

Course report 2026

Higher Fashion and Textile Technology,

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

For information about the practical activity, you should read the verification summary 2025-26 on the [subject page](#) of our website.

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: 344

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 386

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	71	18.4	18.4	69
B	114	29.5	47.9	58
C	108	28.0	75.9	48
D	72	18.7	94.6	37
No award	21	5.4	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

Feedback from markers and statistical data suggested that the assessment components effectively differentiated between candidates with varying levels of ability and understanding and provided good discrimination across all components.

Question paper

The question paper was aligned with the subject course content and the key command words and provided a robust method of assessment. Although feedback indicated that the paper was accessible and reflected the course specification, overall performance was lower than expected.

The question paper provided an effective level of discrimination and allowed candidates to demonstrate a range of attainment. Most candidates completed all four questions in the allocated time.

Questions 1(b), 1(c), 2, 4(a), (b) and (c) proved more demanding for some candidates than anticipated. Question 1(c) was more challenging than anticipated due to the inclusion of an overseas brand in the question context.

Assignment

Overall, the assignment performed as expected and was broadly consistent with last year.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

The overall standard of evaluative responses improved this year, with many candidates producing well-structured answers.

Question 1(a): Most candidates gained three marks for correctly identifying three key features from the images, most commonly for colour, shape and texture. Fewer candidates identified pattern or Asian design as key features.

Many candidates successfully applied inspiration from the images to an appropriate design feature for a fashion or textile item and explained its impact. Candidates who selected texture or shape as discussion points generally gained a wider range of marks, as they were more successful in linking these features to fabric choice, embellishments, construction techniques or garment shape than when discussing colour.

Question 3(a): Most candidates correctly identified and explained two principles of design in relation to the prom outfit. Candidate responses demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of this aspect of the course and were applied effectively to the context of the question (prom outfit). Many candidates clearly explained how the selected principles related to the prom outfit, the person wearing it or the occasion, enabling them to access the full range of available marks.

Question 3(b): Most candidates correctly evaluated three suitable surface decorations for the prom outfit. Candidate responses demonstrated good subject knowledge and were generally structured effectively, including a fact, a judgement and an impact while making clear reference to the prom outfit. This enabled many candidates to access the full range of available marks.

Question 3(c): Most candidates correctly identified a past trend that linked to the image of the prom dress, with the 1920s and 1930s being the most common responses. Some candidates demonstrated a good understanding of these eras by providing two accurate explanations of how the trend was reflected in the dress, such

as its full-length silhouette, cowl neckline, godets or beading. Many candidates, however, provided only one explanation, limiting the marks available to them.

Question 4(a): Most candidates provided accurate evaluative responses on the suitability of mass manufacture. Many candidates demonstrated good subject knowledge by making clear reference to the consumer, music festival or manufacturer in their evaluations, enabling them to access a wide range of marks.

Question 4(c): Most candidates correctly evaluated the suitability of knitted fabrics. Their responses demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of knitted fabrics and they applied this effectively to the context of a music festival and the needs of the consumer attending the festival.

Across all questions, candidates who made explicit links to the specific item, person or activity identified in the question were generally more successful in accessing the full range of available marks.

Assignment

Section 1

Design: Most candidates correctly identified the two key themes and provided detailed explanations of their relevance to the assignment. As a result, most candidates achieved full marks in this section.

Research: Many candidates carried out their investigations to a good standard. Most candidates completed their research using three different techniques to gain information to help them derive a suitable solution.

Research findings were generally clear, concise and factual, with appropriate sources referenced. Many candidate investigations followed a logical progression, enabling candidates to gather relevant information and create their design solution effectively.

Markers also noted that some candidates used the findings from one investigation to identify the focus of their next investigation in their summary points. This

demonstrated a well-planned approach to research and a high level of understanding of the investigative process in Section 1.

Solution: The presentation of the solution (design illustrations) was of a high standard. Candidates who achieved full marks provided clear, detailed annotated illustrations, including fastening type with size and colour, hems, seams, embellishments and placement, fabric type and colour. This level of detail enabled the designs to be clearly visualised, with many illustrations detailed enough to support manufacture using the solution page as guidance.

Many of the 1920s design illustrations were particularly creative, suggesting that candidates engaged well with this aspect of the assignment.

The justification section was generally of a suitable standard this year. Some candidates effectively used evidence from their investigations, carrying forward relevant information to justify design features, fabric properties and construction techniques. In stronger responses, candidates consistently linked their justification to the activity, person or brief.

Section 2

Testing: most candidates carried out a suitable test that provided them with the necessary information for evaluations and amendments. They were clear and concise. Most candidates gained full marks for this section.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

Question 1(a): Some candidate responses were vague, lacked detail and did not make clear reference to the casual clothing collection.

