



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Drama
Level	Intermediate 1 & 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

Centres were generally well prepared for the practical component of the Intermediate Drama exam. Texts for Intermediate 2 were well chosen and of an appropriate length this year. The quality of candidates responses to viva voce questions had improved from last year and candidates seemed better prepared for this part of the exam. At Intermediate 1, devised pieces were of a good length and candidates played more detailed characters than in previous years. Across both levels the audiences for the practical examination were well chosen and supportive to the candidates.

In the Question Paper candidates at both levels answered the full range of the questions and the majority finished their responses within the time allocated.

Areas in which candidates performed well

In the Practical Examination at both levels acting was of a consistently high standard and commitment to the production process was obvious. Amongst technical candidates there were creative ideas in many areas but particularly so in sound.

In the Intermediate 1 Question Paper, there was evidence of strong imaginative dramas having been created in centres which enabled candidates to answer questions fully.

Question 6 – writing in role – was particularly well answered and ground plans were, on the whole, done well this year.

In the Intermediate 2 Question Paper, the linked questions 1 to 3 were well done and question 5 was particularly fully answered. In question 6 (c) candidates who answered on sound did especially well.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question Papers

Intermediate 1

Question 8 (b) showed a lack of depth in the response.

In Question 1 (a) there were consistently poor responses as candidates repeatedly refer to their drama rather than the theme.

Questions on lighting and sound are not answered in any depth and candidates seem to have unrealistic ideas on the function of stage lighting and sound.

Some candidates showed a lack of detail in writing about voice and movement and using terminology accurately.

Intermediate 2

Question 7 caused most problems. The vast majority of candidates did not seem to know the meaning of the word *venue* and answered about types of staging instead.

In question 2 many candidates did not respond to the “character’s attitude” aspect of the question.

Question 6 (c) was generally answered poorly, particularly by those candidates who chose to answer on lighting: many candidates did not relate their answers to the mood and setting identified in questions 6 (a) and (b).

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- ◆ The Practical exam, on the whole, was well organised and ran smoothly in terms of organisation and timing. However, Visiting Examiners commented that in some instances the organisation by Drama Departments was not supported fully by the school as a whole and interruption and problems occurred, which could have been avoided.
- ◆ Candidates tend to do well in the Practical exam if they are involved in a production of sufficient length that enables them to show development and depth of character when acting and have scope for creative ideas when fulfilling technical roles. Some centres persist in presenting a series of repeated scenes with many candidates playing the same character. This inevitably disadvantages both acting and technical candidates.
- ◆ In both Question Papers there is a real need to ensure that candidates do not produce prepared answers without reading the questions and responding to all aspects of them. Many marks are lost by candidates not thinking fully about the task they are being asked to do before beginning to write.
- ◆ Lighting in particular is an area where candidates across both levels are losing marks by describing lighting states and effects that are unrealistic and inappropriate for the drama/extract they are focussing on.

Intermediate 1

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	213
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	199
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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	61.3%	61.3%	122	70
B	24.6%	85.9%	49	60
C	7.0%	93.0%	14	50
D	0.5%	93.5%	1	45
No award	6.5%	100.0%	13	-

Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	1073
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	1276
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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	44.8%	44.8%	572	70
B	27.3%	72.1%	348	60
C	17.5%	89.6%	223	50
D	4.4%	94.0%	56	45
No award	6.0%	100.0%	77	-

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.