

Course report 2026

Higher Health and Food 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

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: 1,328

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 1,546

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	218	14.1	14.1	84
B	371	24.0	38.1	72
C	381	24.6	62.7	60
D	315	20.4	83.1	48
No award	261	16.9	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 covered a wide range of topics from across the course content.

The question paper performed as expected, and feedback from markers, centres and senior appointees suggested it was accessible to all candidates.

Assignment

Both assignment briefs were accessible to all candidates. The most popular brief this session was 'Develop a street food dish high in iron suitable to be sold at a festival.'

A wide range of marks and quality of responses across both briefs was evident. Some candidate responses lacked focused research and therefore candidates were unable to complete the justification section with the detail required. As a result, candidates were unable to effectively justify their chosen ingredients, features or cooking method in relation to their research evidence.

It was also noted that some candidates did not devise a recipe to the required standard, with a lack of detail in the ingredients and methods section.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

Question 1 (a)

Many candidates correctly explained factors that influence a teenager's choice of food. These candidates identified appropriate and relevant factors and provided adequate explanations linked to choice of food.

Question 1(b)

Many candidates performed well in the Dietary Reference Value (DRV) question. Many candidates used an appropriate structure and appropriate answering technique to successfully analyse the diet of a 16-year-old female. Candidates who performed well in this question demonstrated a sound knowledge of nutrition and applied this knowledge to the context of the question, the 16-year-old female. Most candidates provided an impact and/or a consequence relevant to the context of the question. Those candidates who demonstrated a sound knowledge of the sources of nutrients were then able to explain the contribution the meal made to her diet.

Question 1(c)

Many candidates answered the star profile question well. These candidates used an appropriate answering technique to structure their responses. These candidates made clear reference to the savoury wrap and also demonstrated their understanding of ratings linked to sensory attributes.

Most candidates provided a detailed fact about the rating, for example showing an understanding as to why the wrap was rated low for colour. These candidates provided an appropriate judgement on the suitability of the savoury wrap for teenagers and a consequence on the impact of the appeal to adults.

Question 3(b)

Some candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the stages of food product development. Some candidates correctly identified the stages of food product development and explained these stages in relation to the development of a range of chicken dishes.

Question 4(a)

Many candidates performed well in the Scottish Dietary Goal question. These candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge of the specific dietary goals and were able to correctly quote the figures within the goal. These candidates provided examples of how a cereal bar could help to meet different pieces of current dietary advice.

Assignment

Section 1(a): exploring the brief

Most candidates performed well in this section as they identified the relevant key issues and provided an appropriate explanation or justification to the depth required at Higher level.

Section 1(b): research

Many candidates carried out relevant research that was clear and concise. They were able to generate good quality research by having a focused aim that was then met through appropriate research. These candidates had well-structured investigations that were clearly and logically presented. They used sources of research that were relevant to the brief and finalised each investigation with concise points of information that made it clear how the findings could lead on to the development of a product.

Section 3: product testing

Most candidates tested the final product successfully using two different, yet appropriate, testing techniques. These candidates presented tests that followed the guidance on presenting results from the course specification, appendix 3.

Section 4(a): evaluation

Many candidates successfully evaluated their final product using the results of their testing. These candidates provided their responses in a well-structured evaluative way, using an appropriate technique.

Section 4(b): improving or adapting the product

Many candidates successfully identified appropriate improvements or adaptations or variations to their product. These were clearly justified against either the results of research and investigations or the results of testing whilst also making links to the brief. Many candidates also described the improvements, adaptations or variations clearly, for example quantities were provided when an ingredient was identified as being increased.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

Question 1(d)

Some candidate's knowledge of the functional properties of eggs and fat in relation to a cupcake was poor. These candidates did not name the functional property of the ingredient correctly in this context, for example they were unable to identify aeration and then explain how this works in relation to a cupcake.

Question 2(a)

Many candidates' knowledge of consumer organisations was poor. Many candidates had little knowledge of the role of Trading Standards and Consumers' Association and as a result they were unable to access the marks.

Question 2(b)

Many candidates' knowledge of the effect of consuming too much salt was limited and as a result they were unable to access all marks.

Question 2(c)

Many candidates' knowledge of technological innovations was poor. As a result, they did not fully evaluate these in relation to the consumer. As their knowledge was not strong in this area, they did not provide a relevant fact about cook-chill or functional foods, resulting in them having an incomplete evaluation.

Question 4(c)

Many candidates lacked the depth of nutritional knowledge to be able to fully explain two factors that may hinder the absorption of calcium.

Question 5(b)

Many candidates did not fully explain the inter-relationship between vitamin C and iron. Their nutritional knowledge was lacking so they could not access the two marks available.

