# Course report 2026

## National 5 Administration and IT, 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.

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# Statistical and grade boundary information

## Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 5,352

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 5,377

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

| Course award | Number of candidates | Percentage | Cumulative percentage | Minimum mark required |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1,814 | 33.7 | 33.7 | 84 |
| B | 1,391 | 25.9 | 59.6 | 70 |
| C | 1,078 | 20.0 | 79.7 | 57 |
| D | 672 | 12.5 | 92.2 | 43 |
| No award | 422 | 7.8 | 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.

A few candidates did not submit printouts for all questions, especially the table in 1(d). Most candidates attempted all parts of the theory question.

## Assignment

The assignment performed as expected.

Only a few candidates did not hand in printouts for every task, and the tasks they omitted were usually the mail merge and the e-diary.

# How candidates performed

## Question paper

### Question 1(a) — Database table

Many candidates gained most marks for this question. Some candidates were unable to change the date field to short date and did not change the field heading as instructed. Most candidates keyed-in the new record correctly.

### Question 1(b) — Database form

Most candidates gained more than half marks for this question. Most candidates accurately inserted the form header which was given. Some candidates did not gain the keyboarding mark because the surname or the e-mail address was incorrectly keyed-in. Some candidates did not include the instructor's title as part of their name, so did not gain the fields mark. Many candidates did not attain the print mark as the field names were truncated.

### Question 1(c) — Database report

Most candidates gained around half marks for this question. Many candidates did not insert an appropriate header, often this header only included one of the key points of information or omitted the year.

Many candidates were able to search on two fields however some candidates were unable to sort on two fields. Many candidates did not attain the print mark because some of the e-mail addresses were truncated, the name fields were not together, or the fields required were in the wrong order. Some candidates omitted the title field from the customer's name. Some candidates printed this question after they had completed question 1(d), this changed the records shown in the report, so they did not gain the print mark.

### Question 1(d) — Database table

Most candidates who attempted this question gained more than half marks. Most candidates attained the mark for deleting the record and printing the correct fields.

Some candidates did not sort the records. Most candidates who sorted the records sorted them correctly. Many candidates did not update the correct records.

## Question 2(a) — Tarn Enterprises worksheet

Most candidates gained more than half the available marks for this question.

In the value view, most candidates gained the merge mark and many candidates gained the sort mark. A few candidates incorrectly included the Total Activity Cost label in the sort. A few candidates inserted the Price per Person information before sorting the column, therefore the Activity and Price per Person did not match.

Many candidates did not gain the keyboarding mark as they omitted the Ringos or Buffet Lunch numbers. Many candidates did not gain the border mark as they did not border the cell, this was the second instruction in a comment box. Most candidates were not awarded the footer mark, usually because it was omitted, had keyboarding errors, or the full stop was missing.

In the formula view, most candidates were awarded the first 4 formula marks. A few candidates named the Activity Prices in the Prices worksheet, or keyed-in each price individually, so did not replicate column B. Many candidates attained the formula marks for both addition and subtraction in the overall cost section, many of these were consequential.

Few candidates attained the IF statement formula marks. This was often because the formula was not an IF statement, they did not use cell references, the Discount Rate was calculated instead of the Discount Amount, or the formula was truncated.

Most candidates attained the VAT multiplication formula mark, however some candidates inserted the VAT Rate, instead of calculating the VAT Amount. Most candidates named the VAT cell correctly.

## Question 2(b) — Income 2026 worksheet

Most candidates gained around half marks for this question.

In the value view, many candidates attained the formatting mark for formatting 2(a) value view correctly and the percentage change in 2(b) to % with 2 decimal places.

Most candidates created a bar chart with the title given. Many candidates did not attain the data mark because they did not highlight columns A and D to create the bar chart, they highlighted the March figures in column D only.

In the formula view, most candidates did not gain the percentage change mark. Many candidates did not gain the print mark because some of their printouts were in the wrong orientation, their name was not below the footer in question 2(a), or the bar chart was printed on a separate page instead of being embedded in the value view.

### Question 3 — Theory

Most candidates gained around half marks for this question, although some candidates gained very high or very low marks. Some candidates wrote about the benefits of good file management, instead of the features, so did not gain marks.

Many candidates scored highly in the security of property/equipment section, however some candidates described security of information instead.

Most candidates gained at least 1 mark for the customer service question, though some of their answers were not explained in sufficient detail or were repeated explanations.

