

Course report 2026

National 5 Care, 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: 54

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 29

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	16	55.2	55.2	84
B	6	20.7	75.9	72
C	2	6.9	82.8	60
D	2	6.9	89.7	48
No award	3	10.3	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 was accessible and fair. Candidates appeared to be able to complete the paper in the allocated time.

The questions differentiated between candidates appropriately and allowed A-grade candidates to develop their answer for full marks, and C-grade candidates to gain marks. Course content was sampled adequately.

There were examples of candidates who performed between A and D grades across all centres.

Project

The project performed as expected.

There were examples of candidates who performed between A and D grades across all centres.

In section 2, candidate differentiation across all parts was evident. Candidates working at A grade were able to apply theories and the concepts described, to the brief and the individual. Candidates working at C grade were able to describe with little application to the chosen individual.

How candidates performed

Many candidates performed well. There were clear gaps in knowledge and understanding for some candidates, which adversely affected their overall grades. It was also evident that a few candidates were not ready to be presented for the question paper.

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper

Most candidates performed well in question 1: identifying two life experiences which can happen in adulthood.

Most candidates performed well in question 3: describing what is meant by 'nature' within human development.

Most candidates performed well in question 13: identifying the difference between the private and statutory care sectors.

Project

Many candidates performed well in items 2(e) and 3(b), and most candidates performed well in all other project items.

Candidates chose a diverse range of individuals and centres used innovative ways to help candidates choose an individual requiring care.

Candidates detailed the tasks and timescales effectively and most candidates referred to their chosen individual in the sources of information section.

Most candidates submitted a log book with their project and these were used with varying degree of effectiveness. Some log books had one or two sentences and others had a weekly account of progress.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper

Many candidates couldn't access all marks in the following questions:

- question 7 because they could not describe the sociological term 'power' or 'conflict'
- question 9 because they could not describe the principle of 'Responsive Care and Support'
- question 10 because they could not describe how cognitive needs can be met
- question 12 because they could not explain the importance of registration with a regulatory body

Project

As in previous years, many candidates found item 2(e) to be the most demanding. Some candidates were not clear about features of the positive care environment. This made it difficult for them to explain how these could meet the needs of the chosen individual.

In item 3(b) some candidates did not gain marks because they did not provide enough information on how they might use the knowledge and understanding related to care in the future.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper

Candidates need to be aware of how to respond to command words, for example describe, explain, identify.

You should ensure that candidates understand the care planning process, the different sectors of care, and the principles of the Health and Social Care Standards.

They also need to understand:

- norms, values and roles
- the process of socialisation
- the influence of agents of socialisation or other relevant social influences including government
- prejudice, stereotyping, labelling
- discrimination
- marginalisation, disempowerment and exclusion
- power and conflict
- consensus and dysfunction

You should look at the sociological concepts of the course, as similar questions will feature in future question papers.

Candidates are expected to display their knowledge of key concepts of the four psychological approaches identified. Candidates must also display knowledge of a range of sociological concepts. The key concepts are listed in the [National 5 Care Course Specification](#) on our website in the stages of development section of 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment'.

You should make sure candidates are aware of positive care practice, positive care environments, and understand the statutory, private, and voluntary care sectors. You should direct candidates to the [National 5 Care Course Specification](#) on the Care subject page of our website.

Project

You should make sure candidates are aware that the word count is set at 2,500–3,500 excluding references, footnotes and appendices with a penalty applied if the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%.

In terms of the positive care environment, you should ensure that candidates understand the four features: organisational aspects, physical aspects, therapeutic/interpersonal aspects, and community aspects, and that they are able to refer to them and the description of what each one refers to. You can find this information in the ‘additional notes on judging evidence’ section of the Coursework assessment task marking instructions.

You must remind candidates that it is mandatory to submit their log book with their project. You should also remind candidates to maintain the confidentiality of the individual, particularly if they choose clients they have worked with during their placement or friends or family.

If you distribute a case study or refer to an online resource for candidates to select their chosen individual, it is important you check that it allows the candidates enough scope to develop the project fully and access marks.

You should make sure candidates are aware of the importance of putting their research and investigations into their own words rather than copying directly from websites.

You should make sure you are using the most up-to-date coursework assessment task available on the [Care subject page](#) of our website.