

## Principal Assessor Report 2005

**Assessment Panel:**

**Physical Education, Sport and Leisure**

**Qualification area**

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

**Physical Education Higher**

## **Statistical information: update**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2004</b>	3,994
---	-------

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2005</b>	4,148
---	-------

### **General comments re resulted entry numbers**

It was thought that the reduction in the weighting of Performance relative to Analysis and Development of Performance in the revised Course structure might lead to a reduction in entries at Higher. The 2005 figures however represent an encouraging slight increase in entries.

## Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark - <b>100</b>	-	-	-	-
A	13.3	13.3	553	68
B	28.7	42.0	1,191	58
C	33.8	75.9	1,403	49
D	11.8	87.7	489	44
No award	12.3	100.0	512	-

### 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 arrangements evolve and change.

## Comments on any significant changes in distribution of awards/grade boundaries

The changes in Course arrangements which have come into effect this year have had a significant effect on the distribution of awards. The most important changes are:

- ◆ the Investigation has been discontinued
- ◆ a changed weighting of Performance (40%) and Analysis and Development of Performance (60%) has been introduced.

As highlighted in last year's PA report, these changes put an additional emphasis on the need for candidates to have genuine Higher level competence in the knowledge and understanding requirements of analysing and developing performance.

The mean mark of this year's cohort of candidates in the examination has actually fallen slightly on the previous years. This fact, when taken in conjunction with the Course arrangement changes outlined above, has had a significant effect on the overall pass rate and on the distribution of A and B awards.

It should be noted that in the setting of this year's grade boundaries, account was taken of implementation issues arising in the first year of presentation of the new Course structure.

This year's grade boundaries benchmark the National Standard for the new Higher Physical Education Course and it is anticipated that, given similar cohorts in future years, similar patterns of grade boundaries will continue.

## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

The high Performance marks of previous years were again maintained. This year's mean score of 33.9 out of a possible 40 marks equates very closely with last year's 76.6 out of 90.

Evidence from marker reports following the central marking of the examination scripts suggested that the number of high scoring scripts seemed to be down. However most felt that there seemed to be a slight improvement in the quality of candidate work in the lower and middle ranges and that the number of very low scoring scripts was down. Comments also indicated that these changes were mainly due to the relative abilities of the candidate group rather than any increase or decrease in the difficulty of the assessment.

Although a high proportion of candidates performed well and a spread of awards were achieved, there was some evidence of candidates being inappropriately presented for a Higher level course award. Evidence suggests that some candidates appear to be presented for Higher on the basis of high performance marks even though they have demonstrated only modest abilities in the Analysis and Development of Performance Unit work.

The number of centres working in the area of Performance Appreciation does not seem to be increasing and only a very small number of candidates attempted questions from this area.

Markers reports also suggested that there appears to be an increase in instances where candidates are attempting to apply pre-planned answers to examination questions. When attempting to apply this approach, candidates frequently do not relate their response closely enough to the key words of the question and therefore score low marks.

This seemed to be particularly the case this year with the focus of some of the questions asking for specific knowledge about a key concept, while others asked for details about how key concept knowledge could be applied in the analysis and development of performance. These styles of questions are not so easy to predict and some candidates found that their prepared answers did not fit.

## Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

There was generally a pattern of candidates being relatively successful at answering the parts of questions that related to Outcome 1 when analysing performance in an activity and in Outcome 3 when completing and monitoring a programme of work.

Relating to Outcome 1 knowledge of data gathering methods, and descriptions of what had been learned about the strengths, weaknesses and development needs of performance was generally good. This was particularly the case in responses to part b) of Question 4 in Preparation of the Body and part a) of Question 6 in the Skills and Techniques sections of the paper.

When answering questions relating to Outcome 3 candidates mainly demonstrated a sound knowledge of the detail of training undertaken and were aware of the importance of monitoring and adapting the programme to ensure progression. This was well illustrated in responses to part c) of Question 3 and part b) of Question 6.

When responding to Outcome 2 questions, candidates were generally able to demonstrate a level of knowledge and understanding when answering the parts of the question that asked for a description of what they knew about an aspect of key concept knowledge. For example when responding to part a) of Question 5. However many had difficulty when asked to give examples of how this knowledge and understanding could be applied to planning for performance development, as was required in the response to part c) of Question 5.

In responses to questions addressing Outcome 4 many candidates were able to describe generally the benefits to performance of development work undertaken, but only a few were able to offer a more detailed discussion about the effectiveness of analysis and development work undertaken. For example parts d) of Questions 3 and 4.

Although a question from the Performance Appreciation section was not attempted by many candidates, those who did answer in this area mainly did well.

## Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

The demands of the question paper and mark scheme at this level require candidates to demonstrate both a width and depth of key concept knowledge if they are to access the upper ranges of the marks available. Many candidates had difficulty accessing these mark ranges.

For example in part a) of Question 3 and part a) of Question 4 candidates had the opportunity to gain substantial marks if they were able to give a full and detailed account of the importance of a concept when analysing and developing performance. Many responses lacked the width and detail of key concept knowledge that was required for high marks.

Some questions required candidates to demonstrate both a depth of key concept knowledge and a level of critical thinking when discussing approaches to the analysis and development of performance. For example part b) of Question 8 asked candidates to explain the importance of a chosen design factor while part c) asked how the factor chosen could be applied to ensure effective performance. Although many candidates were able to offer a depth of knowledge in responding to part c) few were able to go to the next stage and illustrate the application of the factor.

Some candidates were shown to have gaps in their key concept knowledge. For example in part d) of Question 6 an understanding of skilled performance in an activity was required. Candidate responses to the question indicated that many candidates had limited knowledge of this factor although it is central to 'Concepts of Skill and Skilled Performance'. Centres should ensure that coursework addresses all the aspects of content outlined in the key concept statements.

Other common gaps in key concept knowledge were 'merits of training methods' Question 3(b), 'principles of effective practice' Question 5 (a), 'Use of data gathered to plan performance development', Question 5(b), 'Why practice methods are appropriate to purpose' Question 6(b), 'Group and team principles' Question 8(b).

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

The majority of candidates were generally strong or satisfactory when answering the parts of questions that drew mainly on their knowledge of the analysis processes of analysing performance, monitoring performance development, and evaluating the effectiveness of the analysis and development process.

The majority of candidates had difficulty accessing high marks from the sections of questions that addressed particular aspects of key concept knowledge, and how they could be applied in the analysis and development of performance.

In planning and completing work of this kind care must be taken to ensure that all the aspects of content that are outlined in the key concepts of each analysis area have been covered. Candidates also need to be prepared so that they are able to answer questions that ask for a broad knowledge from across the range of the key concept and also more focused questions that require them to give a depth of information of relevant content.

At this level candidates also need to be able to critically discuss key concept knowledge and its application to performance development. This is a limiting factor in the work of many candidates at present and centres should ensure that they offer opportunities for the practice of this important analysis skill.

Candidates should be encouraged to take time to read, and try to understand fully, all that is being asked in examination questions. They must also relate their responses closely to what is being asked in the question. The structure of examination questions in the revised format follows closely the framework of the Unit outcomes. Candidates should be able to identify the stage of the analysis and development process that is being addressed in each part of a question.

The work of some candidates presented for the examination was well below that of the standards illustrated in National Exemplification of Higher level competence. Before presenting candidates at this level, centres should ensure that they are able to offer the required breadth and depth of key concepts knowledge. The recent changes to Course arrangements and element weightings make this a crucial factor in achieving the award at all levels.