



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Physical Education
Level	Higher

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

As in previous years there was an increase in the number of candidates being presented at Higher Level. It is expected that this trend will continue in the future.

Evidence from the marker's reports suggested that the number of really high scoring scripts were fewer than in 2008. However, most felt that there seemed to be an improvement in the quality of candidate work in the lower and middle ranges and the number of very low scoring scripts was down.

This year candidates answered the full range of questions on offer. There was little evidence of particular questions being popular with candidates as in previous years.

There appeared to be more centres attempting Performance Appreciation and the responses in this area showed an improvement on previous years.

The responses to questions this year, from candidates across all areas of Analysis were very similar to the previous year.

A range of activities was apparent from the answers written by candidates.

Areas in which candidates performed well

The responses were generally good where candidates were asked to gather information on their performance in terms of data gathering methods, and descriptions of what had been learned about strengths, weaknesses and development. This was evident in responses to Question 5 part (a) and in Question 6 part (a)

When answering questions where the competency was to 'describe' candidates tended to respond well. This was well illustrated in Question 4 part (a) where candidates displayed good knowledge of physical and skill related aspects of fitness in relation to a selected activity and in Question 7 part (a) where candidates had to describe the role they played in applying a particular Structure, Strategy or Composition.

There seemed to be a slight improvement in the quality of responses from candidates who answered in Performance Appreciation.

Many candidates were able to describe the benefits to performance of development work undertaken, but only a few were able to offer a more detailed discussion about the effectiveness of the analysis and development work undertaken. This was evident in responses to Question 3 part (d) and Question 5 part (d).

Areas which candidates found demanding

At Higher level candidates are required to demonstrate both width and depth of key concept knowledge if they are to access the upper range of marks available. Many candidates are still having difficulty in achieving this. This was highlighted in Question 4 part (c) where candidates were asked to describe a method to develop a skill related aspect of fitness. Most responses lacked the specific knowledge to answer this part of the question.

There is still evidence of candidates' responses lacking depth in their answers when they are asked to 'discuss'. Many candidates still tend to describe and sometimes explain than show critical thinking in their answers. This was particularly the case in Question 5 part (d) and in Question 7 part (b).

Candidates still demonstrate a limited understanding of the importance of monitoring and reviewing their work. This was demonstrated in Question 7 part (d) and in Question 4 part (d)

There still appears to be instances where candidates are attempting to apply pre-planned answers to examination questions. This often results in responses not relating to the wording of the question and therefore candidates achieving very low marks.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres must ensure that all aspects of content that are outlined in the key concepts of each area of analysis have been covered. This will allow candidates to answer questions that ask for a broad knowledge and also more focussed questions that require a response that gives a depth of relevant information.

Centres should ensure that they provide opportunities for candidates to answer questions to explain and discuss key concept knowledge and its application in their course work. The majority of candidates still have difficulty in accessing marks where detailed explanation and discussion is required.

Candidates should be encouraged to try and fully understand and relate their responses to what is being asked in the question.

It still appears to be the case that the work of some candidates is below the standard required for Higher level. Before presenting candidates centres should ensure that they are able to offer the required breadth and depth of key concept knowledge. The weighting of the two elements is a crucial factor in achieving the award at all levels

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	4912
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	5293
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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	11.4%	11.4%	601	70
B	31.7%	43.1%	1679	60
C	38.9%	82.0%	2061	50
D	10.1%	92.1%	534	45
No award	7.9%	100.0%	418	-

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.