



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Drama
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Candidates on the whole were well prepared for both components of the external exam and performed well.

Centres were largely well organised for the practical examination and devised pieces were creative and well rehearsed.

Areas in which candidates performed well

In the Practical Exam it was noticeable that many Intermediate 1 candidates had devised dramas that were complex and detailed, and that these had been thoroughly rehearsed.

Viva Voces were conducted well by candidates, with many of them having a clear idea of the sort of questions they would be asked and responding in detail to those questions.

The required length of piece for the practical exam (minimum 15-20 minutes) was well adhered to by centres.

In the Question Paper there were many good responses across the paper.

Question 4 (a) *State your character's **role** in your drama*, and Question 4(b) *What was your character's **purpose** in your drama*, were especially well answered by the majority of candidates, with most knowing the important difference between role and purpose.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Neither the Question Paper nor the Practical Exam seemed to be over-demanding for the majority of candidates.

Question 9 was a more demanding question on staging but most candidates responded well to it. They answered in detail and were able to apply their knowledge and creative thinking.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Several issues were raised about centres' organisation of the Practical Exam

- 1 Timing of the exam: while Visiting Assessors make every effort to time the external exam around the school day. The Drama practical exam is an external SQA assessment and all candidates need to be available throughout the planned time with the Visiting Assessor.
- 2 Because this is an SQA assessment no filming of the performance/Viva etc is allowed.

- 3 Similarly, because it is an external assessment, members of staff must not be present for any part of the practical exam except the performance itself.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2011	2456
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	2601
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	22.8%	22.8%	593	70
B	39.7%	62.5%	1032	57
C	26.9%	89.4%	699	45
D	5.9%	95.2%	153	39
No award	4.8%	100.0%	124	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.