



Course report 2025

National 5 Practical Woodworking

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: 8,366

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 9,041

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	3,249	35.9	35.9	70
B	2,548	28.2	64.1	60
C	1,922	21.3	85.4	50
D	829	9.2	94.5	40
No award	493	5.5	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, teachers and lecturers was positive and suggested that the question paper was fair and accessible for candidates.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Few candidates gave a non-response to one or more questions, which was an improvement on previous years.

The candidates who gained the highest marks responded to 'explain' questions with clear cause and effect and the required level of depth.

Most candidates demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of practical woodworking and answered the following questions well.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Question 1(a)(iii) | Most candidates described two personal health and safety precautions when using the belt sander. |
| Question 2(c)(ii) | Most candidates correctly described the purpose of the tool they identified in question 2(c)(i). |
| Question 2(e)(i) | Most candidates identified a G-cramp. |
| Question 2(e)(ii) | Most candidates correctly described how to avoid indenting the wood when using a G-cramp. |
| Question 3(a) | Most candidates extracted the dimension successfully from the working drawing. |
| Question 4(c)(i) | Most candidates used the diagram to calculate the maximum length of each dowel. |

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Some candidates' responses to 'explain' and 'describe' questions displayed knowledge but lacked sufficient detail to gain marks. Some candidates included sketches in their responses. These candidates generally achieved more marks.

The following questions proved demanding.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Question 2(a)(i) | Most candidates did not state the names of the three joints. Many candidates incorrectly identified the joints as 'dovetail', 'mortice and tenon', and 'butt'. |
| Question 2(a)(iii) | Most candidates did not describe one advantage of using knock down fixings, often incorrectly basing their answers on improved strength. |
| Question 2(b)(ii) | Most candidates did not fully explain the advantages of using a template. Many candidates simply stated that using the marking aid was 'quicker' or 'easier' without qualifying this response. Some candidates achieved 1 mark by establishing cause and effect across both advantages. |
| Question 4(a) | Only a few candidates identified the manufactured boards from their construction methods. Many candidates did not attempt this question. |
| Question 4(d)(i) | Most candidates did not identify a plough plane as the plane used to cut the groove. |
| Question 5(a)(iii) | Most candidates did not fully explain why hardwood 'A' was chosen. Many candidates simply stated information from the table without including a comparison or an explanation. |

Question 5(b)(ii) Most candidates did not fully explain why diagonal lines are seen on one end of the blank. Many candidates displayed knowledge of the turning process but did not show a relationship or clear cause and effect.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

From session 2025–26, we're removing the question paper from the course and expanding the practical activity to include a case study.

The following advice may help teachers and lecturers prepare candidates for the case study:

- Candidates should have knowledge from across the breadth of the course specification. Candidates should practise answering different question types.
- Teachers and lecturers should prepare candidates by revising command words and going over potential responses. Single-word responses can gain marks for 'state' or 'name' questions. However, if the command word is 'describe' or 'explain', a single-word response or series of bullet points will not gain marks. Candidates need to give a fuller response, typically formed as a sentence, to convey the description or explanation.
- It is good practice for centres to use example questions and to discuss expected responses based on agreed marking instructions. However, teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates not to rely solely on past papers as revision materials for the case study as these do not cover the full content of the course.

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](#).