



External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	Drama
Level	Intermediate 1 and 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

The majority of centres were well prepared for the practical examination, and candidates performed well with a sense of examination formality and occasion. A wide range of texts were used for Intermediate 2 and the majority were appropriate. This year good examples were *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *Stags and Hens* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

However, some centres are still presenting a series of short acting pieces with no linking material or common theme, and are therefore disadvantaging their candidates who are not fully engaged in the production process.

Candidates on the whole were well prepared for the Question Papers and managed their time well.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Practical Examination

Acting candidates who were well rehearsed and directed, and who had a consistent character to develop and present throughout a production, achieved good results both at Intermediate 1 and 2 levels.

Set, props and costume candidates mostly had excellent creative ideas and plans, even if centre resources did not allow them full rein to realise these at all times.

Many candidates gave detailed and full responses to questions in viva voce.

Question Paper Examination

Intermediate 2

Candidates responded well to questions on target audience (Question 8a), audience response (Question 4), and the important point in the extract (Questions 7a and b).

Intermediate 1

Candidates gave full and detailed character information at Question 3 (e) and described purpose and mood and atmosphere well on the whole. Question 2, on dramatic outline, was also answered fully, and Questions 6 and 7 on target audience and message were excellent in the majority of cases.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Practical Examination

Intermediate 2

In a small number of centres, technical candidates seemed unaware of what they were being assessed on and so were unprepared and achieved lower marks. This is particularly true for costume and props candidates, who sometimes did not know that they had to create and/or adapt one item in particular to gain marks.

Question Paper

Intermediate 1

Theatre Arts questions in general were not answered in a detailed or specific way, and Questions 5 (a) and (b) were often answered poorly. Many candidates left it out altogether, and a large number used incorrect terminology and showed little understanding of the purpose of different staging.

Intermediate 2

Question 4 proved a challenge to many candidates who failed to read the question properly and did not answer on a third character and therefore failed to gain any marks.

Question 6, on practical activities, was often answered well in terms of describing the activity, but was vaguer in terms of how this activity would help the actors.

Theatre Arts questions

Question 5 showed some creative ideas and descriptions, but drawings were often poorly done and written detail might have gained more marks.

Question 8 (b) was on the whole poorly answered. Very few candidates read the question properly and answered in the context of *this audience*, ie the one selected in 8 (a), meaning they lost an opportunity to link their ideas to a specific age group or type of audience.

Candidates' use of theatre terminology was vague, particularly when describing lighting states; 'dark lighting' and 'dim lighting' were often used terms.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Practical Examination

Candidates, particularly technical ones, need to be more aware at an earlier stage of what they will be assessed on. Access to the Candidate Mark Sheet, with all its information, at the beginning of the production process is highly recommended.

Intermediate 2 candidates working as crew for Higher candidates is perfectly acceptable, so long as the acting piece is continuous and of the correct length, ie a minimum of 25 minutes. So, for example, prescribed text pieces from *The Crucible* could be run as a continuous

production with the same set, props and costume, and with links between scenes of movement, monologue or even sound.

Production must be a minimum of 25 minutes for Intermediate 2 and 15 minutes for Intermediate 1 but occasionally productions can be too long, ie over an hour. This is perfectly acceptable if acting candidates are well prepared and rehearsed. However, if the piece is over-long and they begin to disadvantage themselves by continual prompting and lack of direction, development or motivation of character, then it is best to keep to a shorter, better prepared piece.

Centres should ensure they send a cast/production team list to the Visiting Assessor (VA) with the script/scenario and checklists. This enables the VA to plan the timing of the practical exam more efficiently.

Written Paper

Candidates at both levels need to use appropriate, correct terminology for questions on voice and movement as well as theatre arts. Terminology was often used vaguely and marks were lost because of this.

In lighting and sound responses, candidates need to be aware of how their ideas will look and sound to an audience. Loud effects/music or flashing colour changes in lighting are not practical when they occur during dialogue and will merely distract from the action.

Statistical information: update on Courses: Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2009	199
Number of resulted entries in 2010	170

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	67.1%	67.1%	114	70
B	18.2%	85.3%	31	60
C	10.6%	95.9%	18	50
D	0.6%	96.5%	1	45
No award	3.5%	100.0%	6	—

Statistical information: update on Courses: Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2009	1276
Number of resulted entries in 2010	1316

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	53.1%	53.1%	699	70
B	24.5%	77.6%	322	60
C	13.2%	90.8%	174	50
D	2.9%	93.7%	38	45
No award	6.3%	100.0%	83	—

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.