

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Physical Education

Qualification area:

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
Included in this report**

Physical Education Advanced Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	60
Pre appeal	

Number of entries in 2003	75
Pre appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

The figure of 75 students from 33 centres represents an increase from last year which is encouraging of the 33 centres, 18 were presenting for the first time. 10 centres had three or more candidates being presented.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

Grade	Band	Minimum Mark
A	1	190
A	2	170
B	3	159
B	4	148
C	5	137
C	6	126
Compensatory	7	115
No Award	8	104
No Award	9	0

General commentary on passmarks and grade boundaries

- While SQA aims to set examinations and create mark schemes which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum 50% of the available marks (notional passmark) and a very well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70%, it is almost impossible to get the standard absolutely on target every year, in every subject and level
- Each year we therefore hold a passmark meeting for each subject at each level where we bring together all the information available (statistical and judgmental). 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 senior management team at SQA
- We adjust the passmark downwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly more demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- We adjust the passmark upwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly less demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- Where the standard appears to be very similar to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries
- 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 are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. And just because SQA has altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry 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
- Our main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain standards across the years, even as syllabuses evolve and change

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

These grade boundaries were exactly the same as the previous year for Advanced Higher.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Overall performance in the third year of presentation was similar to last year. In terms of percentage passes overall. There was an increase in the number of pupils achieving the top award in the A and B categories and a slight drop in the number achieving C awards. However, many students still failed to achieve the standard required this still may be due to the high number of centres presenting for the first time.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

The pattern of high performance marks was again evident in the third year of Advanced Higher. The mean mark was 67.3 out of 70 marks which is an increase of 0.6 from last year. Marks were generated across a wide range of activities.

In the dissertation the mean mark was 53 out of the 140 marks available at the lower end there was still examples of work below higher level. There was however a higher standard of work at the upper end.

More centres this year had adopted a recognised process which students followed which was encouraging as this was an area which was a concern last year. Some students however still failed to be specific about what concepts and features are being addressed within their dissertation.

Students tended to access marks reasonably well in the nature and demand section.

Students who achieved high marks accessed good marks across all areas of the dissertation.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

In the opening section some students need to be more specific about how major issues introduced could be and were going to be addressed.

The level of research by the most able was very impressive however for some students the methods selected allowed only occasionally detailed information and relevant underpinning knowledge needed for their work to progress.

The quality of interpretation and discussion was very varied, at the upper level critical thinking was evidence and clarity and focus was maintained. Many candidates however only had a partial understanding of the broad and specific issues involved which led to a narrative and descriptive presentation.

Similarly in the evaluation of work many students presented a mainly descriptive and modest discussion of their findings relative to their performance and future planning and training.

Students presented their work in a very logical manner but the majority still find it difficult to keep their work within the word allocation.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

- ◆ Candidates should be clear about the perspective(s), key concept(s) and features they are using as the focus for their dissertation.
- ◆ Candidates/centres should be encouraged to follow the process as per NAB material previously issued.
- ◆ The research area is crucial. Without extensive in depth research students will struggle in the interpretation and discussion section to access marks. Many students have plenty of quotes etc but fail to use this material in terms of critical thinking and discussion with relevance to personal performance.
- ◆ Whilst the majority of students who pursue Advanced Higher are top performers, hence the high mean mark of 67.3 out of 70. It is imperative that centres look very closely at the areas of analysis and investigation achieved in Higher PE previously before undertaking Advanced Higher as it is in these areas that two thirds of the marks are achieved. Evidence so far suggests many candidates fall into this category and fail to achieve the minimum marks to gain a successful overall award.