



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Drama
Level(s)	Intermediate 2

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.

Generally, centres were largely well prepared for the practical examination and pieces were largely well rehearsed.

The choice of text for the practical exam remains a problem for some centres. While many texts were appropriate for the level and age of the candidates, and an appropriate audience was chosen, some centres did not follow the instructions and candidates were disadvantaged.

The length of Intermediate 2 productions remains an issue in many centres and, despite the instructions and SQA guidelines stating that a minimum time of 20-25 minutes is required for one production, this is being interpreted in different ways.

Further comments on this issue follow in this report and Instructions to Centres for 2013 will be updated to reiterate this and other issues about the practical exam.

In the Question Paper all the extracts were tackled, with extract 2 being the least popular.

Responses were similar in marks range across all three extracts.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Question Paper

On the whole candidates performed well across the paper.

Question 1 was well answered and responses largely referred well to the text.

Question 3 was quite a complex one but the majority of candidates chose the character well and continued to provide detail throughout all parts of the question.

Question 5 elicited many really creative responses to this problem-solving question.

Practical Exam

Acting candidates largely performed some very complex characters in great detail and sustained characterisation throughout well. Viva voce across all areas was largely conducted well, with candidates giving creative and detailed responses. Technical candidates were well prepared.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question Paper

Question 5 — many candidates did not read the question and answer it fully, so lost marks here by listing problems but giving no solutions to those problems.

Question 2 – again, many failed to read the question fully and did not relate the practical activities to the theme discussed in Question 1.

Question 4 — many candidates described the relationship but lost marks as the question asked them to write in terms of voice and movement and not merely describe the relationship.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- 1 The length of piece for the Intermediate 2 practical exam must be a minimum of 20-25 minutes. This is for **one** production, and centres may have many productions. This means that each 25 minute production runs without a break, has the same actors throughout — unless a swap over of a main character can be achieved without stopping — and, crucially, has **one** technical production team assigned to it. The purpose of the Intermediate 2 practical exam is to give candidates the experience of running a production of a suitable length so that every participant has enough scope for creativity and the opportunity to access the full range of available marks in their area of expertise.
If these criteria are not met candidates will be disadvantaged. Visiting Assessors will ask for repeat performances if the piece is not long enough and that is unsettling for candidates and does not show them at their best. If technical candidates do not have the full scope of a long enough piece to work on, they can be disadvantaged and this will be reflected in the marks awarded.
- 2 Therefore only **one** Costume and/or Make-up designer is allowed per 25 minute production. The Costume Designer must costume **all** of the actors, and the Make-up Designer must design for **all** actors and either apply all make-ups themselves or oversee application by others. Even though the Visiting Assessor only watches two make-ups being applied, they cannot give a mark for the creativity of make-up in performance if only two candidates are in make-up. The same applies for the Costume Designer.
- 3 Lighting candidates need access to a minimum of 6 lanterns able to be operated individually. Being a Lighting Designer at Intermediate 2 level implies that focusing and gelling of these lanterns is a possibility for the candidate, even if done by someone else under their direction. Candidates must be able to discuss this during the viva.
- 4 Centres should note that it is good practice to choose their text each year to suit their candidates (eg ability, range, gender balance of the group) rather than use the same text every year.
- 5 Timing of the exam: 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.
- 6 Because this is an SQA assessment, no filming of the performance/viva etc is allowed.
- 7 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

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2011	1473
------------------------------------	------

Number of resulted entries in 2012	1693
------------------------------------	------

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	53.9%	53.9%	912	70
B	25.4%	79.3%	430	60
C	13.5%	92.8%	229	50
D	2.8%	95.6%	48	45
No award	4.4%	100.0%	74	-

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.