## Assignment

### Task 1 — Headed paper

Most candidates gained most marks for this task. Many candidates had keyboarding errors, and a few candidates keyed-in the name of the youth centre a number of times. Some candidates inserted their name on the same line or above the slogan within the footer, so did not achieve the presentation mark.

### Task 2 — Poster

Most candidates gained at least half the available marks for this task. Almost all candidates correctly changed the page orientation, inserted the cost graphic and included the essential information.

Some candidates did not use the function to insert the filename into the header, instead they keyed in the filename, and often had keyboarding errors. Some candidates did not realise that the poster was for the Summer Bonanza, and keyed-in the youth centre as the event, therefore they were not awarded the keyboarding mark.

A few candidates did not use text formatting. Most candidates inserted graphics which did not look consistent. One of the graphics often covered the lines of the box, or the spacing around the graphic was inconsistent. Many candidates either deleted Monday — Friday or used it as part of the dates, so did not gain the presentation mark.

## Task 3 — E-mail

Most candidates gained most marks for this task. Most candidates were able to send an e-mail to two people and include the essential information.

Some candidates did not show the subject heading, so the reply function was not evidenced. Many candidates did not use the correct e-mail layout and had keying-in errors.

## Task 4 — Theory

Most candidates gained around half marks for the theory. Many candidates gained most of their marks in the outline and describe tasks.

Some candidates did not identify the feature of e-mail that they were describing and some candidates described benefits of e-mails. Some candidates had repetitive and vague answers in the explain task.

## Task 5 — Presentation

Most candidates gained most marks for this task. Most candidates were able to add a title slide with the essential information, delete a slide, remove the action buttons and print correctly. Many candidates inserted the handout header accurately and applied a design to all slides.

A few candidates did not copy the whole sentence to the reviews slide, with or without the quotation marks, consistently. A few candidates did not make the shape the correct size for the sentence which meant that words were incorrectly wrapped, for example, a word was split over two lines, or text was outwith the shape boundary. A few candidates used unsuitable slide designs which made text difficult to read.

Most candidates did not gain at least one of the keyboarding marks. Many candidates had keyboarding errors in the essential information on the title slide and some did not follow the instructions in the manuscript correction signs on the final slide. A few candidates did not print full page slides, instead they printed individual slides in handout view.

## Task 6 — Itinerary

Most candidates gained around half marks for this task. Most candidates created a front page with the essential information, inserted a border and numbered the correct pages.

Many candidates replaced Pottery with Dramarama, however a few did not replace every instance of the word. Many candidates cut and pasted the two activities. Few candidates gained the print mark because the alignment of the top of the tables was not consistent.

## Task 7 — Internet printouts

Most candidates gained around half marks for this task. Most candidates were able to find walking directions. Some candidates were able to search for a bus to and from Edinburgh and Glasgow, however only a few candidates were able to search on the correct date for the correct times.

## Task 8 — Mail merge security badge

Most candidates gained at least half marks for this task, with some candidates gaining full marks. Most candidates attempted a mail merge and some candidates gained both merge marks. Some candidates did not include the title field when inserting the name.

Most candidates created a box for the security badge that was the correct size and inserted a box for a photo. A few candidates did not use various text formats. A few candidates did not gain the logo mark because it had been omitted in one of the previous tasks, usually from slide 1 of task 5, the presentation.

## Task 9 — E-diary

Most candidates gained around half marks for this task. Most candidates were able to print in monthly view; however they sometimes did not submit additional printouts to show all the event details, or they printed more than one week. Some candidates created a timed event for the visit to Dynamic Earth, instead of an all-day meeting. Most candidates were able to show the reminder evidence.

Some candidates created the awards ceremony for the wrong time, and some candidates had keying-in errors in the event.

Many candidates did not use the task function, instead they set up a new meeting in the calendar or created a new calendar called Tasks.

## Task 10 — Consent Form

A few candidates gained over half the available marks for this task. Most candidates sorted the table into alphabetical order. Most candidates did not have the footer in the headed paper, or they inserted the headed paper after the heading of the form.

Many candidates did not shade all the header rows, most candidates omitted either the Tick box, or the Parent/Carer Signature row. Many candidates did not gain the presentation mark because they did not change the size of the rows to allow the form to be completed by hand.

