



# **Course report 2024**

## **Advanced Higher Health and Food Technology**

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2024 appeals process.

# Grade boundary and statistical information

## Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 28

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 44

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

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

<b>A</b>	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	2.3	Cumulative percentage	2.3	Minimum mark required	77
<b>B</b>	Number of candidates	6	Percentage	13.6	Cumulative percentage	15.9	Minimum mark required	66
<b>C</b>	Number of candidates	16	Percentage	36.4	Cumulative percentage	52.3	Minimum mark required	55
<b>D</b>	Number of candidates	13	Percentage	29.5	Cumulative percentage	81.8	Minimum mark required	44
<b>No award</b>	Number of candidates	8	Percentage	18.2	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

# **Section 1: comments on the assessment**

## **Question paper**

The question paper sampled knowledge and understanding from a range of topics from the mandatory skills, knowledge and understanding in the course specification.

This was the first time the question paper had been answered in its entirety since the review of national qualifications and the removal of modifications.

Feedback suggested that the question paper was fair in terms of overall demand and course coverage and that candidates were able to complete the paper in the allocated time.

## **Project**

Candidates performed as expected in the project and achieved a range of marks. As per previous years there were some interesting and informative topics, which the candidates were clearly passionate about.

Almost all candidates provided a research question, backed up by two valid objectives, which helped to clearly focus the research. This year, most of the research was carried out via questionnaires with the identified target groups and interviews with specialists on the topics that were being researched. These methods allowed for a range of qualitative and quantitative research to be carried out by candidates.

Candidates generally performed well in stages 1 and 2 of the project and were weaker in stage 3. Some candidates are still drawing conclusions in this section which is no longer required.

## **Section 2: comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas that candidates performed well in**

#### **Question paper**

##### **Question 1(a)**

Most candidates answered this question very well, they were able to apply the answering technique required to discuss their answer and apply it to a wide range of marketing techniques which the manufacturer could use to promote their products to the consumer.

##### **Question 3**

Many candidates were able to answer this well and demonstrated a sound understanding of minerals and were able to clearly link them to the diet of an adolescent. Many candidates also demonstrated a very good depth of knowledge in this question and were able to get developed marks in their answers.

##### **Question 4**

Many candidates had a good understanding of the new product development stages and were able to apply the answering technique of evaluate to gain the marks for this question.

#### **Project**

##### **Stage 1(a)**

Most candidates performed well in this section by providing a clear, concise, and informative literature review, which focused clearly on the chosen topic. Most candidates were also able to back the literature review up with credible and current sources of information, which were cited correctly.

##### **Stage 1(b)**

Almost all candidates provided a research question, which was relevant and based on the topic of the literature review. This was then followed up with two valid objectives which allowed the candidate to clearly focus on the research question and allowed them to prove or disprove the research question. Once again there were some excellent and different research questions.

##### **Stage 1(c)**

All candidates accessed some of the marks for providing a clear and concise outline plan for how they were going to carry out their research and explaining why with valid reasons.

##### **Stage 2(a)**

This section was carried out to a high standard. Candidates were able to access marks in this stage as they carried out their research using the techniques and sources they outlined in the plan. Many candidates used interviews and questionnaires as their methods of research. The candidate interviews featured some very interesting people.

##### **Stage 2(b)**

Most candidates were able to access the marks in this section by providing sufficient relevant evidence for analysis. Candidates made sure the type of research they carried out was clearly linked to the research question, those who clearly thought about their questions

and linked them clearly to their objectives covered their research question in more detail therefore this gave them more information to analyse in stage 3.

### **Stage 3(a)**

The candidates who performed best in this stage were the ones who had carried out their research to a high standard and clearly interpreted the results and the importance of these results by linking them to evidence from the literature review. It was clear candidates are becoming more confident in this section as many were able to correctly use the skill of analysis.

### **Stage 3(b)**

Many candidates accessed the marks in this stage by evaluating their research process and explaining appropriate next steps.

## **Areas that candidates found demanding**

### **Question paper**

#### **Question 1(b)**

Many did not interpret the question correctly and linked the development of the new product to the health of the consumer rather than relate it to the impact of the food manufacturer.

#### **Question 2**

Some candidates were able and confident in the skill of evaluation; however, many did not answer the question correctly and talked about food choice in general and did not link it specifically to environmental issues.

### **Project**

#### **Stage 3(a)**

This is still the stage where candidates did not access all the available marks. Many did not fully analyse the results and link what they had found out from their research to the results. Some candidates introduced new information at this stage, which was not backed up by their research. Many candidates purely repeated the results at this stage, without offering any extra information. Advanced Higher level requires more depth, especially as it is the technique of analysis which marks are awarded for.

## **Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment**

### **Question paper**

Candidates should be aware of the knowledge and understanding that the question paper can assess. This information is in the 'Skills, knowledge and understanding for the course assessment' section of the [course specification](#) on SQA's website.

Candidates should be given more experience of answering exam-style questions in the correct time allocation.

It is advisable that candidates and centres have a look at the marking instructions from the previous question papers as there are some useful model answers and guidance on what is specifically being looked for with the different types of command words.

Candidates should be clear on how to apply each command word when answering the question paper and make sure that they make clear links to the question in the answer.

Candidates should be taught to read the questions carefully and make sure that they are answering the question in relation to what is being asked.

Candidates do appear to be grasping the answering technique of 'analyse' better, but they need to make sure that they read the question properly. Some candidates also still appear to not fully understand the different pieces of current dietary advice.

### **Project**

There was a good range of topics chosen for research, which were from all areas indicated in the 'skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification.

Centres must follow the information on SQA's website about submitting projects.

There is also useful information on the [Understanding Standards website](#) that will help with project submission.

Presentation of projects was varied. It would be beneficial if line spacing was 1.5 and a minimum font size of 11pt was used throughout.

Projects should include a bibliography. Many projects this year lacked a bibliography.

Many candidates referred to themselves throughout the project. This should be avoided, where possible use the phrase 'the researcher found that...'.

Candidates should use up-to-date and credible research material and make sure it is cited correctly throughout.

## Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims 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 is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA 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.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

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.

During the pandemic, we modified National Qualifications course assessments, for example we removed elements of coursework. We kept these modifications in place until the 2022–23 session. The education community agreed that retaining the modifications for longer than this could have a detrimental impact on learning and progression to the next stage of education, employment or training. After discussions with candidates, teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and others, we returned to full course assessment for the 2023–24 session.

SQA's approach to awarding was announced in [March 2024](#) and explained that any impact on candidates completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, would be considered in our grading decisions and incorporated into our well-established

grading processes. This provides fairness and safeguards for candidates and helps to provide assurances across the wider education community as we return to established awarding.

Our approach to awarding is broadly aligned to other nations of the UK that have returned to normal grading arrangements.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [National Qualifications 2024 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).