Question 5(d)

Many candidates' knowledge of alternative proteins was poor. As a result, they could not provide an accurate fact within the evaluative response.

Assignment

Section 2(a): describing the product

Many candidates did not access full marks as they provided a recipe that lacked detail in the ingredients list or the method. Many candidates did not provide metric measurements for quantities of ingredients, and in the method section, they did not provide adequate detail. This is a product development task therefore the recipe should be written with the adequate amount of detail to allow this to be reproduced with identical results.

Section 2(b): justification

Many candidates did not fully justify the features, ingredients and cooking method of their final product. In many cases, links to the research were missing and they did not provide a factual justification as to why the product was appropriate. In some cases, candidates did not make a link or connection to the assignment brief.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

You must use the 'mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification on [our website](#) to prepare candidates for the question paper. You can also use the course specification as a planning tool to deliver the course. Candidates can also use the course specification to help with their revision.

You should review candidates' knowledge throughout the different stages of the course. 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.

Encourage candidates to practise answering exam-style questions that contain appropriate and relevant command words in the allotted time. All areas of the course content should be covered.

You can support candidates by demonstrating the most appropriate ways to structure answers for each of the command words. You should do this from the beginning of the course to ensure they are fully understood and reinforced throughout the duration of the course.

Candidates' knowledge of the contemporary food issues topic must be improved. You should support candidates to learn each area of course content and make sure that the contemporary food issues topic is scheduled into teaching time.

Candidates' knowledge of consumer organisations is another area that needs to be improved.. You should support candidates to learn the different organisations listed in the 'mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification. Candidates should then be able to demonstrate how these organisations protect the consumer in relation to food issues. It is essential that candidates link this to food products and not non-food products.

In the Dietary Reference Value question, when candidates analyse the meal, they must ensure that there is a relevant link to the person identified within the question.

This link must be evident in either the impact or the consequence or both, otherwise the candidate will be unable to access all marks.

For the star profile question, you should make sure candidates know they need to provide a fact that is detailed. The fact must reflect a clear understanding of both the attribute ratings and the reasoning behind those ratings. For example, the candidate should be able to state the rating and explain why the attribute is rated like this. Otherwise, candidates will be providing an incomplete fact. They must also be able to provide an appropriate judgement and a consequence that is linked to the fact. In some cases, candidates were providing responses that were not fully evaluated.

Assignment

You must ensure that all evidence has been submitted to Qualifications Scotland, including all **three photographs and all pages of the research**. If parts of the assignment are missing, then candidates are unlikely to be able to access all marks.

Photographs **must not** be generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and must fully reflect the candidate's own work. In the first photograph all ingredients must be present as this demonstrates and verifies that the candidate has used the ingredients listed in the recipe.

You must make sure that candidates complete the assignment in the correct time frame and follow the assessment conditions.

For the research section of the assignment, candidates must not produce research that is too similar. Each candidate should produce investigations that vary in layout, focus and results. Although candidates may use the same research technique, the content should be different across candidates.

The aims for the research and investigations should be clear and concise. Many candidates gave aims that are too long and complicated which in turn makes it more difficult for candidates to access marks.

Sections 1, 2 and 3 are conducted under some supervision and control. Candidates may carry out investigations and research outwith the learning and teaching setting.

Section 4: the evaluation must be completed under direct supervision. Candidates are allocated one hour to complete this section and should have access to their previously completed work during this time. You must make sure that all parts of the assignment are completed using the Qualifications Scotland candidate workbook. Candidates must not use alternative formats or templates.

Candidates' research and investigations should be focused on the key issues in the brief, for example 'street food' or 'festivals'. Candidates should not use percentages or pie charts to summarise data. They must provide individual results.

Candidates should avoid using the term 'popular' in their assignment. Many candidates use this term to justify their food product; however, they have no factual evidence to suggest that this would make their product popular.

In section 2(a) it is essential that candidates produce a detailed recipe that includes metric measurements for all ingredients. All ingredients used in the development of the product must be included in the ingredients list. As this is a product development task, the method must be detailed enough to allow for the product to be made with identical results. Portion sizes, cooking methods, cooking times, bakeware sizes and serving temperature, for example 'served hot' should be included in the recipe.

In section 2(b), candidates must provide a justification as to why they have chosen an ingredient or feature or a cooking method whilst also linking to the brief and the research. Candidates should not produce two dishes or accompaniments.

In section 4(b), candidates should include a clear description of any improvement, adaption or variation of the product. For example, the candidate should state 'add 50g of strawberries' instead of stating 'increase the fruit or strawberry content'. Also, for each of the improvements, adaptations or variations the candidate must provide an explanation as to why each one is appropriate, linked to the needs of the brief and the information gathered in research and investigations and/or testing.