

Advanced Higher Physical Education

General Advice

Head of Department Perspective

1. Negotiating and managing the Course
2. Tutoring candidates in preparation for Unit and Course assessment
3. Teacher/lecturer role as facilitator/manager
4. Supporting candidate self-study

INTRODUCTION

Whilst the logistics of the implementation process remain the responsibility of the centre, the advice offered is intended to aid the process by providing possible solutions for staff in the introduction stages of the Advanced Higher Physical Education Course.

1 Negotiating and managing the Course

There are obvious difficulties in obtaining a suitable timetable slot when competing for candidates. However, with a good department record of candidate accredited SQA results, the continuity of Advanced Higher study is an obvious development for broadening the Post 16 curricular provision. This may relate to your whole school development initiatives. The key to success is the *early recruitment of candidates*: think about the current cohort, identify the capable and potential candidates at this stage.

A suggested strategy

A strategic approach to negotiating the introduction of the Advanced Higher Course is to provide Senior Management (*in the year prior to implementation*) with a detailed framework identifying difficult issues and offering some flexible alternatives. Importantly, this provides a perspective about how **all** the upper school candidates' requirements would be met.

Identifiable features such as:

- a) Candidate uptake
- b) Timetabling/staffing implications
- c) Parental perception/support
- d) Certificate currency

a) Candidate uptake

Often the candidate uptake is quite small therefore teaching and learning considerations can be complex.

Considerations must also be made in respect of:

- ◆ the learning and teaching of Core, Higher and Intermediate level classes
- ◆ staff expertise, facilities and resources.

b) Timetabling/staffing implications

It is important to negotiate with Senior Management and subject staff how the Courses will be adequately delivered.

It is desirable to have more than one member of staff timetabled to facilitate delivery of theoretical content. This may also serve as a staff development opportunity with CPR targets being satisfied.

There are various options available:

- ◆ teach an Advanced Higher group on their own (*all Course elements*)
- ◆ integrate Advanced Higher – particularly important in the delivery of practical performance (*separating them for some theoretical aspects of coursework, via tutorials for example*)
- ◆ integrate Higher and Intermediate 2 candidates (*differentiating theoretical aspects of coursework*)

One of the most beneficial ways is to integrate candidates for practical performance. This provides challenging contexts, motivation and sound assessment environments for all candidates. Consideration of the diversity of the other Course elements must be carefully planned to take account of the different individual learning styles. Accordingly, candidates are allowed adequate time to reinforce and integrate the various learning aspects of the appropriate demand level.

For example, use of:

- ◆ various teaching methodologies
- ◆ differentiated class assignments, homework and support materials
- ◆ group and individual tutorials
- ◆ practical and theoretical workshops
- ◆ achievement related assessment.

Considerations must also be made in respect of:

- ◆ staff expertise
- ◆ candidate's performance development area
- ◆ available resources

c) Parental perception/support

Dealing with parental enquiries are usually in connection with 'certification currency', reassuring them of the benefits of accruing University points to advance further education and career prospects ensures their support and cooperation. It is important to forge the triangle support between teacher/lecturer, candidate and parent as it is an integral part of the process.

d) Certificate currency

Although this seems to change on an annual basis, many Universities will accept Advanced Higher Physical Education as part of the points system for entrance/conditional placement. This may depend on the faculty applied for; therefore it is advisable to check.

2 Tutoring candidates in preparation for Unit and Course assessment

It is helpful to issue candidates with a Course handbook, which includes a copy of the Course Arrangements document which contains the *Perspectives on Performance Development, Analysis and Development of Performance* and *Performance Units*, as well as details about the *Project Report*. This encourages ownership and helps to clarify Course expectations and assessment requirements.

Candidates should be encouraged at a very early stage to select their preferred analysis area, identify the Key concepts and select the most relevant Key features to be addressed in developing their performance. They should be aware of specific performance targets and offer some reflection about how best to proceed with the development of their proposal. This provides an initial assessment of the candidates' thinking and understanding.

In recognition of the candidates' selected perspectives and project report focus, it is advisable to prepare a personal reading list. This should be negotiated with candidates as part of their planning and research; *remind them of the need to add to this*. This will help them to develop a more detailed appreciation about several key issues and enable them to offer critical debate by exemplifying theory, and authenticate their research to practical experience.

To enable candidates to acquire knowledge, an idea is to set specific tasks related to the prescribed reading, for example give a talk on the prescribed reading or a synopsis of the main findings.

3 Teacher/lecturer role as facilitator/manager

Although there is a need for strong interaction between teacher/lecturer and candidate at this level of study, candidates should be working more independently. Tutorials help, as this involves the teacher/lecturer and candidate working together to improve learning and encourages the candidate to work proactively and not merely as passive recipients. Candidates should be supported to test solutions and develop a more sophisticated approach to research and developing their debate.

Teachers/lecturers therefore require to explicitly make a shift from a 'content based approach' to a 'thinking skills approach'.

Candidates require to demonstrate:

- ◆ a developed sense of purpose
- ◆ commitment to working independently
- ◆ logical, analytical and critical thinking skills

When preparing candidates to develop their project report, it is imperative to integrate knowledge gained through studying the *Perspectives on Performance Development* and *Analysis and Development of Performance Units*, this enables them to support their rationale.

The Project Report requires the candidate to:

- ◆ confirm performance issues
- ◆ use research enabling contextual analysis
- ◆ relate cause and effect/problem solve
- ◆ test solutions with resultant critical analysis consistent with the evidence
- ◆ evaluate the process, objectives and offer future recommendations

4 Supporting candidate self-study

To enable candidates to acquire the essential skills required, self-study needs to be presented as an attractive prospect, therefore a flexible approach should promote self-belief, personal challenge and achievement to ensure they become better 'skilled learners'. It is important to remember that whilst candidates will attempt to work independently, they will still need a structured approach to managing their work and meeting deadlines; a timetable will enable them to complete Course assessments.

What has worked well?

Various presentation devices to promote learning such as:

- ◆ class/individual group interviews
- ◆ candidate PowerPoint, video and oral presentations
- ◆ candidate book reviews (*oral and use of Dictaphone*)
- ◆ posting assignment tasks (*written and practical*) on notice boards
- ◆ issuing assignments on disc format or via the intranet
- ◆ engaging Advanced Higher candidates in the learning of their peers, for example teaching a Standard Grade group a specific aspect of performance or delivering a theoretical presentation to an Intermediate 1 or 2 group, enables candidates to select, apply and adapt appropriate teaching methods to deliver their 'prepared lesson'. This allows them to draw on their own experiences by expressing their depth of knowledge, perception and evaluation. This approach can nurture motivation and develop the candidates' self-evaluation, a vital tool in promoting confidence and promoting lifelong learning skills.

In summary, the learning and teaching of this Course can be complex; however by careful management, it is extremely rewarding.