



Course report 2024

National 5 Fashion Textile 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: 632

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 616

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	109	Percentage	17.7	Cumulative percentage	17.7	Minimum mark required	70
B	Number of candidates	186	Percentage	30.2	Cumulative percentage	47.9	Minimum mark required	60
C	Number of candidates	165	Percentage	26.8	Cumulative percentage	74.7	Minimum mark required	50
D	Number of candidates	106	Percentage	17.2	Cumulative percentage	91.9	Minimum mark required	40
No award	Number of candidates	50	Percentage	8.1	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

The question paper performed as expected. Feedback from centres suggests it was a fair and balanced paper.

Assignment

Feedback suggests most centres like the separation of the practical assignment from the practical activity, although some centres continue to allow candidates to make their item in response to their practical assignment. There was a bias towards the teenager's item influenced by the 1960s, although candidates who chose the children's item based on a Scottish product brief did equally well.

There was improvement in marks achieved this year, with candidates' performance improving in some key areas.

Practical activity

Most candidates correctly manufactured items which met the national standard of eight construction techniques, with a minimum of two techniques from the higher tariff columns.

Most centres provided candidates with varying degrees of personalisation in either the choices of fabric, or method of decoration or embellishment.

Centres are encouraged to allow some personalisation and choice, even if candidates are manufacturing the same items.

Where there was difficulty with the assessment approach it was due to centres limiting candidates' marks by trying to make techniques add up to 28 marks at National 5, rather than marking the eight highest tariff techniques.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper

Question 1(a): most candidates could identify a suitable embellishment and fastening, and many could explain one or both. Where marks were not awarded it was due to the answer not relating specifically to a wedding dress.

Question 1(b): some candidates evaluated the use of silk and made four points, but many achieved only one or two points. Candidates were not penalised for not using the ratings (excellent, good, fair and poor) included in the fabric properties chart.

Question 1(c): a few candidates correctly identified methods of manufacturing the dress sustainably, but many could not, and it was clear candidates have limited knowledge of sustainability.

Question 2(a): most candidates could identify factors related to clothing for the elderly, but some failed to explain the relevance to the elderly or manufacturer.

Question 2(b): some candidates could evaluate four points about selling in the high street, although some candidates were confused about the term 'high street shop'. Those candidates who were not awarded marks, often failed to relate their points to the elderly and instead made general points about high street shopping.

Question 2(c): many candidates could identify benefits of wool and polyester but made general comments that did not relate to the elderly or to the trousers. Marks were awarded for explanations relating to wool, polyester or the blended fabric.

Question 3(a)(i): most candidates could identify a style feature and embellishment, and most could explain the suitability for the costume.

Question 3(a)(ii): most candidates could describe reasons for suitability of elastane for a costume.

Question 3(b): most candidates could not give reasons for the use of a ball point needle with a knitted fabric.

Question 3(c): most candidates could give safety rules for using an overlocker.

Assignment

The briefs were generally used correctly and there was a better coverage of both key themes this year.

Most candidates attempted all sections of the assignment.

Stage 1

Themes

Most candidates were able to identify the two key themes.

Investigations

Most candidates were able to carry out three investigations, although not all were clearly separated, and a few candidates are still not providing points of information.

Some candidate investigations consolidated previous findings rather than providing four new points of information. For example, '...cotton was found in 12/20 items, cotton was the preferred choice in the questionnaire, an expert confirmed cotton was a suitable fabric...'. This does not move the development of the item forward and results in candidates having difficulty identifying and justifying sufficient design features.

Candidates who have clearly decided upon their design solution prior to embarking on investigations tend to limit themselves and restrict their marks.

Design solution

Presentation of the design solution was generally well done. Many candidates identified features and were able to justify them based on findings from research. A few candidates used information not found in the investigations or relied on personal opinion. Marks are only awarded for features and justification based on the findings of the investigations completed by the candidate in section 1.

Testing

Most candidates carried out a suitable test, and most drew valid points of information from this test, although a few candidates still either provided no points of information, or only rewrote the results, and sometimes the scale used limited the usefulness of the information obtained.

Evaluation

More candidates were able to identify points to evaluate, however candidates tended to make statements rather than evaluations.

Practical activity

Most centres marked to the national standard and correctly judged the mark to be awarded for each technique.

Visiting verifiers consistently remarked on the high quality of items being manufactured, and the wide range of items being completed.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Candidate performance was generally better than in previous exam diets, and fewer candidates made no attempt at answering some questions. Whilst it is clear candidates possess relevant knowledge in some areas, they do not apply this knowledge to the context of the question. For example, it was clear many candidates knew the properties of wool and polyester but not why they would be suitable for a pair of trousers or for the elderly.