# Preparing candidates for assessment

In both assessments candidates should proof read their work very carefully and pay attention to detail within the questions and tasks. They should look at their printouts and ensure they are not truncated and ensure they make sense. You should encourage candidates to attempt every question and hand something in for every question and task, because often they pick up marks.

If candidates are asked to include a name, they must have title, first name and surname in the correct order, and be together.

If candidates are composing their own heading (for example in a report, form or chart), it should include all key pieces of information or criteria, so that the heading accurately describes the data displayed. Good practice is to use block capitals for headings, for example in letters, forms, e-mails, reports, and charts to ensure consistent capitalisation.

The candidate name should be included outwith the document produced. When it is in the footer it should be below any information required, and if it is in the header it should be above the information required. In a database question the candidate's name should not be in the heading, instead it should be in the header or footer.

Common manuscript correction signs should be practised.

You must ensure that all the features and functions detailed in the course specification are practised by candidates. The course specification is available on the Administration and IT page of our website.

## Theory

You should remind candidates to answer theory questions by addressing the command word used:

- An outline response needs more than one word and usually includes a verb.
- A describe response requires more detail.
- An explain response must include a cause and effect.

Where we provide an example as part of a theory question, candidates should use this example to structure their answers but ensure that they do not replicate it in their responses.

# Question paper

## Database

If candidates create their own report heading they should ensure that it covers all the criteria requested in the question.

You must ensure that candidates have practised all the required features, for example, searching and sorting on two fields and creating a form with specified fields from more than one table.

Candidates should check their database printouts for truncation, especially field headings and e-mails, which are often the longest fields. It is good practice to change the orientation of the report if required, so that all fields fit on one page easily.

## Spreadsheet

Candidates should action each of the comments in number order. They must also read and action all of the information in each comment, not just the first part of it.

Candidates must ensure that they read the labels in a spreadsheet so that they know when a formula response is to be a rate or an amount. They should understand income, expenditure, VAT and discount so that they know whether they should be adding or subtracting cells.

Candidates should practise inputting combined or complex formula and IF statements. They should have a clear understanding of when = should be used within an IF statement.

If information required is included in the worksheet, for example VAT, a cell reference should be used in a formula, instead of the candidate keying-in numbers. Candidates should avoid naming cells, when they have not been directed to, because it may mean that they are unable to replicate cells.

Candidates must check that they hand in printouts for each question, including formula printouts. They should check they make sense and continue to check all printouts for truncation, especially formula printouts, which often require columns to be elongated. They should continue to have gridlines on value printouts, and gridlines with row and column headings on formula printouts.

Candidates should practice creating charts using non-adjacent cells, so that the correct data labels are displayed. All axis labels and legends should make sense.

## Assignment

You should refer to the marking instructions and general marking principles on our website when preparing candidates for future assessment. Any ICT issues encountered by candidates during the assignment, that might have an impact on marking, should be communicated via the ICT issues form which will be available on the Administration and IT page of our secure website. You must not write notes or include information within the candidate's evidence.

### Communication

If screenshots or snips are used for internet evidence, candidates must ensure that all the information required is visible and legible. Candidates cannot gain marks if information cannot be read. Candidates must ensure that they show all the criteria, for example date, time that has been requested and the printout is large enough to read the information. All directions must show the start and finish location.

Candidates should practise the layout of e-mails. All e-mails must have a subject, start, sensible message, and close, along with no commas at the start and close, with the spacing as displayed in the marking instructions. Candidates must proof read all e-mails carefully and the printout should be large enough so that the information can be read. If candidates use screenshots all information must be shown, for example subject, date and time stamp.

If an e-mail is to be sent to all candidates, the e-mail should be sent individually or bcc should be used, so that if candidates use reply all, they do not share their work with other candidates.

In the e-diary, candidates must ensure their evidence shows all the information required, in this assignment supplementary printouts were required to show event start and finish times, locations and the reminder.

Candidates should practise creating tasks using the to-do list function, not inserting a task as an event. They should also use the date due function, not insert the date manually.

## Word Processing

Graphics should be inserted consistently into boxes in the template.

When using headed paper it is good practice to insert files instead of using a screenshot. A screenshot will often mean that the headed paper is a different size to the original file.

When instructed to use different fonts and formats a minimum of two of each should be used, these should be noticeable, for example a change of font from 12 to 16 point.

## Presentations

Candidates should use a slide design which does not obscure writing and clearly shows the information — black backgrounds and white writing can be difficult to read.