



## External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Physical Education
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

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.

Most Markers felt that there seemed to be an improvement in the quality of candidates' responses in the upper ranges. Also, 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. There also was a slight decrease in 'D' grades compared to previous years.

There are still only a small number of candidates answering in the area of 'Performance Appreciation', but there is evidence of some centres whose candidates answer well in this area.

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.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

- ◆ Question 3(a) where candidates were able to explain the importance of two aspects of mental fitness.
- ◆ Question 3(b) where candidates were able to explain the importance of two aspects of skill related fitness.
- ◆ Question 7(a) where candidates were able to describe a Structure, Strategy or Composition they had used in an activity they had covered in class.
- ◆ Question 8(a) where candidates were able to describe the benefits of a particular Structure, Strategy or Composition they had used.

There was also a slight improvement in candidates' responses where acquired knowledge was asked for. This was evident in Question 5(a), where candidates were asked to show knowledge about the stages of learning. Also, in Question 6(a), where candidates were asked about the advantages of a model performance.

## 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:

- ◆ Question 3(c) — candidates were able only to describe the principles of training rather than discuss how they were considered when planning a fitness programme.

- ◆ Question 4(a) — many candidates were able to describe the phases of training but were unable to discuss how training would differ between each of the phases.
- ◆ Question 5(d) — candidates described and explained what they did in their course of action, rather than justifying what they did to improve their performance.
- ◆ Question 8(d) — candidates tended to describe rather than justify the decisions they took to develop their performance within the Structure, Strategy or Composition they had selected.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

Markers highlighted that there are still instances where it would appear that candidates have pre-planned answers that they are using to answer 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 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 can limit candidates' ability to provide a full response to questions.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	6883
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	7385
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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	24.3%	24.3%	1792	70
B	34.8%	59.0%	2567	60
C	28.8%	87.8%	2124	50
D	6.6%	94.4%	490	45
No award	5.6%	-	412	-

## 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.