

Course report 2026

Accounting National 5, SCQF level 5

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: 933

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 940

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	505	53.7	53.7	123
B	142	15.1	68.8	104
C	106	11.3	80.1	85
D	95	10.1	90.2	66
No award	92	9.8	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 generally as expected. Feedback from markers and centres suggested that the paper offered the appropriate level of demand and allowed candidates to use the subject knowledge and skills they had developed throughout the course.

Performance in the question paper was slightly lower than in session 2024–25. Some questions were more challenging than intended, and we adjusted grade boundaries to reflect this. Candidates found the Statement of Account and the combined Income Statement/Statement of Financial Position more challenging than expected. Both of these questions were assessed for the first time in a couple of years.

Assignment

The assignment generally performed as expected, however it did prove slightly more challenging than intended and we adjusted grade boundaries to reflect this.

The inclusion of Ledger Accounts, which candidates always find challenging and a poorly answered question on Ratio Analysis theory, meant the average assignment mark was lower than in previous years.

Formulae used by candidates was strong, and the ability to cell reference using data contained within the worksheets, seemed to aid candidates.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

Question 2 Part A(a)(i): The 11-mark basic Overhead Analysis was answered very well by candidates and was the highest scoring question in the paper. The majority of candidates also made a good attempt with both re-apportionments in (a)(ii) and (iii).

Question 3: FIFO Inventory Record Card was the second highest scoring question in the paper. Most candidates knew the layout and procedure; however a significant amount of candidates were not awarded marks because they used a 'running balance' in the balance column.

Question 5: The Trial Balance was the third highest scoring question. Most candidates were able to correctly classify entries as Dr/Cr to a high level.

Assignment

Task 2: Candidates performed very well in the Budget task and the majority were able to correctly interpret the information provided.

Task 3: Candidates also performed very well in this question. The most challenging element for candidates was determining the figures for the Current Ratio.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

Question 2 Part B: Although not dissimilar to previous Job Costing questions, candidates found this topic slightly more challenging than in previous years. Calculations for Fertiliser and Overheads proved to be especially challenging. Many candidates were not awarded a straightforward mark as they did not label the final total as 'Selling Price' or 'Charge to Customer', despite having the correct (or consequentially correct) final answer. Instead, many candidates just labelled it as 'Total Cost' which meant they did not gain the mark.

Question 4 (a): The Statement of Account was very challenging for candidates. This was the computational topic with the lowest average score. Many candidates started the question but did not attempt the final entries on 21 June (worth 4 marks). If they had attempted this they could have gained some marks, because the question is marked consequentially.

In the Income Statement and Statement of Financial Position question, some candidates found it difficult to produce both statements together, with nearly 9% of candidates not attempting a Statement of Financial Position.

Question 6: The break-even question averaged just above half marks and, as with all questions on this topic, they become more challenging as candidates progress through the question. Consequentiality allows candidates to attain marks even if they make an initial error, however they have to make an attempt at the questions in order to gain consequential marks. Most candidates made an attempt at 6(a), which steadily lowered as the question progressed, with only 61% attempting 6(f).

Candidate performance in theory questions was again low but showed improvement and candidates averaged over 50% across the theory in the paper for the first time in a number of years.

Assignment

Task 1: Candidates found many elements of the Ledger Accounts task challenging. In particular, entries on 12 March where VAT was inclusive and entries on 18 March pertaining to a Bad Debt had many poor responses.

Task 4: Although the ratios themselves were done well, many candidates struggled to give adequate reasons for the differences. A common error when analysing the Current Ratio was to state more/less 'assets' or 'liabilities' rather than prefixing with the word 'current' which was required to gain the mark.

Preparing candidates for assessment

You should share the advice in this report with candidates when they are preparing for assessment.

Question paper

All elements of the course specification are assessable. There are topic areas which will be assessed more frequently and others less frequently and many candidates were underprepared when answering the less frequently asked Statement of Account question.

You should make sure candidates understand how consequential marking works in Accounting and encourage them to respond to **all** questions, even if they think that writing a response would not gain marks. This also affects the theory questions where there was a high rate of no response.

Once again, some candidates who complete the question paper using a computer lost marks because they did not show their working. You should ensure that candidates show their workings in class, to help them get used to doing this in the final exam. Candidates and teachers can refer to the 'Top tips when using ICT in the question paper' which can be found under the 'Formulae and Course Support' heading on the National 5 Accounting subject page on [our website](#).

Assignment

You should continue to make sure that candidates are aware of the importance of cell referencing and using the data contained within the spreadsheet to construct formulae.