

Course report 2026

Advanced Higher Design and Manufacture, SCQF level 7

We've written this report for teachers and lecturers. We recommend you read this with the published course assessment documents and marking instructions.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the question paper and coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they did not perform well
- has advice you might find useful when preparing candidates for assessment

We collect and prepare the statistics in course reports before we complete the appeals process.

Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 61

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 55

Distribution of course awards (including minimum mark to achieve each grade)

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	10	18.2	18.2	140
B	7	12.7	30.9	119
C	9	16.4	47.3	98
D	13	23.6	70.9	77
No award	16	29.1	100	Not applicable

We've not applied rounding to these statistics.

In this report:

- 'Most' means greater than or equal to 70%.
- 'Many' means 50% to 69%.
- 'Some' means 25% to 49%.
- 'Few' or 'a few' means less than 25%.

You can find [statistical reports](#) on our website.

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's 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 make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Senior Qualifications Scotland staff normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors use 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.

- We can adjust the grade boundaries downwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- We can adjust the grade boundaries upwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- If levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries.

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](#).

How the course assessment performed

Question paper

Most questions performed as expected. However, question 7(a) was slightly more demanding than anticipated for some candidates.

Assignment

The assignment was unchanged and performed as expected.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

Question 2(a)

Many candidates clearly described significant changes to products and explained why they were a success or failure.

Question 3(b)

Many candidates described other ways the designer may have reduced the negative impact of the DuraOcean chair on the environment.

Question 4(a)

Many candidates clearly described how consideration of safety would have influenced the design of the Alinker Bike.

Question 6(b)

Many candidates clearly explained why an elastomer is a suitable material for the cushions.

Assignment

Generating initial ideas

Most candidates generated appropriate initial ideas and achieved marks in the top two bands for this section.

Apply graphic techniques

Many candidates demonstrated effective application of graphic techniques. Many candidates achieved marks in the top two bands for this section.

Producing a plan for commercial manufacture

Many candidates achieved marks in the top two bands.

Manufacturing a presentation model

Many candidates achieved marks in the top two bands. Candidates who completed this section generally scored well.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

Question 5(c)

Some candidates were unable to describe the types of graphics the designer would use to communicate and the purpose of the information. Some candidates were unable to name types or graphics and some candidates confused modelling with graphics.

Question 7(c)

Few candidates were able to outline issues that would be considered when choosing between two shot injection moulding and over-moulding for the manufacture of products.

Assignment

Defining a design opportunity

Most candidates did not clearly define the design opportunity and achieved marks in the bottom two bands. Many candidates did not produce a clear specification.

Generating initial ideas

Some candidates achieved marks in the bottom band as they had not clearly defined the problem, which resulted in poor generation of initial ideas.

Exploring ideas

Many candidates carried out exploration which was restricted to functional aspects of the solution. This was partly due to their limited definition of the design opportunity and a limited specification.

Refining ideas

Many candidates carried out superficial refinement, which at times was due to their limited exploration.

Apply knowledge and understanding of design

Many candidates did not demonstrate the depth or range of knowledge of design required at this level. Their design knowledge was often limited to function. Many candidates researched areas such as aesthetics, ergonomics, cost and safety when defining the opportunity but did not consider them in the development of their solution.

Apply knowledge and understanding of materials and manufacturing

Many candidates did not demonstrate the depth or range of knowledge of materials and manufacturing required at this level. The lack of exploration and refinement by many candidates affected their opportunity to apply the required knowledge.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

To effectively access the full range of marks available for section 1, it is important that candidates carry out a product analysis and research the evolution of a product. You can refer to the SCQF level 7 freestanding units for support when you deliver these areas of the course.

Many candidates did not display the depth of knowledge required at Advanced Higher level across several areas of the course content and relied instead on their general knowledge. You should provide candidates with the table from the course specification that lists the knowledge and understanding that can be sampled in the question paper. You can find the course specification on [our website](#).

Assignment

Many candidates had difficulty generating appropriate evidence for the assignment because they chose a problem that was limited. You should discuss ways to identify suitable design opportunities with candidates and encourage them to consider how the problem they identify will allow them to produce suitable assessment evidence. You should discourage candidates from designing a product, for example a student's desk as it often leads to superficial changes to existing products.

Some candidates produced limited evidence in the exploring section of the assignments. You should give candidates skill-building tasks in these areas before they carry out the assignment. Many candidates only explored functional aspects during the development of their proposal. You should remind candidates to consider the other design issues which are likely to be listed in their specification.

It is important that candidates allow themselves time to complete the 'manufacture a presentation model' section of the assignment. Many candidates who produced a presentation model gained marks in the top band. CAD modelling will not attract marks in this section as the skills being assessed are in the manufacture of a physical presentation model. There was an increase in the number of candidates

who incorporated laser cutting and/or 3D printing into their model, which attracts marks at this level.