



Course report 2024

National 5 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: 1,652

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 1,528

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	336	Percentage	22.0	Cumulative percentage	22.0	Minimum mark required	82
B	Number of candidates	338	Percentage	22.1	Cumulative percentage	44.1	Minimum mark required	70
C	Number of candidates	391	Percentage	25.6	Cumulative percentage	69.7	Minimum mark required	58
D	Number of candidates	255	Percentage	16.7	Cumulative percentage	86.4	Minimum mark required	46
No award	Number of candidates	208	Percentage	13.6	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

Feedback from markers and centres showed a well-balanced and fair paper. Most candidates made a good attempt at answering all the questions.

The number of unanswered questions was lower than in previous years, however, some candidates still have difficulty providing the required detail for 'explain' questions. Some questions were found to have been more demanding than intended therefore, this was considered when setting the grade boundary.

Assignment

Both briefs were accessible to all candidates and fully completed by most candidates. The 'Develop a savoury dish that is high in calcium for a school canteen' brief was completed by slightly more candidates than the 'Develop a lunch item for a café that includes a plant-based alternative'. Both briefs performed equally well.

The reintroduction of making and testing the product gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding acquired throughout the course and these sections were mostly completed well.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Question 1(a)

Most candidates could give at least one way of increasing fibre in the diet. Some candidates did not gain the marks as they did not give ways to increase fibre and merely stated to eat specific foods rather than 'eat more'.

Question 1(c)

Most candidates could explain at least one benefit of teenagers eating breakfast.

Question 1(d)

Most candidates could identify nutrients a teenager may not have enough of in their diet and explain the affect this would have on their health.

Question 2(a)

Most candidates performed well in this question, achieving three or more marks. Many candidates related their answers back to the person or activity in the question stem and could evaluate the impact of having more than enough or too little of the nutrient compared to the DRV that they chose.

Question 2(b)

Most candidates could give an advantage or disadvantage of cook–chill foods with many giving both.

Question 3(c)

Some candidates could name two stages in the development of a new street food product; however, they did not always correctly explain the stages chosen.

Question 4(a)

Most candidates explained at least two factors which may influence a teenager's food choice and showed a good understanding of this.

Question 4(c)

Most candidates identified correct pieces of current dietary advice and/or correctly described a way to adapt the recipe.

Question 5(b)

Most candidates correctly evaluated at least two ways the packaging was suitable for a child's sandwich.

Question 6(c)(iii)

Many candidates gave a correct function of vitamin D and could identify at least one source of this vitamin.

Question 6(d)

Most candidates could give at least one correct benefit of drinking water.

Assignment

Section 1(a): exploring the brief

Most candidates identified three key issues from the brief and could explain why each one was important.

Section 1(b)(iii): carrying out research

Again, this section was completed well by most candidates. Most candidates used valid research techniques, the most common being questionnaire and internet research, and presented them logically with detailed conclusions. Many candidates who chose to carry out a questionnaire did so accurately and were able to access all the marks available.

Some candidates found it difficult to carry out a third investigation that was relevant to the brief and therefore did not produce conclusions that could be taken forward towards developing a product.

Section 3: sensory testing

This section, which had been removed for the previous two sessions, was completed well by most candidates with many carrying out a rating test and making at least three accurate conclusions from the data gained. A few candidates, however, did not give any reasons as to why they chose to carry out this test, therefore were unable to access all the marks.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Question 1(b)

Whilst most candidates were able to state the health benefits of increasing fibre in the diet, many did not explain these benefits and gave answers that lacked the depth and detail required for this type of question.

Question 2(c)

Knowledge of the responsibilities of the Citizens Advice Bureau was very weak with most candidates being unable to describe their responsibilities when dealing with complaints. Some candidates confused these responsibilities with those of Trading Standards Officers.

Question 3(b)

Some candidates did not fully explain why a manufacturer would carry out either sensory testing or market research and many did not give enough detail in their answers to access all three marks.

Question 4(b)

Many candidates gave brief answers that described ways to prevent cross contamination, however, they did not give the required detail or explain how these ways prevented cross contamination. Many answers lacked the depth required and therefore candidates were unable to access the marks.

