



Course report 2024

Childcare and Development Higher

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 in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 224

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 245

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	32	Percentage	13.1	Cumulative percentage	13.1	Minimum mark required	91
B	Number of candidates	56	Percentage	22.9	Cumulative percentage	35.9	Minimum mark required	78
C	Number of candidates	69	Percentage	28.2	Cumulative percentage	64.1	Minimum mark required	65
D	Number of candidates	51	Percentage	20.8	Cumulative percentage	84.9	Minimum mark required	52
No award	Number of candidates	37	Percentage	15.1	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

Questions used a balance of command words to allow candidates to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content.

Questions that required description and explanation continued to be challenging for some candidates. This type of question allows candidates to demonstrate and apply their knowledge. This allows for differentiation between an A candidate who should be able to demonstrate knowledge fully in their explanation, and a C candidate who may demonstrate a basic understanding of their knowledge but might not be able to provide an explanation of any depth.

Project

This year SQA returned to providing three briefs and candidates were able to choose from the following:

- ◆ Brief 1 How do Government initiatives support outdoor learning?
- ◆ Brief 2 How can literacy development be supported for children and young people?
- ◆ Brief 3 What are the benefits of play to the holistic development of children and young people?

The brief performed as intended to allow candidates to demonstrate their breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content of the course. Most of the projects presented this year were generally well referenced.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Generally, candidates performed well in section 1: child development.

- ◆ Question 1: most candidates identified appropriate emotional milestones for a child aged 8-12 years.
- ◆ Question 2: many candidates were able to evaluate an appropriate method of assessment for a child aged 8-12 years.
- ◆ Question 3(a): most candidates were able to describe a suitable activity for the promotion of fine motor skills
- ◆ Question 3(b): most candidates were able to explain ways in which a family could influence physical development using rhythm and rhyme.

Project

- ◆ Prompt A — Many candidates explained aspects of development and their interrelationship.
- ◆ Prompt C — Many candidates explained theories of development related to the child and the brief.
- ◆ Prompt E — Many candidates explained strategies and initiatives that were relevant to the child and the brief.
- ◆ Prompt G — Many candidates explained the roles and responsibilities of two professionals.
- ◆ Prompt I — Many candidates were able to provide a conclusion to the question posed in the brief.
- ◆ Prompt J — Many candidates were able to reference well.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

In section 2 question 4(a), many candidates were not able to describe a theory of language development. In question 4(b) many candidates were not able to apply a theory of language development to an appropriate play activity.

In question 5, many candidates were not able to identify a theory of social and emotional development and explain how this would be used by a keyworker in the settling in process.

In section 3, question 6, some candidates were not able to describe the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Candidates were not able to specifically describe in detail how the Act influences practice within a childhood practice setting. In question 7, some candidates did not correctly describe articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that were relevant to children and young people. In question 8,

many candidates did not explain the purpose of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) as a regulatory body.

Project

Prompt A: many candidates did not explain aspects of development that were relevant to the brief and the chosen child. Candidates were not specific in their explanation of the interrelationship between aspects.

Prompt B: some candidates did not analyse factors of development. Candidates were not specific in their analysis of one positive and two negative factors. Candidates were not specific in analysing the relationship between factors, and their relationship to the brief and the chosen child.

Prompt D: some candidates were not specific in their analysis of theories of development. Candidates were not specific in showing the relationship between the theories and their relationship to the child or young person. Candidates were not specific in exploring contradictions, comparing and contrasting, or inconsistencies and different views relating to theories of development.

Prompt F: many candidates did not explain the way that two current services supported the chosen child or young person in relation to the brief.

Prompt H: some candidates did not evaluate the effectiveness of partnership working. Candidates were not specific in their evaluation in terms of making a judgement about the effectiveness of partnership working. Candidates were not specific in their evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and/or advantages and disadvantages in relation to the chosen child.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Centres should ensure candidates have a sound understanding of all aspects of development and can effectively discuss and relate them to children.

In section 1: child development, candidates should ensure they can effectively evaluate appropriate methods of assessment.

In section 2: child development theory, candidates should ensure that they are able to describe theories of language development and apply them to the planning of appropriate play activities. Candidates should ensure that they are able to identify and explain theories of social and emotional development and be able to apply them to the settling in process.

In section 3: services for children and young people, candidates should ensure that they are able to describe legislation and how it influences practice.

Centres should continue to ensure that candidates:

- ◆ are specific in their description of theories and that they are specific to the area of development in question
- ◆ are specific on how the theory of development can be applied to learning experiences for children
- ◆ are specific in their explanation of how legislation influences practice in early learning and childcare settings
- ◆ understand and can describe current developments in legislation changes such as the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ◆ are specific in their description of the purpose of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)
- ◆ do not use acronyms when structuring responses based on the command word in the question paper. This can lead to candidates answering questions incorrectly.

Project

Centres should continue to ensure that candidates:

- ◆ are specific in their analysis of factors that influence development in relation to the brief and chosen child (Prompt B)
- ◆ are specific in their analysis of their chosen theories and can effectively relate this to the brief and chosen child (Prompt D)
- ◆ are specific in their evaluation of partnership working in relation to the two professionals identified in (Prompt H)

Centres should continue to ensure that all prompts respond to the brief and the chosen child in order to support candidates to achieve the maximum allocation of marks available to

them. The project coursework assessment task on the [Childcare subject page](#) has detailed marking instructions which clearly state that 'candidate responses must be clearly related to the brief and the chosen child or young person'.

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](#).