



Course report 2025

National 5 Sociology

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: 258

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 237

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	84	35.4	35.4	70
B	41	17.3	52.7	60
C	36	15.2	67.9	50
D	29	12.2	80.2	40
No award	47	19.8	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

Overall, this component performed well. Almost all parts of question 1 were answered well by most candidates. Each section contained questions to enable candidates to secure an appropriate pass and to display deeper understanding. The paper overall was balanced and showed an appropriate range of command words.

Assignment

The assignment continues to perform as intended and provided an appropriate challenge while offering an opportunity for candidates to display their learning. This has proved to be a very durable method of assessment.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper

Most candidates did well in the opening three parts of question 1. A few candidates were unable to make three separate points for question 1(e). Question 1(f) continues to be the type of question that acts as a discriminator between candidates achieving different grades.

Of the three sections, candidates handled question 2 the best, including the 8-mark question 2(a). Candidates generally answered question 2(b) on subcultures well, although again a few candidates had difficulty in making three distinct points. A few candidates struggled to fully explain diversity in question 2(c).

Some candidates did not do well in question 3(a), and a few candidates did not attempt it at all. Some candidates provided full answers for question 3(b) and a few candidates were able to access all 8 marks. There were more candidates this year who attempted the social issue other than differential achievement in education in question 3(c)(i), although not all were able to describe suitable research evidence for question 3(c)(ii).

Assignment

The assignment continues to be a component where most candidates do well. The degree of difficulty of the different subsections has not changed over time.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the National 5 Sociology course specification on our [website](#). This is the best guide as to what needs to be included to ensure full course coverage. The course specification clearly sets out the areas that may be sampled from in the question paper. Teachers and lecturers must include all of these as part of learning and teaching.

When candidates are asked for multiple features and/or advantages etc in a question, it is best they keep these points as separate as possible. If there is significant overlap, then they may not be able to gain full marks.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that when teaching specific subcultures, there is a clear division in candidates' minds between cultures and subcultures. This advice follows-on from that given in the previous course report regarding the teaching of cultures.

Teachers and lecturers should fully explain the role of research evidence in sociology to candidates.

For the second social issue, teachers and lecturers must teach two pieces of research evidence, as well as the mandatory ones for differential achievement in education.

Assignment

Centres should continue to ensure that candidates use the template provided and that choice of topic is as diverse and individual as possible.

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](#).