



Course Report 2015

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| Subject | Dance |
| Level | Higher (new) |

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors 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 assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Performance

For Course assessment, candidates perform two contrasting technical performance solos. These solos need to be performed in two contrasting styles, with the utilisation of movement language and vocabulary that is appropriate to that style, but also allows for the demonstration of technical ability appropriate to work at Higher level.

Component 2: Practical Activity

The practical activity component for Higher Dance consists of the creation of a piece of creative choreography, coupled with a choreographic review which demonstrates the candidate's overall process and subsumes elements of evaluative and critical analysis into the process. This component works very well, and the new review is a welcome change to the former evaluation, making the overall award more accessible for learners.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Performance

Overall candidate performance was good. There were a few centres who presented candidates for Higher Dance for whom National 5 level would have been more appropriate.

On a few occasions there were issues with the choreography being too simple for the level of the award, or the movement vocabulary being incorrect or inconsistent with the technical style being presented.

Overall, technique was presented well by candidates, with further work needing to be done on the performance elements. However for centres which were more experienced at this level of dance, this was not an issue.

Component 2: Practical Activity

The standard of the practical activity was varied, depending, it appears, on the experience of the presenting centre. In a number of centres the use of devices was simplistic across the spectrum of candidates; likewise a vast majority of candidates opted for the use of a narrative structure.

Overall the choreographies were presented well, and clearly prepared and rehearsed thoroughly by candidates. However, some centres demonstrated a lack in knowledge of complexity of idea of original movement, choreographic structure and their use of devices. The thematic approach was sometimes only vaguely evident and presented in a fairly obvious fashion.

The Choreography Reviews were well written with S6 candidates in particular demonstrating exceptionally high skill level and maturity in their writing.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Performance

Due to the nature of the Higher Dance qualification, individual centres and candidates excel in a variety of aspects dependent on previous experience and the level of provision provided at the centre. However, overall this year it was felt that the vast majority of candidates were of an acceptable technical standard for the Higher Dance qualification.

Component 2: Practical Activity

Overall this year it was felt that the candidates produced very good choreography reviews which covered all required aspects, and showed a good level of analysis of their practice throughout.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Performance

Although candidates mostly demonstrated good technical skill and awareness, a number were let down by their performing ability. Sometimes centre staff spend a lot of time ensuring the practical technical standard is correct for the steps provided within the solo, but less time appears to have been taken across the board to marry this with a Higher level of performance skill.

Component 2: Practical Activity

In some centres it was evident that there is a lack in knowledge and understanding of the idea of original movement, complex choreographic structure and the use of complex devices. The thematic approach was sometimes only vaguely evident and often presented in a fairly obvious fashion.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Performance

Centres should ensure that candidates are not solely focusing on technique throughout their learning. The solos are to be performing solos, and as such candidates need to demonstrate

a higher level of performance, specifically the use of facial expression, emotive connection to the piece, dynamics and musicality.

Centres need to consider the level of the solo choreography and ensure that it contains appropriate stylistic elements for the genre.

Component 2: Practical Activity

Centres need to encourage the use of original movement and a more complex use of devices and structure. It would be beneficial for candidates to be encouraged to use a structure that is more appropriate to their piece, rather than a narrative structure because they may perceive its use as easier.

Statistical information: update on Courses

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| Number of resulted entries in 2014 | 0 |
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| Number of resulted entries in 2015 | 336 |
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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 - 140 | | | | |
| A | 65.8% | 65.8% | 221 | 98 |
| B | 17.6% | 83.3% | 59 | 84 |
| C | 11.3% | 94.6% | 38 | 70 |
| D | 1.2% | 95.8% | 4 | 63 |
| No award | 4.2% | - | 14 | 0 |

For this Course, the intention was to set an assessment with grade boundaries at the notional values of 50% for a Grade C and 70% for a Grade A. The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

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.