredients to complete the dish along with the oven temperature if applicable. British/metric terminology should be used for both, for example degrees Celsius, rather than Fahrenheit. It may be useful for candidates to cross check the ingredient list with the method to ensure nothing has been left out and/or nothing has been prepared twice.

Ingredients lists should always use metric measurements and where appropriate, specify the size of ingredient, for example medium egg, small banana. This is important as it is a product development exercise, and the recipe should, in theory, be able to be reproduced numerous times with identical results.

Justifications of ingredients and features should each be linked to a different source of information which can easily be found in the investigations. Candidates should not use the same source for each. Note: key issues should not be used as features.

Candidates should check the mark allocation for each section and ensure they have made the correct number of points for the marks available.

In the sensory testing section, individual results are required, an appropriate key must be provided and used accurately, and the conclusions should come from the results of the test.

Centres should not provide candidates with a pro forma for sensory testing. This will result in candidates being unable to access all the marks for that section. Centres

should ensure that sensory testing is completed individually and that candidates devise their own key.

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](#).