



## Course report 2019

Subject	Physical Education
Level	Higher

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any post-results services.

# **Section 1: comments on the assessment**

## **Question paper**

The question paper performed as expected in the first year of the revised format, following the integration of unit content. Feedback from Team Leaders and markers indicated that there had been an appropriate range of content sampled, allowing candidates to demonstrate acquired and applied knowledge throughout the assessment.

Section 1 of the paper sampled from all four factors impacting performance and included a 6-mark question which enabled candidates to demonstrate depth in their response.

In Section 2 there were opportunities for candidates to reflect on work they would have carried out as part of the performance development process in the course. The majority of candidates were able to use this information to answer all questions in relation to their personal experience when working on development needs. Overall this section performed well.

The final section of the question paper presented information requiring explanation and analysis. Most candidates completed this section and feedback from teachers and markers was that these questions had been well received.

The revisions to the Higher Physical Education course resulted in a more appropriate distribution of candidate marks which was reflected in the Grade Boundary decision.

## **Performance**

From all the centres sampled, the performance component performed as expected. A range of activities were observed by verifiers and information from the centres showed that an even wider range of activities was assessed in centres. Candidates had to be assessed in two activities with a significantly different range of movement and performance skills.

Some centres were outwith tolerance in their judgements and were required to revisit the marks for the entire cohort and adjust the marks where necessary. Each centre in this situation received feedback and support to ensure they marked to the national standard.

## **Section 2: comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas that candidates performed well in**

#### **Question paper**

Question 2(a) performed well and most candidates were able to differentiate between the characteristics of a long and short-term goal.

In question 3(a) there were examples of candidates presenting standardised tests as approaches to develop performance. Overall, most candidates achieved more than half of the marks available for this question by providing an appropriate approach for developing the physical factor.

#### **Performance**

Statistics show that candidates performed well in the performance component of the course. A mixture of team and individual activities were observed on verification visits. Verifiers commented on how well candidates performed and also on the high degree of motivation shown by the candidates.

Many candidates were able to explain clearly what their tactics or plans were before taking part in the verification exercise. This aided the marking of the assessment item, 'using and applying well established composition, tactics and roles safely and effectively.'

A wide range of activities was assessed. Personalisation and choice contributed to strong performances in this component of the course.

### **Areas that candidates found demanding**

#### **Question paper**

Question 3(c) was challenging for the majority of candidates. Most candidates provided appropriate evaluations of the approach used in 3(a) however, because these were not linked to performance as the question had asked, they were unable to access marks.

A significant number of candidates did not attempt question 4. However, of those who did, it was clear that many struggled to describe the ways in which a Personal Development Plan (PDP) for social factors could be evaluated. Many described the monitoring process session by session and so, consequently, did not access the full range of marks because there was no mention as to how the PDP was actually evaluated.

Similarly in Section 2, question 6(a), many candidates gave information more suited to evaluation instead of the ongoing process of performance development monitoring.

#### **Performance**

There were few, if any, reports of candidates having difficulty accessing marks from any particular area of the marking instructions.

A number of centres reported that some candidates had to be encouraged to plan ahead before choosing the Higher Physical Education course because they had difficulty in finding a second activity with significantly different movement and performance skills, in which they could be assessed.

## **Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment**

### **Question paper**

There was evidence that many candidates were using writing frameworks for explaining and analysing. This enabled them to structure their answers more effectively and ensured their answer demonstrated both the required knowledge and the appropriate skills. Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates understand the different processes of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of a PDP.

Candidates should be clear that monitoring is the ongoing recording of progress while the PDP is actually being implemented. Additionally, evaluating must relate to comparisons of pre-PDP and post-PDP information where judgements about the effectiveness or otherwise can be substantiated.

It is important that candidates reflect on their own personal experience of creating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating a PDP in Section 2.

### **Performance**

A key aim of the Higher Physical Education course is to enable candidates to develop and demonstrate a broad and comprehensive range of complex movement and performance skills through a range of activities.

Centres are reminded that candidates must choose two activities which allow them opportunity to display a significantly different range of movement and performance skills. The assessment of these performances must take place in a context which is suitably challenging for a Higher Physical Education candidate to set it apart from normal learning and teaching activities.

For a number of years, guidance has existed on SQA's website to help teachers and lecturers decide which activities are acceptable for assessment and which combinations of activities are acceptable. Following views expressed at the Understanding Standards events in 2018 and the National PE survey (May 2019) we have inserted additional information on acceptable/unacceptable activities in the coursework assessment task document.

A revised model for verification of the performance component is being introduced in session 2019/2020. This is available on the subject pages of [SQA's website](#).

## Grade boundary and statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	10092
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Number of resulted entries in 2019	9896
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### Statistical information: performance of candidates

#### Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
<b>Maximum mark</b>				
<b>A</b>	27.5%	27.5%	2717	70
<b>B</b>	32.7%	60.1%	3234	60
<b>C</b>	27.8%	87.9%	2748	50
<b>D</b>	9.8%	97.7%	965	40
<b>No award</b>	2.3%	-	232	-

## General commentary on grade boundaries

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.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary)
- ◆ 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.

Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The principal assessor and SQA qualifications manager meet with the relevant SQA head of service and statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. Members of the SQA management team chair these meetings. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper has been more, or less, challenging than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper is more challenging than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for question papers set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the question papers that they set themselves.