

Course report 2026

Higher Childcare and Development, SCQF level 6

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: 292

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 335

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	208	62.1	62.1	91
B	66	19.7	81.8	78
C	40	11.9	93.7	65
D	14	4.2	97.9	52
No award	7	2.1	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

The question paper performed as expected.

The question paper performed as expected. Markers and centres reported that the question paper was fair and provided appropriate coverage of course content, with a balanced range of question types. Most of the candidates accessed the full range of marks and there was good differentiation for A-C level candidates.

Project

Candidates were able to choose from the following briefs:

- Brief 1 How do Government initiatives support outdoor learning?
- Brief 2 How can literacy development be supported for children and young people?
- Brief 3 What are the benefits of play to the holistic development of children and young people?

The briefs performed as intended.

How candidates performed

Overall, candidates performed exceptionally well in both components. It is clear that they were well prepared and possess substantial knowledge and understanding.

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

Section 1

- Question 1(a): most candidates identified two physical milestones.
- Question 1(b) most candidates described two age appropriate activities to promote linguistic development.
- Question 1(c) most candidates evaluated the impact of environmental influences on holistic development.
- Question 2: most candidates were able to describe an appropriate observation technique for a child aged 3-5 years.

Section 2

- Question 3: most candidates were able to describe one theory of language development for a child aged 3-5 years.
- Question 4(a): most candidates were able to describe how a relevant social and emotional theory would support attachment in children aged 0-3 years.

Section 3

- Question 5: most candidates were able to identify two articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Question 8: most candidates were able to describe how partnership working between an early-years setting and local library could meet the needs of children.

Project

- Prompt A — Most candidates explained aspects of development and their interrelationship. Most candidates related this to the child and the brief.
- Prompt B — Most candidates were able to analyse factors that influence development. Most candidates related this to the child and the brief.

- Prompt C — Most candidates explained theories of development and related this to the child and the brief.
- Prompt E — Most candidates explained strategies or initiatives that were relevant to the child and the brief.
- Prompt F — Most candidates explained the ways that two current services may support the child and related this to the brief.
- Prompt G — Most candidates explained the role and responsibilities of two professionals and related this to the child and the brief.
- Prompt I — Most candidates were able to provide a conclusion to the question posed in the brief.
- Prompt J — Most candidates were able to reference well.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

In section 2, question 4(b) a few candidates were not able to explain how the theory identified in question 4(a) could be applied by practitioners when working with children aged 0-3 years.

In section 3, question 6 a few candidates were not able to evaluate an initiative within an early-years setting and apply it to the wellbeing needs of children.

In question 7, a few candidates were unable to explain the purpose of registration with a regulatory body such as the Scottish Social Services Council.

Project

- Prompt D — a few candidates were not specific in their analysis of theories of development. Candidates were not specific in showing the relationship between the theories and their relationship to the child or young person and the brief. Candidates were not specific in exploring contradictions, comparing and contrasting, or inconsistencies and different views relating to theories of development, the child and the brief.
- Prompt H — a few candidates did not evaluate the effectiveness of partnership working in relation to the child and the brief. Candidates were not specific in their

evaluation in terms of making a judgement about the effectiveness of partnership working in relation to the child. Candidates were not specific in their evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and/or advantages and disadvantages in relation to the chosen child.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

The question paper allows candidates to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content not addressed in the project.

You should make sure that candidates understand:

- they need to be specific in their explanation of how theory can be applied by practitioners when working with children
- how current initiatives are applied within an early years setting, and how it supports the wellbeing of children
- they need to be specific in their explanation of the importance of the Scottish Social Services Council in relation to the registration of early years workers

You should tell candidates not to use acronyms when structuring responses based on the command word in the question paper. This can cause candidates to answer questions incorrectly.

Project

You should make sure:

- candidates are specific when they analyse their chosen theories and are able to effectively relate this to the brief and the chosen child (Prompt D)
- candidates are specific in their evaluation of partnership working in relation to the two professionals identified in (Prompt H)
- that strategies and/or initiatives chosen by candidates for Prompt E, link to the services chosen for Prompt F, and to the professionals chosen in Prompt G. It is also useful to ensure that these responses link to the professionals in Prompt H.
- that all prompts respond to the brief and the chosen child

You should continue to use the most up-to-date version of the coursework assessment task which contains marking instructions and instructions for candidates. You can also direct candidates to the [Project guidance grid](#). These documents are available on the [Childcare and Development subject page](#) of our website.

You should familiarise yourself with sample candidate evidence and commentaries on our [Understanding Standards website](#).