Centres should refer to the Summary of fibre properties document which is available on the [National 5 Fashion and Textile Technology subject page](#). They should encourage candidates to distinguish between fibres using the four-point scale — excellent, good, fair or poor.

Centres must improve candidate understanding of the difference between a fibre and a fabric and how each behaves.

Centres should encourage candidates to refer to the item stated in the question rather than use general terms, such as item, clothes or garment, as this prevents the candidate from linking back to the context of the question effectively.

Centres should ensure that candidates have knowledge of sustainable manufacture of fibres, fabrics and garments and be able to apply this knowledge to different contexts.

Centres should ensure candidates have knowledge of a range of needle types and their uses, either practically or theoretically.

Assignment

Stage 1

Themes

Candidates must correctly identify the two key themes. At National 5 level no explanation is required.

Investigations

Candidates should be reminded that both key elements of the brief must be investigated. This allows candidates to access the full range of marks available in the justification and evaluation stages.

Investigations which rely on colour as a key feature should provide evidence in colour as black and white images do not allow for clear visualisation when marking.

Centres should ensure that all three investigations are clearly separated and that points of information to be taken forward are clearly identified at the end of each investigation. Each investigation should provide four new points of information or narrow a range of choices down.

Candidates should be encouraged to make definitive statements. For example, if a candidate finds that the most common fastening was a zip then they should state their solution will contain a zip. Further investigations could lead to the type of zip, position of zip and colour of zip being decided.

Centres should encourage candidates to not decide what they are developing too early on and to investigate a wide range of items. Candidates who do not provide a wide range of examples limit their ability to draw valid conclusions. Some candidates investigated only four or five items which made it difficult to identify common features or colours.

Centres are reminded that good practice would be to ensure that one investigation includes research into the properties and characteristics of fibres and construction techniques appropriate to their solution as this allows candidates to access marks for justification of properties and characteristic and construction techniques in section 2.

Centres should avoid teaching the use of formulaic answers for the points of information. For example, '...I found xxxxx, therefore I will consider this in my next investigation...' or '...this makes the item influenced by the 1960s suitable for a teenager...'. This results in candidates failing to make it clear how they are moving the finding forward and developing the solution, therefore marks cannot be awarded.

Centres should ensure candidates check all their work is printed before submission. There is an issue with electronic submissions, there have been instances where blocks of information have been copied and pasted into a box which has resulted in the box spreading over multiple pages and failing to print when requested. A few candidate's assignments were missing multiple pages this year, which can delay marking.

Centres are reminded that the briefs are published in September each year on the [Fashion and Textiles Technology subject page](#) and are the same for both National 5 and Higher. These could be adapted for National 4 combined unit assessment if centres have a tri-level class.

Centres are reminded to download the correct up-to-date version of the candidate workbook each year as failure to do so severely disadvantages candidates.

Design solution

Justifications must be based on the findings contained in the investigations completed by the candidate in section 1.

The properties and characteristics must be linked to a particular fabric which has been identified from the investigations.

Testing

Most candidates carried out a suitable test, but some failed to draw valid points of information from the test, instead they just rewrote the results. Candidates should be taught not to rewrite results but to come to some conclusion about them. For example, '... three out of five of testers rated the colour as excellent, and two as good, this suggest I made a good

colour choice...' or '...Three of the teenagers who looked at my design felt the skirt was too long. I will need to do more research into what a more appropriate length would be...'

Candidates must provide a suitable key when presenting test results to allow for valid judgements to be made. Asking additional questions often provides candidates with additional information which enables them to make evaluative statements.

Evaluation

Centres are reminded that an evaluation must include a fact, a judgement, and an impact. The fact should come from the testing carried out in section 3 rather than the investigations carried out in section 1. For example, '...Based on results of my testing, three of my testers felt my skirt was too long (fact), therefore my design doesn't reflect the 1960s (judgement) therefore I have not met the brief and will need to adapt my design and retest it' (impact).

Practical activity

A few centres were praised for their excellent use of photographs (taken by candidates), which provided a good record of progress throughout the manufacture of the item. This is a good record for verifiers to see and allows for clarification of any techniques which can't be seen once the item is complete.

Centres are reminded the candidates should be marked for the eight highest tariff techniques, even if it means their possible mark exceeds 28. Candidates cannot be awarded more than 28 marks for this section.

Marks should be shown in the marking grid for all eight techniques, with the highest tariff technique being shown first and subsequent techniques being listed in descending order.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to demonstrate techniques which exceed the maximum marks available but cannot be awarded more than 28 marks for National 5.

Appendix 1: 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](#).