Question 5(a)(iii)

Some candidates were able to explain one benefit to the consumer of both Fairtrade and organic produce but did not give either a developed response or a further explanation therefore they were unable to access all of the available marks. Most candidates could give a basic description of each but did not explain how this benefits the consumer.

Question 5(c)

Most candidates were unable to adequately explain three ways of preventing dental caries in children.

Question 6(b)

Many candidates lacked knowledge of the functional properties of fat in shortcrust pastry.

Assignment

Section 2: the product idea

Many candidates either did not fully justify the ingredients and features or repeated the justifications multiple times.

When justifying the cooking process, many candidates used their own knowledge of this process and not information generated from the research.

Section 4(iv): evaluation

Many candidates did not give conclusions for all their stated key issues, instead giving several conclusions relating to one or two key issues. Where candidates had identified 'develop' as one of their key issues, this was rarely mentioned in this section. Similarly, 'lunch item' and 'savory dish' were missed by some.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

The course specification explains the overall structure of the course including its aims and purpose as well as information on the skills, knowledge and understanding required. The appendix gives valuable information regarding requirements for the assignment.

Centres must ensure that they are using the most up-to-date versions of all documents which are available on the [Health and Food Technology subject page](#) on SQA's website.

Question paper

Centres should use the 'skills, knowledge and understanding' section of the course specification to ensure that candidates cover all areas of course content. This section could also be used as a revision tool or checklist to help candidates plan their revision.

Most candidates found it difficult to give a detailed answer relating to the Citizens Advice Bureau. Centres should ensure they cover contemporary food issues when delivering the course.

Centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the command words used in the question paper and should support candidates with training in exam technique throughout the course. Past papers and marking instructions are useful tools in this aspect.

Candidates should be taught the difference in depth required between describe and explain questions and be given opportunities to practice this. Many candidates were disadvantaged once again this year as they did not fully explain their answers.

Evaluation answers should include a judgement and an impact relating to the detail in the question.

Centres should encourage candidates to take time to read each question carefully, including the number of marks assigned to each question. This will benefit them as they will not miss important information or continue with a thread from a previous question which has not been asked for.

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to write as clearly as possible so that markers can read their handwriting.

Assignment

Centres should ensure that candidates pick one brief and stick to it all the way through the assignment.

Centres should check that all information and diagrams are easy to read. It is not essential to print assignments in colour, however, if diagrams and pie charts that rely on a colour key for displaying information are included, please ensure that these are presented for marking in colour to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged.

Candidates should not submit work that has been block highlighted in bold or dark colours. This makes it difficult for markers to read and could disadvantage candidates.

Centres should ensure that all sheets belonging to candidates are presented for marking. It was noted that several assignments were presented with pages missing, particularly investigations which would have had an impact on the candidate's mark had this not been picked up by markers. Numbering sheets and performing a final check with the candidate before signing the flyleaf may help to prevent this happening.

It should be noted that a photograph of the product is required, and some parts of the following sections may not be marked if no photograph is included. It is good practice to check that the photograph has been printed in full and has not been obscured by a formatting issue.

Candidates with detailed research performed better as they were able to link back to this in the justification section.

Candidates should link justifications back to both the brief and investigations.

Candidates should ensure that information they refer to in the justification section has been included in the summarised information in the investigations and is not taken directly from a website, this will ensure that markers can find it and mark accordingly.

When writing up the recipe, candidates should ensure ingredients are given in metric measurements or state the size of the ingredient, for example, 'medium egg' and use correct British ingredient and temperature terminology.

It may be useful for candidates to cross check their recipes to ensure that all ingredients are mentioned in the method and vice versa.

In the sensory testing section, individual results, not averages or percentages, need to be given, a key must be provided and used accurately, and the conclusions should come from the results of the test rather from the extra comments from testers.

Centres should not provide candidates with a proforma for sensory testing. This is too much scaffolding and may result in candidates having marks removed. Testing should not be teacher led, candidates should develop their own key and method of presenting their data.

It should be noted that a star diagram is a method of presenting data and not the name of a test.

In the evaluation section, candidates should read what is required for each section carefully and refer back to their research where appropriate.

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](#).