In weaker responses, some candidates provided basic discussion points that identified a design feature but did not develop its impact. For example, if candidates referred to a straight line from the tower inspiring a belt on a dress for the casual clothing collection they did not meet the marking criteria, as it was vague and lacked a clear impact of the design feature.

There was also an increase in responses where the impact referred generically to the item being 'trendy' for a teenager. These responses did not meet the assessment standards as they were not directly linked to the identified design feature.

Some candidates repeated the same impact across multiple discussion points, often focusing solely on aesthetic appeal. Some responses did not make explicit reference to the casual clothing collection, so candidates were unable to gain marks.

Question 1(b): Many candidates did not gain marks for this question. Although most candidates attempted the question, many candidates provided responses relating to environmental issues rather than ethical issues. Common responses focused on CO₂ emissions, water systems (dyes) and biodegradable fabrics, which were not relevant to the question.

To gain marks, candidates need to refer to ethical considerations such as fair wages, no child labour and appropriate working conditions.

Question 1(c): Some candidates did not gain marks for this question, and many candidates did not access the full mark allocation.

Candidates demonstrated their good knowledge and understanding of online shopping but many answers were generic and did not relate specifically to purchasing from an overseas brand. As a result, they did not meet the requirements of the question.

Some candidates made no reference to overseas brands at all, which limited their access to marks.

Question 2: Many candidate responses focused on evaluation of fibres or construction techniques rather than providing the depth required for analysis. In order to access the marks, candidates must demonstrate greater depth and clearly relate their response to the activity, person or context.

Many candidates did not apply the correct terminology from the Qualifications Scotland [Summary of fibre properties grid](#). For example, candidates did not gain marks for stating that linen is 'cool', 'breathable' or 'durable'.

Some candidates gave a response on the properties of viscose linked to fair durability, for example, viscose has fair durability; therefore, the jacket or skirt or outfit may not withstand lots of wear and tear or keep a good appearance. They did not demonstrate an understanding of the mixed fibres as a whole (75% linen 25% viscose) as linen has excellent durability; therefore, their responses for viscose contradicted their analysis on linen.

Some candidates did not correctly identify the type of pocket, collar and zip. They simply stated the construction technique, for example, zip rather than open-ended zip. To gain a mark, candidates must identify the type of zip, sleeve, collar or pocket.

Some candidates did not refer to the fashion show or spring collection in their responses, which limited their access to marks.

Question 4(a): Many candidates did not gain full marks for this question.

Most candidates attempted the question and demonstrated good subject knowledge of bespoke manufacture. However, many candidate responses were generic and did not make clear reference to the music festival or the consumer attending it.

Question 4(b): Some candidates did not attempt this question.

Overall, many candidates demonstrated limited knowledge and understanding of smart fabrics. Many candidates were unable to correctly identify a smart fabric, and if a fabric was identified, candidates often could not provide an accurate description or relate it to the context of the music festival or the consumer attending it.

Only a few candidates were able to correctly identify and describe two smart fabrics and link them appropriately to the context. Overall, candidates' limited subject knowledge of smart fabrics restricted their access to marks.

Assignment

Section 1

Research: Some candidates included excessive detail in their investigations. In particular, internet-based investigations were often overly detailed, with some

candidates providing more than eight summary points per investigation. This level of detail is not required and does not reflect a concise approach to presenting findings.

While this demonstrates significant time and effort, the volume of information may be unnecessarily time-consuming and could potentially reduce candidate motivation during the investigative process.

A few candidates did not provide an explanation for the purpose of their investigations. They provided an aim or a vague explanation which did not detail the purpose and proposed impact of the investigation.

Many candidates quantified their findings in their summary points. For example, 10 out of 15 images show dresses with full length skirts. Candidates need to be careful to ensure that the data is accurate as some candidates had provided inaccurate information (incorrect numbers) therefore the summary point was invalid.

Some candidate summary points were statements or direct lifts from their evidence and did not demonstrate their ability to discuss the importance of the summary point and how they intend to use it.

Some candidates used the same impact for each of their summary points. For example, 'I will therefore ask my target group if they would like this...'. The impact needs to be varied and not repetitive to gain a mark. In these instances, candidates may only gain one mark if their impact is a repeat for each point.

Only a few candidates did not use their investigation progressively. This was apparent when reading the summary points of investigation three when a few candidates were still stating 'I would consider...'. At this stage, candidates should have identified their design features, construction techniques and fabric choice. In addition, a few candidates continue to ask the textile expert questions about which fabric, design features, fastenings etc they should use in their solution. At Higher level, candidates should have identified these and made decisions based on their evidence from investigation one and two.

