



## Course Report 2016

Subject	Dance
Level	National 5

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 Performance component, candidates perform one technical solo in their chosen genre. This solo should allow for the demonstration of both technical ability and performance skills appropriate to National 5 level.

The collaborative marking model (of a sample of 12 candidates) was well received by all centres, with positive feedback highlighting the benefits and development opportunities afforded by this approach.

It is evident that centres are gaining confidence from the robust and supportive process of assessing performance. The majority of centres were very well prepared for the visiting assessment, with all documentation and candidate mark sheets complete and ready for use. This reduced assessment time and helped make the process run smoothly. As the number of candidates being entered for National 5 Dance increased, centres were able to select candidates for the sample of 12 across a range of performance abilities. This, in turn, reinforced standards with candidates accessing a wide range of marks.

The majority of centres met the correct standard for Performance at National 5. More candidates than before were able to access marks for performance quality, demonstrating that centres have a greater understanding of the marking criteria.

Overall, assessment of Performance in 2016 was very positive.

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

The Practical Activity component for National 5 Dance consists of the creation of a piece of creative choreography for two dancers, coupled with a Choreography Review that demonstrates the candidate's ability to research, plan, review and critically evaluate their whole creative process. The review can be presented in whatever format best suits the candidate; a flexibility that is welcomed by all presenting centres.

The assessment of both Choreography and Choreography Review was for the most part presented as a choreographed dance, mood board and written report. When marking the reviews, the majority of centres demonstrated that they were fully in line with the national standard. However, a few centres still require further support to ensure they are able to guide candidates in the correct direction to access the full range of marks available for Choreography.

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

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

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

The majority of centres demonstrated clear evidence of the required performance standards at National 5 level. The process of assessment for National 5 Dance provided ample opportunity for discussion around standards across a number of genres.

In almost all centres, candidates were able to access the full range of marks from the tutor-taught choreography. This provides further evidence of a greater understanding of the technical requirements for successful performance at this level.

It was evident that a number of centres had worked hard to develop and improve candidate performance quality as well as technique. The majority of candidates were well prepared for their chosen solo performance and were able to demonstrate the requisite technical skills for National 5 Dance. Jazz Dance was the most popular genre chosen at National 5.

The number of pupils able to access more marks for performance quality has increased from last year, allowing more candidates the opportunity to access the full range of marks.

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

##### **Choreography**

There was strong evidence in a few centres that candidates had really built on their learning from the Dance: Choreography Unit and produced work that was very creative and high in quality. In other centres, some candidates were unable to develop creative, original movement from a stimulus, choosing set steps that limited rather than embraced creativity.

Some candidates were able to demonstrate effective use of space and choreographic devices beyond the standards set for National 5. Where the stimulus was well researched and developed into an effective original motif, the choreography was able to access the full range of marks. Centres that were able to support candidates' developing creativity during the internally-assessed Dance: Choreography unit of this course found the transition to the final choreography more straightforward.

##### **Choreography Review**

The majority of candidates produced a written report and a mood/stimulus board. Generally, the level of candidate work for the written report was excellent, and it was clear that they were able to reflect on the learning process. Most candidates supplemented their report with a short introduction prior to performance; this helped put the choreography in context before it was performed.

The majority of candidates were able to write about their creative ideas and movement better than they could put it into practice. Greater attention to the transfer from idea to movement would benefit the majority of choreographies at National 5 level.

Some candidates were able to develop highly creative and original movement that was layered with the effective use of choreographic devices.

In general, candidates produced very good choreographic reviews, which covered all required aspects of the Course. The majority of the essays were written in cohesive and structured way.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: Performance**

- ◆ Although better than in previous years, some candidates could still benefit from an improved sense of performance quality to ensure they are able to access the full range of marks.
- ◆ For some candidates, the lack of centre and alignment impacted on almost every aspect of performance. Struggling to meet or sustain the technical demands of National 5 could be best supported by a further year of study before being presented for external assessment.

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

#### **Choreography**

- ◆ In some centres there is a lack of knowledge and understanding about the idea of original movement and how to develop this.
- ◆ In some cases, the use of set steps in creative choreography was very limiting.
- ◆ Focusing on telling a long narrative story, in a number of cases, compromised choreography and the creative development of movement.

#### **Choreography Review**

- ◆ Some candidates demonstrated confusion in their understanding of the use of structure and, where this was evident, visiting assessors were able to advise centres on how best to seek support.
- ◆ The majority of candidates were able to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses as choreographers, but could not be allocated the full range of marks because they did not discuss the impact that this then had on their choreographic process.

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

### **Component 1: Performance**

- ◆ Centres should remember that candidates are not solely focusing on technique throughout their learning, and that they must connect with the use of facial expression, emotive connection, and musicality.
- ◆ To control nerves, some candidates would benefit from more opportunities to perform solo before the external assessment day.

- ◆ All centres should ensure that paperwork is complete, in order, and ready before the Visiting Assessor arrives, as this can be very time-consuming on the assessment day.

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

- ◆ Centres should ensure that the foundations for developing creative movement are in place before allowing candidates to embark on choreography.
- ◆ Centres should focus on using a structure and devices appropriate to a theme for two people.
- ◆ Centres should discourage long, drawn-out storytelling, and concentrate on developing original movement with a clear focus. The presentation time given to the final choreography (between 1.5 and 2 minutes) should guide centres and candidates to focus.

## Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	437
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	521
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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	49.3%	49.3%	257	70
B	23.2%	72.6%	121	60
C	16.7%	89.3%	87	50
D	3.5%	92.7%	18	45
No award	7.3%	-	38	-

## 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.