

26 February 2009

To: SQA Co-ordinators  
Secondary Schools and FE Colleges

cc: HMIe  
LEA Contacts  
SQA Business Development Managers

Action by Recipient	
	Response required
✓	Note and pass on
	None - update/information only

Contact Name: Joanna Morris  
Direct Line: 0845 213 5554  
E-mail: [joanna.morris@sqa.org.uk](mailto:joanna.morris@sqa.org.uk)

Dear Colleague

Please pass this letter to the member of staff responsible for Drama. This letter contains important information for this current session 2008/2009 and gives key information about a change to Higher and Advanced Higher in terms of how SQA will weight the marks and arrive at final grades in the 2009 examination and in subsequent years.

**In the 2009 examination for both Higher and Advanced Higher Drama, SQA will set a new 50.50 weighting to the two external components of the exam. NB There is no change to the Arrangements documents or how centres set and mark prelim-type examinations; the only impact for centres is how estimates to be submitted to SQA for each candidate are calculated and arrived at.**

The attachment to this letter contains details of these important changes and is in the form of questions and answers and the appendix is a marks conversion chart. It is hoped that this advice and guidance will support you in preparing your candidates for the 2009 examination. Please detach these pages, make copies and distribute these to all Drama staff.

If you would like to discuss any of the contents of this letter please contact Joanna Morris (contact details above) or myself on 0131 561 6811 or email [mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk](mailto:mary.mcdonald@sqa.org.uk).

Yours faithfully

Mary McDonald  
Qualifications Manager

## **Higher and Advanced Higher Drama New Weighting of External Examination Components for 2009 Questions and Answers**

### **1. What is meant by the term *external examination component*?**

**Higher Drama** has two external examination components:

1. Question Paper                      max mark 60
2. Acting Exam                         max mark 40

Currently, these marks are not scaled in any way by SQA. The raw marks out of 60 and 40 respectively are added together and a mark of 100 is arrived at for each candidate.

**Advanced Higher Drama** has two external examination components:

1. Question Paper                      max mark 40
2. Practical exam                        max mark 30

Currently, these marks are scaled by SQA. The Question Paper mark is scaled to a mark out of 55 and the practical exam mark is scaled to a mark out of 45 in order to arrive at a mark out of 100 for each candidate.

### **2. Why change to a 50.50 split and why change now?**

A 50.50 split of marks in Higher and Advanced Higher Drama better reflects the importance of the practical nature of NQ Drama and brings us more into line with other Expressive Arts subjects. This would achieve a better balance in a subject where practical performance is pivotal and no longer weights the final mark in favour of the candidate's ability in written work. The 50.50 split also operates at Intermediate 1 and 2 Drama.

This change is in response to a wide lobby of opinion over the past few years. Representation has been made to SQA through a variety of forums of teachers and LEA subject leaders, SQA Examining Teams and SQA Assessment Panel. All of this dialogue has focused on the need to reflect the practical nature of Drama in the final examination result and to be more in line with the practices in other related subjects.

### **3. How does this change impact on Arrangements and assessment conditions?**

There are no changes whatsoever to Arrangements documents, Course content or examination procedures or processes. There are no changes to Visiting Examining or Question Papers and the marks allocated to each of these. The new weightings will be calculated by SQA systems.

### **4. How does this affect prelim exams and how these are marked?**

This has no effect at all on how you set or mark any prelim-type event. However, this year the arithmetical task for centres is the calculation of the estimate mark arrived at for each candidate.

### 5. How do we arrive at the 50.50 split for Higher Drama?

Take the candidate's prelim mark for the Question Paper out of 60 and scale this to a mark out of 50. Then take the candidate's prelim mark for the Acting exam out of 40 and scale this up to a mark out of 50. Arrive at a mark out of 100. See example below:

- Candidate has a mark of 36/60 for the Question Paper
- Scale this and it becomes a mark of **30** out of 50
- Candidate has a mark of 30/40 for the Acting Exam
- Scale this up and it becomes a mark of **38** out of 50
- Add the scaled marks together to arrive at a total mark of **68** out of 100

### 6. How do we arrive at the 50.50 split for Advanced Higher Drama?

Take the candidate's prelim mark for the Question Paper out of 40 and scale this to a mark out of 50. Then take the candidate's prelim mark for the Practical exam out of 30 and scale this up to a mark out of 50. Arrive at a mark out of 100. See example below:

- Candidate has a mark of 25/40 for the Question Paper.
- Scale this and it becomes a mark of **31** out of 50
- Candidate has a mark of 21/30 for the Practical Exam
- Scale this up and it becomes a mark of **35** out of 50
- Add the scaled marks together to arrive at a total mark of **66** out of 100

### 7. What is the advice about arriving at an accurate estimate of candidate performance?

In all NQ subjects including Drama, estimates should be arrived at on the basis of demonstrated attainment on the part of each candidate. Take each candidate's total mark out of 100 and apply cut-off scores which are set at approximately 70% for Grade A and 50% for Grade C.

Grade	Band	Mark Range
A	1	85-100
A	2	70-84
B	3	65-79
B	4	60-64
C	5	55-59
C	6	50-54
D	7	45-49
No award	8	40-44
No award	9	0-39

8. SQA releases component marks to centres in August of each year. What form will this information take for Higher and Advanced Higher Drama with the new 50.50 split?

Component marks will show the mark for each external component as a **scaled** mark:

<b>Higher Drama</b>	Component 1	Question Paper as a mark out of 50
	Component 2	Acting Exam as a mark out of 50
<b>Advanced Higher Drama</b>	Component 1	Question Paper as a mark out of 50
	Component 2	Practical Exam as a mark out of 50

## Appendix Conversion Charts

Higher Drama  
Question Paper

Raw Mark	Scaled Mark
60	50
59	49
58	48
57	48
56	47
55	46
54	45
53	44
52	43
51	43
50	42
49	41
48	40
47	39
46	38
45	38
44	37
43	36
42	35
41	34
40	33
39	33
38	32
37	31
36	30
35	29
34	28
33	28
32	27
31	26
30	25
29	24
28	23
27	23
26	22
25	21
24	20
23	19
22	18
21	18
20	17
19	16
18	15
17	14

Higher Drama Acting  
Exam and Advanced  
Higher Question  
Paper

Raw Mark	Scaled Mark
40	50
39	49
38	48
37	46
36	45
35	44
34	43
33	41
32	40
31	39
30	38
29	36
28	35
27	34
26	33
25	31
24	30
23	29
22	28
21	26
20	25
19	24
18	23
17	21
16	20
15	19
14	18
13	16
12	15
11	14
10	13
9	11
8	10
7	9
6	8
5	6
4	5
3	4
2	3
1	1

Advanced Higher  
Practical Exam

Raw Mark	Scaled Mark
30	50
29	48
28	47
27	45
26	43
25	42
24	40
23	38
22	37
21	35
20	33
19	32
18	30
17	28
16	27
15	25
14	23
13	22
12	20
11	18
10	17
9	15
8	13
7	12
6	10
5	8
4	7
3	5
2	3
1	2

Higher Drama  
Question Paper (continued)

<b>Raw Mark</b>	<b>Scaled Mark</b>
16	13
15	13
14	12
13	11
12	10
11	9
10	8
9	8
8	7
7	6
6	5
5	4
4	3
3	3
2	2
1	1