In addition, candidates continued to ask questions which are not valid for the expert to answer. These are questions linked to fashion trends/colours and are not appropriate questions to ask a textile expert/teacher as this is not their expertise.

Solution: Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail in their justifications linked to the design features, properties or characteristics of their chosen fabric, and the construction techniques to be used. Their justifications were predominantly statements of information lifted directly from investigations and did not demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Some candidates did not link the justification to their solution (1920s teenager or school Christmas fayre). These responses lacked depth and did not provide any impact or links to the design brief.

Section 2

Evaluations: Some candidate evaluations lacked detail and depth and did not meet the standard for Higher level. These candidates did not provide an impact, or the impact was repeated in all the evaluative responses they gave.

Some candidates used the same statement for their consequence. For example, 'the evidence from the test means I have been successful in meeting the design brief'. This does not meet the standard for Higher level.

Amending the solution: Some candidates did not have evidence to justify the amendment to the solution. Instead, they provided changes based on personal opinion and therefore did not gain a mark.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

New Understanding Standards materials, including candidate responses and commentaries, are available on our [Understanding Standards website](#). These resources support centres and candidates to develop a clear understanding of the national standards required at Higher level. You can use them to help learners understand how the question paper is marked and their expected standard of response.

You should ensure candidates are familiar with the style and format of the question paper by regularly practising exam-style questions. This will help candidates develop the pace they need to complete the paper in the allocated time.

Regular timed practice can also improve the clarity and consistency of candidates' handwriting. Encourage candidates to write as clearly as possible, so that markers can read their responses correctly.

Centres must provide candidates with support with their exam technique. Practice in structuring responses and managing their time will help candidates respond effectively to the question paper and be fully prepared for the exam.

The first section of the past paper marking instructions explains how candidates should approach each command word used in the Higher question paper. You should use this section to ensure candidates have a clear understanding of the requirements of each question and command word. This is especially important for the analyse question, which was not answered well by candidates this year. Past papers and marking instructions are available on the [Fashion and Textile Technology subject page](#).

You should make sure candidates know they need to answer questions in sequence. Candidates should not move back and forth between questions. They should complete one question before starting another question. If candidates answer questions out of sequence they can sometimes fail to maintain the correct context in

their answers. Candidates also need to clearly identify the question they are answering in the supplementary answer booklets.

Question 1(a)

Candidates need an opportunity to practise this type of 'discuss' question because many candidates did not provide an impact and/or gave vague answers.

You should advise candidates that their responses in question 1(a) should focus on textile items such as dresses, skirts, coats or shirts. These provide scope to discuss design features, embellishments, fabrics, silhouettes and fastenings. You should discourage candidates from using footwear or jewellery, as these are less suitable for developing detailed responses.

You should also remind candidates to take into consideration the season or type of collection outlined in question 1(a), if applicable, and identify suitable clothing.

Candidates need to understand required structure for question 1(a). They must:

- identify a key feature (for example shape, colour or texture)
- apply it to a fashion or textile item in a way that allows it to be visualised (for example 'the oval shape from the lanterns could inspire a puff sleeve')
- explain the impact (for example 'this will create volume and an interesting silhouette')
- and link back to the original feature

You could show candidates a diverse range of imagery to help them gain experience for question 1(a).

We have some Understanding Standards resources specifically centred on question 1(a) to support you to teach to the correct standard.

You should encourage candidates to read and use the scenario information from each question. They may find it useful to highlight or underline key points. This will ensure they effectively relate their responses back to the context of the question and refer to the person or activity or item. This is essential for candidates to achieve full marks. If they don't make references to the person or item or scenario (for example,

the designer, prom outfit, t- shirt, fashion show or spring season) their answer will be too generic.

Question 2

When analysing in question 2, candidates should consider the person, activity or season stated in the question and refer to this in their response. You should encourage candidates to provide more depth and reflect on the property and construction techniques they have stated.

When answering question 2, candidates should focus on analysing rather than evaluating. They should consider the specific person, activity or season in the question and refer to this throughout their response. They must develop their answers by providing greater depth, explaining how and why the stated property or construction technique is appropriate for the given context.

Question 2 is about construction techniques that are visible on the fashion item. This generally refers to sleeves, fastenings, pockets, waistbands, cuffs, collars and any surface decoration. Candidates do not need to analyse any construction techniques that are not visible, for example, seams or linings.

You should give candidates the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding of a variety of construction techniques during theoretical and practical lessons. The Textile Construction Techniques guidance is available in the Understanding Standards section of our [Fashion and Textile Technology subject page](#). This guidance can provide support to candidates and centres.

