



## External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	<b>Physical Education</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

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.

There is clear evidence that the examining team's work to improve the accessibility of the paper has been successful, and that support from professional development workshops (PDWs) and Understanding Standards events has meant that centres are better able to prepare candidates for the written exam. This is reflected in the increased A–C rate of 8.3%.

Evidence from Markers' reports suggests that the standard of response from candidates was much better than in previous years. This was apparent in all areas of the question paper rather than in any particular section.

Candidates appeared to be writing in more depth and detail in their answers, leading to an increase in the number of middle- to high-range scoring scripts.

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

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

There was less evidence of candidates attempting to apply pre-planned answers to examination questions.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

When answering questions where the competency was to 'describe', candidates tended to respond well. This was well illustrated in Question 4 (b), where candidates displayed good knowledge of gathering information on an aspect of fitness and, in Question 7 (a), where candidates had to describe a particular structure, strategy or composition.

There was a better response from candidates this year where the competency was to 'explain'. This was well illustrated in Question 4 (a), where candidates had to explain the importance of types of fitness to their chosen activity, and also in Questions 8 (a)(i) and 8 (a)(ii), where candidates had to explain the effects of strengths and weaknesses on their performance in their chosen structure, strategy or composition.

There was a good standard of response from candidates who had studied performance appreciation.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

There is still evidence of candidates' responses lacking depth when they are asked to 'discuss'. Many candidates still tend to describe and explain rather than show critical thinking in their answers. This was particularly the case in Question 3 (a), where candidates had to discuss training approaches, and in Question 6 (c), where candidates had to discuss the importance of motivation, concentration or feedback when carrying out a development programme.

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 5 (a), where candidates were asked to explain what they understood about information processing models and skill classification. Most responses lacked the specific knowledge to answer this part of the question.

## **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 focused questions that require them to give a depth of relevant information.

Centres should ensure that they provide opportunities for candidates to practice answering questions where they are required to 'explain' and 'discuss' key concept knowledge and its application in their Course work. This will allow candidates to fully understand and relate their responses to the questions being asked in the exam.

There is still some evidence of candidates whose work appears to be below the standard required to achieve a grade at Higher level. Centres should take into account the weighting of the two elements and try to ensure that candidates have the ability in both elements to achieve a final grade.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	5293
Number of resulted entries in 2010	5814

## 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	26.7%	26.7%	1553	70
B	37.2%	63.9%	2163	60
C	26.7%	90.6%	1553	50
D	4.9%	95.5%	283	45
No award	4.5%	100.0%	262	–

### 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.