

Course report 2026

Advanced Higher Health and Food Technology, 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: 37

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 24

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	6	25.0	25.0	77
B	9	37.5	62.5	66
C	5	20.8	83.3	55
D	3	12.5	95.8	44
No award	1	4.2	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

The question paper sampled a wide range of content from the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding in the course specification.

Most candidates completed the question paper in the allocated time.

Feedback from the marking team was very positive, suggesting the paper was fair in its overall level of demand and coverage of the course content.

Project

The project performed as intended. Candidates chose topical, on trend and informative project topics that clearly demonstrated knowledge and interest.

All candidates provided a valid research question, and most candidates supported this with two appropriate objectives, which helped to focus their investigations. All candidates chose interviews and questionnaires as their methods of research. Both approaches allowed candidates to gather quantitative and qualitative data, which they analysed later in the project.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

Question 1(b)

Most candidates performed well in this question and demonstrated a good understanding of how to apply the command word. They also demonstrated knowledge of how food packaging and labelling impacted consumer food choice.

Question 2

Most candidates had a good understanding of how to answer and analyse this question. Many candidates gave several accurate pieces of current dietary advice, clearly linking them to a diet-related disease or condition, and explaining the impact.

Question 3

Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of micronutrients and clearly linked them to a pregnant woman's diet.

Project

Stage 1(a)

Many candidates performed strongly in this section, producing clear, concise, and well-focused literature reviews that aligned with their chosen topics. These literature reviews were effectively supported by relevant, up-to-date sources, and candidates accurately cited these sources throughout.

Stage 1(b)

All candidates provided a relevant research question that closely linked with the topic of their literature review. Most candidates supported this by providing two valid objectives, allowing them to maintain a clear focus throughout their research. Candidates provided a range of excellent, original and topical research questions as the focus of the research.

Stage 2(a)

Many candidates gained marks by carrying out their research using the methods and sources detailed in their plans. All candidates chose interviews and questionnaires as their research methods. Overall, candidates presented their results clearly and concisely which helped them to interpret them easily.

Stage 2(b)

Many candidates achieved marks in this section by presenting sufficient and relevant evidence to support their analysis. Candidates who carefully considered their research questions and ensured a clear link to their objectives explored their topics in greater depth. As a result, they had more substantial information to analyse in stage 3.

Stage 3(a)

Many candidates who performed well in this stage conducted high-quality research and demonstrated a clear ability to interpret their findings and their significance, by effectively linking them to evidence from the literature review. Many candidates demonstrated their analytical skills well in this section.

Stage 3(b)

Many candidates achieved marks in this section by effectively evaluating the research process and clearly outlining appropriate next steps for further investigation.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

Question 1(a)

While some candidates showed a good understanding of the stages of product development used by a food manufacturer, many candidates demonstrated poor understanding and did not name or discuss the stages accurately. Candidates must identify the product development stages accurately to gain the marks.

Question 4

While most candidates demonstrated their evaluative skills to a high standard; some candidates showed limited understanding of novel protein foods and functional foods in the diet. This gap in knowledge prevented some candidates from gaining available marks.

Project

Stage 1(c)

Many candidates wrote their research plan retrospectively. The coursework assessment task states that candidates must outline the research they intend to carry out before they start, including the techniques and sources they will use, and the justification for each technique.

Stage 3(a)

Some candidates did not interpret their results accurately when moving into the analysis, which led to inaccuracies. A few candidates did not fully analyse their results or link them to the research findings. Some candidates introduced new, unsupported or personal opinions at this stage, which weren't relevant. A few candidates did not analyse the information effectively and simply repeated the results without explaining the impact of their findings.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

You should make sure candidates are aware of the knowledge and understanding they may be assessed on in the question paper. This information is outlined in the 'mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification, on [our website](#).

Encourage candidates to practise answering exam-style questions in the allotted time. You should review marking instructions from previous question papers with candidates, as these include helpful model answers and guidance, particularly in relation to the different command words.

Candidates should have a clear understanding of how to interpret and apply each command word and they should ensure their answers directly link back to the question.

Project

Candidates can choose any research topic but it must link to an aspect of the 'mandatory, skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification.

You should continue to follow the assessment requirements in the course specification and coursework assessment task on our website. Candidates must clearly display the project title on the flyleaf and cover pages.

Candidates will receive a penalty if they exceed 4,000 words. The results section forms part of this word count. The word count must be clearly displayed on the flyleaf and on the project.

Candidates presented their projects in a variety of ways. Candidates must use an appropriate font size and appropriate spacing. Candidates don't need to print their projects single-sided. They can print double-sided.

Candidates must submit bibliographies with their project. They should present the results of their research in the body of the project. Any results which are presented in

the appendix will not receive marks. Candidates must use up-to-date and credible sources and cite their sources accurately and consistently throughout the project.

Encourage candidates to use objective phrasing, such as ‘the researcher found that’ instead of writing in the first person.

Understanding Standards materials on [our website](#) offer valuable support for candidates and centres.