Many candidates' responses for the properties of linen and viscose in question 2, did not meet the standard for Higher level. You should ensure that candidates have a copy of the Qualifications Scotland Summary of fibre properties grid (available on our [Fashion and Textile Technology subject page](#)) and know to refer to this when answering these types of questions. Candidates must use the ratings outlined on the grid: excellent, good, fair and poor when answering any question linked to fibre properties. This is a requirement at Higher level.

Candidates must demonstrate they understand the difference between a fibre's property and a fibre's characteristic. For example, candidates cannot simply state

that a fibre is strong or durable or absorbent. At Higher level, candidates must demonstrate their understanding of the fibre by stating that it has excellent, good, fair or poor strength or durability or absorbency.

Assignment

Investigations

Candidates' investigations should have at least four points of summary or conclusion that show progression. You should advise candidates that a good investigation should not exceed 3–4 pages and may have 5–6 summary points. Their investigation should demonstrate their ability to select appropriate information, present it in a concise manner and highlight evidence that will help them create a suitable solution.

Some candidates simply repeat information found in the investigation. They should indicate how the point they have highlighted will help them with their final fashion/textile item. Their summary points should be progressive and by the third investigation candidates' language should change from 'I am considering using...' to 'I will therefore use...' as this demonstrates that candidates have used higher order thinking skills to progress their investigations to create a suitable solution.

To ensure candidates meet the standards in the solution section, it would be useful if one investigation can be linked to the properties and/or characteristics of textiles or components and include some reference to construction techniques to be used in their solution. This will assist candidates to justify their chosen textile's properties or characteristics and the construction techniques that they will use if the solution was to be manufactured.

If candidates use literary research to gain information on the fibres and construction techniques selected, it should contain meaningful information to assist them in the next stage of the assignment. Many investigations using this type of research technique were vague and did not provide accurate information.

If candidates use a textile expert in their school for an investigation, specifically the interview, the expert should ensure that they provide adequate detail in their answers. This will allow the candidate to have evidence that they can refer to in their justification section of the assignment. Some candidates had limited detail in their

interview responses therefore their justifications were personal opinion and not from evidence.

Recommendations for investigations:

- Interview — minimum five questions, clearly stating the source or expert, consider the questions in relation to the 'expert', explanation of purpose of investigation, progressive summary points not statements of results.
- Questionnaire — approximately 20 respondents, clearly stating the target group, clear explanation of purpose of the investigation, progressive summary points.
- Internet research — minimum three different sources, clearly identifying each with the relevant URL.
- Mood board — minimum three different sources, clearly identifying each with the relevant URL or sources if magazines (this should be either on the back of the mood board, under the images or on a supplementary sheet).
- Exhibition visit/museum — name of exhibition/museum clearly identified.

Solutions

Candidates can use a number of techniques to present their solutions. The most popular technique is an annotated illustration or an image of the item. Any format selected by the candidate must include detailed information on the solution. This could include design features, embellishments, colours, textiles, components, construction techniques etc, with placement and sizes where possible. The illustration should be clear and easily visualised. It is good practice to make sure that the item could be reasonably manufactured using the solution page as guidance.

When candidates are justifying their solution, they must ensure that there is a minimum of four justification points for design features, properties and characteristics, and construction techniques. If there are less than four points in a particular section the candidate will be unable to obtain full marks for that section as it has not met the standards for the solution.

Candidates should ensure that they link design features, properties and characteristics of their chosen textile and construction techniques from evidence derived from the investigations.

Candidates should ensure that they clearly justify the reasons for the design features on their fashion and textile item, properties and characteristics of the textile chosen, and the construction techniques selected. Many candidates provided statements as opposed to explanations.

It is vital that candidates consider the brief when writing their response and demonstrate their understanding of why their chosen design feature, fabric and construction techniques will be suitable for the item, occasion and target group.

Testing

Candidates must ensure they refer to the target group and provide detail on the source when they complete their table outlining information for the test. Many candidates referred to the target group from investigation 2. This is not detailed enough and the target group should be explicit. For example, 10 teenagers aged 15–17 years that I used in investigation 2 not simply 10 teenagers.

When evaluating their items, you should encourage candidates to make use of, and refer to, the evidence from their test to support their evaluative comments. The use of expressions such as ‘therefore’, ‘as a result’, ‘and so’ may be useful triggers for candidates to develop their responses into evaluative points. Candidates should justify all amendments and adaptations that they highlight. These points should reflect evidence gathered in the test and should not be from their personal opinion.

Candidates should consider asking supplementary questions in their test to provide suitable amendments for the last stage in the assignment. Many candidates simply used personal opinion or provided an amendment to their solution based on 1 tester’s response.