



## External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	<b>Dance Practice</b>
Level	<b>Higher</b>

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 were generally well presented by centres and had paid attention to detail when preparing for the Visiting Assessment.

Candidates are achieving well in this qualification and there was an increased number of centres presenting candidates this year.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Planning essay

- ◆ Some candidates presented full and insightful planning essays which were coherent and well written.
- ◆ Candidates used the appendices well and showed excellent knowledge of choreographic development and personal dance development.
- ◆ There was evidence of a good level of research into chosen themes and a wide scope of research methodologies was displayed.

### Dance techniques

- ◆ There was evidence of excellent quality dance technique in the candidates' choice of dance styles.
- ◆ Some candidates displayed a thorough understanding of their own body in technique with good placement, strength and flexibility.
- ◆ The majority of candidates were well rehearsed and performed their solos with confidence and artistry. There was substantial evidence of concentration, focus, projection and rhythmic responses to the music.
- ◆ Some centres maximised their candidates' performances by the use of space, levels and content appropriate to the standard, and opportunities for expression.

### Choreography

- ◆ Some candidates presented choreography which was well researched and developed in terms of choreographic style and movement development.
- ◆ There was evidence of work that was highly creative and individual with excellent use of choreographic devices and original material.
- ◆ In a number of choreographies, candidates used the opportunity to enhance their work by presenting well-costumed, and imaginative, props and set.

### Evaluations

- ◆ In general, the Evaluations were well presented and covered the majority of the salient points.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Planning essay**

- ◆ There were a number of candidates who lost marks in the personal action plan. They need to write about this in the main body of the text and not in the appendix. Centres should note this and advise their candidates appropriately. Centres should refer to the exemplification published on SQA's secure site.
- ◆ Centres should refer more closely to the published marking instructions for guidance on the content and mark allocation for the planning essay.
- ◆ Some centres presented essays that were over-long and candidates should be encouraged to keep within the word limit.

### **Dance techniques**

- ◆ Centres should present candidates in two contrasting dance styles; eg jazz and hip hop are too close in style.
- ◆ Candidates from the same centre should all present the same original choreography for the solos. This gives parity across all candidates at that centre.
- ◆ Centres should refer to the standards and content of the NABs as guidance for the choreography for the solos.
- ◆ In some centres greater emphasis should be placed on the development of core technical skills. This enables candidates to achieve higher marks for their dance technique.

### **Choreography**

- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to develop their own choreographic style which fully expresses their chosen theme.
- ◆ Costumes and design carry marks which are sometimes lost through underdeveloped costume design. Candidates should therefore be encouraged to be more creative in their costume choices and to be resourceful in these choices.
- ◆ Careful music choices need to be explored and some candidates need more exposure to varying types of music and soundscapes that will fully reflect their theme.
- ◆ Centres should encourage candidates to use more than the minimum of two dancers in their choreography. At times, the number of dancers in the choreography limited the scope for development of the material.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **General**

- ◆ Centres are encouraged to revisit and regularly refer to the marking instructions, NAB materials, exemplification and online resources.
- ◆ Centres should familiarise themselves fully with the assessment arrangements for the Visiting Assessment and refer of the annual SQA Dance update letter which contains new information and advice and guidance.
- ◆ In terms of technical dance skills, centres should use the full time available to them to develop correct alignment, strength and flexibility.
- ◆ Attention to the planning essays for future candidates should include: adhering to the appropriate word count and writing the personal action plan fully in the main body of the essay.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2010	288
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	294
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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 200				
A	27.9%	27.9%	82	140
B	31.0%	58.8%	91	120
C	19.7%	78.6%	58	100
D	4.1%	82.7%	12	90
No award	17.3%	100.0%	51	-

## **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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.