

## Principal Assessor Report 2003

**Assessment Panel:**

Drama, Dance and Theatre

**Qualification area:**

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

Drama Advanced Higher

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## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2002</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	75

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	154

### General comments re entry numbers

The numbers for Advanced Higher have more than doubled from those of last year, which is most encouraging.

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

The cut off marks this year were the same as the past two years.

50% was the cut off for a 'C' pass.

60% was the cut off for a 'B' pass.

70% was the cut off for a lower 'A' pass.

85% was the cut off for an upper 'A' pass.

### 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

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## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

This year saw a very committed cohort of able candidates who were particularly talented practically, but also showed themselves to be academically astute.

It is encouraging to see that the candidates now attempting the Advanced Higher are the ones who are able to cope with it and enjoy it.

The average mark for the practical element was 73.1% showing an increase of almost 8% from last year, while the average mark for the written paper was 55.6% showing a marked increase of 17.3% from last year.

The general feeling was that the assessment procedure and the written exam were fair.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

#### Specialist Study

Centres were well prepared and assessment went smoothly this year. The examiners thoroughly enjoyed their visits and were most impressed with the standard of candidate which was quite exceptional this year. Both staff and candidates showed great enthusiasm and commitment to the course. The average mark for this part of the course jumped from 65% last year to 73% this year, showing a remarkable increase of 8%.

#### Written examination

The paper was considered fair and certainly the questions in Section A were wide enough to pose no problem to a candidate who had studied the performance theories of a chosen practitioner.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

Centres are still playing safe with their choice of practitioner and the majority still choose Craig, Stanislavski and Brecht. The centre doing Artaud last year continued with equal success this year and those attempting Brook do so effectively. As yet Reinhart, Meyerhold, Copeau, Piscator and Grotowski are taught more as background material than full studies.

The overall standard of writing this year was outstanding with one candidate scoring 19/20 in both essay questions. The average mark increase by 17% from last year which was most encouraging. Candidates are now beginning to work with their material and the essays are generally solid but at times exciting.

As with last year, occasionally a candidate did not turn the question paper and wrote both their answers on section A.

There are still candidates who do not address the question and who answer what they know rather than what they are asked. To do this at Advanced Higher level is an automatic fail.

Section B offered candidates the opportunity to adapt what they have seen in the theatre to a practitioner they have studied. Most attempted this well as the overall results show.