Course Report 2018

Subject	Physical Education
Level	Advanced Higher

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. 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

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: performance

The performance functioned as expected. A range of activities were verified, and reports from centres indicated a wide variety of activities were chosen for the single performance event. The marking instructions allowed centres to award candidates the full range of marks.

Component 2: project

The project is designed to assess learners' research and investigation skills, as well as their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding to performance development. Candidates are expected to produce an individual, detailed and focused piece of work.

The project consists of four stages: project proposal: research, performance development plan (PDP) record, and post-PDP analysis and evaluation. The clear criteria for awarding marks in each section (and sub-section) guided candidates and markers successfully.

Most candidates selected an activity in which they had considerable experience and expertise. A wide range of activities and factors were selected and the candidates' work demonstrated a high level of commitment to performance development. Candidates chose a wide range of factors — some candidates focused on one main factor and considered the impact of this on performance while others considered how a combination of factors led to the required performance development.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: performance
Centres report that candidates, on the whole, performed well on the day of their single performance event. Many candidates were able to access the full range of marks.

Component 2: project
In general, candidates identified a specific personal performance development need; and by addressing the identified issues they produced original, focused and authentic work.

On the whole, candidates made good use of appendices to ensure that the project was well presented, clear, focused and within the word count.

Section 1(a)	A wide range of relevant methods to gather information about performance was used by the candidates. Candidates justified their selected methods of gathering information, however, in some cases, the quality of the data was insufficient to allow detailed analysis in 1(b).
Section 2(a)	Focused and comprehensive literature reviews were presented. Some candidates, where appropriate, gained further knowledge through interviewing experts and/or studying video footage of top performers.
Section 3	Candidates gave detailed records of the PDP and presented their work clearly.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: performance
There were no reports of candidates struggling with this component. All those involved knew what was expected of them.

Component 2: project

Section 1(b)	In a number of cases the quality and depth of the information gathered in 1(a) was insufficient to allow the required detail of analysis. In addition, some candidates who had gathered sufficient data produced narrative, rather that analytical, reports.
Section 2(b)	Candidates found analysing the relationship between, and the significance of, different pieces of information to be demanding.
Section 2(c)	Many candidates did not address the requirement to justify the selection of the targets.

Section 4(c)   Many candidates selected future development needs which were not based on information gathered from the post PDP analysis and/or evaluation of the PDP. This resulted in low marks being awarded.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: performance

Centres must ensure that the activity chosen allows candidates to access marks in all the sections. Throughout the performance, candidates must be able to demonstrate a broad and well established repertoire of complex skills. These skills should be controlled and fluent, with effective decisions being made. All rules and etiquette should be adhered to. All of this must be demonstrated in a demanding context.

It is up to the centres to ensure that the demand is at a challenging enough level to satisfy the standard for Advanced Higher. If centres cannot provide a challenging context to allow candidates the opportunity to access these marks then a different activity should be considered.

Component 2: project

Section 1(a)	Candidates are expected to **justify** the selection of each method used to gather information about performance (eg relevance, reliability). Candidates should ensure that the information gathered is of sufficient quality and depth to allow for detailed analysis in 1(b).
Section 1(b)	Candidates should be encouraged to **analyse** the information gathered in 1(a). It may be helpful to place raw data in the appendices to ensure that the main text is analytical in nature.
Section 2(a)	Candidates should be encouraged to present work which demonstrates a depth of study **focusing on the research question**. Information should be from respected and reliable sources and should be appropriately acknowledged and referenced.
Section 2(b)	Candidates should **analyse** links, supportive evidence, and any inconsistencies in research findings.
Section 2(c)	Candidates should ensure that they **justify** their selection of each PDP target. This justification should come from analysis in 2b; personal performance analysis in 1b (which has led to the research in 2a) can also be helpful in this justification.
Section 3	Candidates should present a brief summary of their programme in the main text. Details of sessions, modification and comments should be located in appendices. Candidates should ensure that all work in appendices is referred to from the main text.

Section 4(a)   Candidates should ensure that they analyse the post PDP findings; this should include analysis of the impact on specific targets and overall performance.

Section 4(b)   Referring to information from the PDP record (Section 3) may help support candidates in their evaluation of the PDP process.

Section 4(c)   All future development needs should be **linked** to the post PDP analysis and/or the evaluation. These needs may include further linked developments and/or a switch of focus to a different area; evidence for the selection must be gathered from the post PDP analysis and/or evaluation.

Finally, a small number of candidates produced projects that were significantly over the word count limit. Centres are reminded to instruct candidates to adhere to the word count.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	350

Number of resulted entries in 2018	430

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	21.4%	21.4%	92	70
B	28.4%	49.8%	122	60
C	24.7%	74.4%	106	50
D	12.1%	86.5%	52	45
No award	13.5%	-	58	-

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 which allows 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.

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 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.

Grade boundaries from exam 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 exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.