

Course report 2026

Higher Graphic Communication, 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: 3,339

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 3,407

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	1,083	31.8	31.8	98
B	926	27.2	59.0	84
C	744	21.8	80.8	70
D	421	12.4	93.2	56
No award	233	6.8	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. We did not adjust the grade boundaries.

Assignment

The assignment performed as expected. We did not adjust the grade boundaries.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

Candidates performed very well in computer-aided design (CAD) techniques questions. Candidates' use of terminology as defined in the course specification was strong, allowing them to access the full range of marks.

Most candidates correctly stated the name of the command used to create the repeated feature in question 2(d)(ii) as a radial array.

Most candidates described the good practice in question 4(a)(i) and the purpose of an exploded isometric drawing in question 4(a)(ii).

Assignment

Most candidates performed well in task 1. Most candidates completed CAD modelling and were well prepared to do this.

Most candidates completed the CAD illustrations in task 2(a) well.

Most candidates completed the planning for the table talker in task 2(b) well.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

Candidates appeared to find the following concepts challenging:

- Explaining command words. In an 'explain' response, candidates must give cause and effect, or a link between two things. In many cases, candidates gave either a cause only, or an effect only, or did not link two things; for example, in question 2(f)(ii), where candidates were asked to 'Explain why using this file format is beneficial to the CAD technicians.' In reference to a step/iges file format, candidates need to give a cause of a universal or common file type that allows the file to be opened in any CAD software.

- Rhythm; for example, in question 1(b), many candidates referred to unity instead ('the white subheadings create rhythm').
- In question 4(e), the surface development was viewed from the outside, as would be necessary when creating printed packaging. Most candidates responded as if the surface development was viewed from the inside, suggesting they did not read the question fully.

Assignment

Candidates did not demonstrate a clear understanding of auxiliary views. In task 1(a)(i) candidates were asked to 'Produce ... an auxiliary plan of the body (part 1). ... including the true shape of the sloping surface'. Many candidates only produced the sloping surface of the true shape. Removing the rest of the view meant these candidates could not access 1 mark.

While there were improvements in the average mark awarded for task 3, sketching remains an area where many candidates did not perform well.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

‘Explain’ responses remain an area where candidates are not accessing marks as they are not providing cause and effect, or links between two things in their responses. We recommend reading the marking instructions from the past few years to see examples of appropriate ‘explain’ responses.

Remind candidates to read questions carefully, in their entirety, and to consider the context.

Assignment

In task 2(a) candidates must make the image the size of the A3 page, or A4 if there are printing restrictions at your centre. Candidates should understand that the objects in a scene should take up the majority of the page — not the walls and floor, which only add context. The data sheet demonstrates the expected views to be produced, and candidates should ensure the illustration they create is a close replication of the data sheet.