



External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Physical Education
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. 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 question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

As in previous years, there was an increase in the number of candidates being presented at Higher level. It is expected that this trend will continue in the future.

Markers noted an improvement in the quality of candidates' work in the middle and upper ranges. The number of very low scoring scripts was considerably down in comparison to previous years. This resulted in an overall increase in the 'A' grade awards and a slight increase in 'B' grade awards. Also there were fewer overall 'D' grade awards and 'No Awards' than in previous years.

There is still evidence of a small number of candidates answering in the Area of Performance Appreciation.

In the other three areas of the question paper there seemed to be an equal spread of questions being attempted.

A range of activities were apparent from the answers written by candidates.

Candidates appeared to be writing much more when answering questions.

Areas in which candidates performed well

When answering questions where the competence was to 'describe', candidates tended to respond well. This was highlighted in:

- Q7a) Candidates were able to describe two structures, strategies or compositions they had used in an activity they had covered in class.
- Q5 a) and b) Candidates were able to describe methods they had used to collect information on their whole performance in an activity as well as an individual skill or technique they had used in the same activity.
- Q8b) Candidates were able to describe a role they had performed within a structure, strategy or composition.

When answering questions where the competence was to 'explain', candidates tended to respond slightly better than in previous years. This was highlighted in:

- Q4a) Candidates explained the importance of one aspect of each type of fitness. Most were able to show a good level of explanation and how it led to effective performance in a selected activity.

Q3b) Candidates selected an aspect of physical fitness which they had as a weakness and were able to explain the effect that this had on their performance in any activity.

Areas which candidates found demanding

There is still evidence of candidates' responses lacking depth when they are asked to 'discuss' or 'justify' their answer. Many candidates still tend to 'describe' and 'explain' rather than show critical thinking in their answers. This was evident in:

Q4c) Many candidates were able to 'describe' the changes made to their programme of work but were unable to 'discuss' why these changes were made.

Q5c) Candidates tended to describe the principles of effective practice well but again were unable to show discussion as to how these principles were applied when developing their performance.

At Higher level, candidates are required to demonstrate particular key concept knowledge. Many candidates are still having difficulty in achieving this. This was the case in:

Q6a) Many candidates demonstrated limited knowledge of what are simple and complex skills.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Markers highlighted instances where candidates were attempting to apply pre-planned answers to questions. This restricts the depth of response given, and often candidates then do not answer the question being asked. This has the effect of disadvantaging all candidates in achieving the best possible mark for the whole question.

Staff in centres should try and give candidates as much practice as possible in answering questions where justification or discussion is required, as this continues to be the competency answered poorly.

Staff should try to give candidates advice on exam technique in preparation for the exam. There is still evidence of candidates not reading questions carefully and not fully answering the actual question being asked.

There are also many centres where all candidates have the same strengths and weaknesses and then follow identical programmes of work. This also can lead to very similar and self restricting answers being used.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	6432
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	6883
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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 100				
A	22.7%	22.7%	1561	70
B	36.4%	59.1%	2504	60
C	28.9%	88.0%	1989	51
D	6.8%	94.8%	468	46
No award	5.2%	100.0%	361	-

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.