



Course report 2024

National 5 Physical Education

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.

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: 20,022

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 20,348

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	9,676	Percentage	47.6	Cumulative percentage	47.6	Minimum mark required	87
B	Number of candidates	6,288	Percentage	30.9	Cumulative percentage	78.5	Minimum mark required	74
C	Number of candidates	3,343	Percentage	16.4	Cumulative percentage	94.9	Minimum mark required	61
D	Number of candidates	880	Percentage	4.3	Cumulative percentage	99.2	Minimum mark required	48
No award	Number of candidates	161	Percentage	0.8	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

Portfolio

It was felt that the portfolio performed similarly to previous years. Feedback suggests that teachers and lecturers possess a clear understanding of the assessment by attending understanding standards events.

Feedback indicates that it was felt to be fair and accessible for all candidates, with comments suggesting that there were questions within the assessment accessible to C candidates, as well as questions to challenge A candidates. The majority of candidates understood what was required and were able to complete the whole portfolio.

On the whole, all questions performed as expected.

Performance

From all the centres sampled, the performance component performed as expected. A range of activities were observed by verifiers and information from the centres showed that an even wider range of activities were assessed in centres.

Centres appear to have embraced the opportunity to allow personalisation and choice.

Some centres were outwith tolerance in their judgements and were required to revisit the marks for the entire cohort and adjust the marks where necessary. Each centre in this situation received feedback and support to ensure they marked to the national standard.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Portfolio

Question 2(a) — Candidates were able to explain the challenges faced when gathering data and link back to the reliability of the data.

Questions 2(b), 2(f) — Candidates were able to identify methods of data collection and relevant targets.

Question 2(c) — Descriptions were short and concise, allowing most candidates to achieve marks for the process and the data collection method.

Question 2(e) — Most candidates described a strength and development need for both factors. Candidates were able to clearly use short and concise descriptions of performance.

Question 2(h) — Candidates clearly understood how to describe approaches to performance development.

Performance

Candidates performed well, and many candidates achieved full marks. Verifiers reported that they observed some outstanding performances where some National 5 candidates were playing against, or with, Higher candidates who were introduced to enable the National 5 candidate to have the opportunity to access a full range of marks in an appropriate context. It was clear that centres knew their candidates' capabilities and so were able to provide suitable contexts for assessment.

Personalisation and choice led to strong performances in this component of the course.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Portfolio

Question 1 — Candidates found it challenging to give a specific context with suitable detail and then relevant related impact. Candidates continue to find it challenging when responding using social and emotional factors such as 'sadness', 'happiness', 'etiquette' and 'team dynamics' to explain the context and impact on the performance. 'Confidence' continues to be incorrectly included in mental factor responses.

Questions 2(d) — Many candidates gave relevant reasons for using an identified method but lacked reasoning to explain the benefit of these on the performance development process.

Question 2(i) — Candidates found it challenging to justify their decisions. Some candidates were able to include a 'decision' and 'explanation', however they did not have a clear link between this and the 'personal reasoning', or did not give enough reasoning for the decision to access marks.

Question 3(d) — While a few candidates accessed the full mark range, many candidates found it challenging to evaluate relevant aspects of the Personal Development Programme (PDP). Responses which made judgements on relevant aspects of the PDP still lacked personal value linked to the performance development process rather than an overall performance impact. This resulted in limited access to marks.

Question 3(e) — Candidates found it challenging to make a judgement and determine the value of its impact on performance. Some candidates found it challenging to demonstrate depth or breadth of knowledge of both factors to access the full mark allocation.

Question 3(f) — An increasing number of candidates produced concise responses to justify next steps however, those who did not gain marks often lacked detail related to current performance, a relevant action or personal reasoning for their future plans.

Performance

There were a few reports of candidates having difficulty accessing marks from a particular area of the marking instructions.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Portfolio

Question 1(a) — Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that a clear factor, context and impact on performance are included for each response. Candidates must also ensure that the impact demonstrates a linked understanding to the context included in the response. For example, 'Having good team dynamics will positively impact my performance in cross country because my team members will motivate and cheer each other on to push our hardest, all the way to the finish line. This will result in me being able to keep pushing my pace all the way, even when I am getting tired and out of breath, so I will be able to get the best places and times in races that I can achieve.'

Centres should be aware that 'confidence' is an emotional factor and marks will not be awarded in this question if candidates use 'confidence' as a mental factor.

Question 2(d) — Candidates should ensure that they provide a reason why the method was used and an explanation of its benefits. Candidates should also be aware that reasoning around reliability and validity must have a 'so what?' to ensure knowledge is not repeated from Question 2(a).

For example, 'One reason I used the T-10 to gather data on the physical factor CRE is that it is practical. This means that it is easy to set up and carry out. The effect of this was that I was able to gather data easily without making mistakes and identify my strengths and needs to create a training programme specific to me.'

Question 2(i) — A candidate's justification in 2(i) must give a decision, explanation and personal reasoning. Decisions may come from any area of the PDP other than the justification of approaches. Personal reasoning is demonstrated by acknowledgement of how the decision made will benefit the candidate's performance development during the PDP.

Question 3(d) — Candidates must identify an aspect from their PDP, place a positive or negative judgement on the effectiveness of the PDP and then make a value judgement back to the PDP on whether it was effective or not. The value must link back to the impact on the PDP or training process and not in a game or performance situation.

Question 3(e) — Candidates must evaluate performance after the PDP has taken place. Candidates should place a positive or negative value in relation to the factors and make a judgement on the impact on performance. Candidates must show that they understand that this is the end impact of the performance development process. Candidates accessing high marks in this question evaluated two different aspects of performance for each factor.

Candidates can access 2 marks for the development of a point of evaluation about the impact of one aspect of performance in each factor. This is illustrated in the additional guidance within the marking instructions examples.

Question 3(f) — Candidates must state where they are in their current performance, the action they will take to improve in this area and give personal reasoning as to why they will

take this action. Candidates may write about any factor, but responses must be related to their chosen portfolio activity.

Candidates must ensure that reasoning gives a detailed justification of the planned action, for example, why this action will ensure improvement in performance or exemplify a clearly linked performance development impact.

Candidates must not directly copy the examples provided in the additional guidance section of the marking instructions. They cannot obtain marks if they use these examples.

Performance

A key aim of the National 5 Physical Education course is to develop candidates' ability to perform in physical activities by enabling them to acquire a comprehensive range of movement and performance skills in a variety of activities.

Centres are reminded that candidates must choose two activities which allow them the opportunity to display a significantly different range of movement and performance skills. To set it apart from normal learning and teaching activities, the assessment of these performances must take place in a context which is suitably challenging for a National 5 Physical Education candidate.

Updated guidance can be found in the Physical Education Performance coursework assessment task on [SQA's subject page](#) to help teachers and assessors decide which activities are acceptable for assessment.

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](#).