



## Course Report 2016

Subject	Dance
Level	Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

# Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

## Summary of the Course assessment

### Component 1: Performance

For the external Course Assessment of the Performance component, candidates are required to perform two contrasting solos. These solos should be contrasting in technical elements, style and overall performance skills, to allow the candidate to demonstrate a broad range of transferrable Dance skills. Overall the standard and presentations of solos was very good.

The visiting model for Course Assessment uses a collaborative marking strategy — SQA's Visiting Assessor (VA) working with the centre assessor — by sampling up to 12 candidates. This allows the centre to be confident in the national standard, which enables them to accurately assess the remaining cohort of candidates (should they be presenting more than the sample of 12).

The collaborative marking method was received well by centres, allowing delivery staff to further understand and apply the marking criteria. The majority of centres were very well prepared for the visiting assessment, with all documentation and candidate mark sheets completed and ready for use. The majority of centres were able to meet the required standard for Performance at Higher level, with few instances of inappropriate presentation for the qualification.

All individual tasks performed as expected and the standard was maintained in line with the previous year.

### Component 2: Practical Activity

The Practical Activity component of Higher Dance allows candidates to express a topic in a thematic piece of creative choreography which is performed by three or more dancers. This is coupled with a choreographic review of the process, enabling the candidate to demonstrate the implementation, reflection and evaluation of their decision making throughout the structuring of the work.

A number of candidates chose to present the review in a variety of formats this year, which enabled them to access the most appropriate presentation for their learning style and to access the full range of available marks.

Some centres still require further support about the requirements for creative choreography.

All individual tasks performed as expected and the standard was maintained in line with the previous year.

## **Section 2: Comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1: Performance**

Overall it was felt that the presentation by the candidates was good for Higher level. Candidates made a concerted effort to demonstrate a variety of learned technical skills appropriate to the solos and level of the award.

The majority of solos presented enabled candidates to access the full range of marks.

Centres are making a clear effort to prepare and present the most appropriate style for each individual candidate. This enabled Visiting Assessors to see a much wider spectrum of technique/styles than in previous years.

#### **Component 2: Practical Activity**

##### **Choreography**

Overall it was felt that candidates performed adequately in the presentation of their own choreographic work. Practical choreographies demonstrated a good considered use of space throughout, alongside some interesting, engaging and unique choices of costume, make-up and props.

The initial choice of theme can often be quite dark/harrowing, and this tends to lead candidates to create narrative structures within their work. It would be beneficial for centre staff to encourage the use of more abstract themes and structural choice for the work.

##### **Choreography Review**

The level of choreographic reviews was very good across the board with a particularly exceptional level of analytical and critical review being displayed by S6 candidates.

The majority of candidates were able to explain their choices well and give good, considered rationale for these. Areas of evaluation were also mostly strong.

### **Areas which candidates found demanding**

#### **Component 1: Performance**

Although the majority of candidates met the technical requirements for presentation at Higher level, some candidates lacked expertise in the display of performance quality.

Likewise, the use of musicality and dynamics was sometimes limited in the dance solo presentations.

#### **Component 2: Practical Activity**

Some centres and staff are unfamiliar with the requirements for Higher level regarding movement creation and choreographic methodology. Music selection is also an area where some candidates could engage in more appropriate choices rather than opting for 'favourite' or 'current' music tracks. As with the movement vocabulary, Higher level choreography

should be accompanied by music or sound choices that assist in representing the theme and conveying it to the audience.

The Practical Activity component will be a focus of the forthcoming Understanding Standards Course event.

## **Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Performance**

Teaching staff should be aware of the marking criteria to ensure all aspects are given enough focus during learning and teaching, eg use of musicality and dynamics. A more holistic vision of dance practice should be considered to ensure candidates are able to access the full range of available marks.

### **Component 2: Practical Activity**

Centres should focus on the creation of original movement, ensuring that candidates fully understand the difference between dance composition and dance choreography. Task-based choreographic learning, and further exposure to high level/professional choreography, would help the candidates fully understand the concept and would inform their overall practice in this part of the assessment.

## Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	336
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	427
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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 -				
A	55.5%	55.5%	237	98
B	24.4%	79.9%	104	84
C	12.6%	92.5%	54	70
D	3.0%	95.6%	13	63
No award	4.4%	-	19	0

## 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.