



Course Report 2017

Subject	Dance
Level	Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: Performance

The performance component of Higher Dance requires students to demonstrate their technical and performance skills in two contrasting styles of dance. This enables the learners to demonstrate their ability and skill in specific steps appropriate to each style whilst also enabling them to demonstrate physical knowledge and understanding of transferrable skills within dance.

The component performed largely as expected. Feedback indicates that on a few occasions there were presentations of styles that were not sufficiently contrasting, but this did not affect the overall outcome. Feedback also indicates that the component was generally well received by centres, and candidates were prepared and understood what was required of them.

Component 2: Practical activity

The practical activity component of Higher Dance requires students to demonstrate their creative skills and ability in the research, preparation and presentation of a choreographed performance for three or more dancers. This is further supported by a choreographic review, which demonstrates their theoretical and procedural understanding of the choreographic process.

The component performed largely as expected. Feedback indicates that on a few occasions, there were issues with a misunderstanding from delivery staff regarding the nature of creative choreography. However, this has improved from previous sessions, and the further work being done by SQA on understanding standards for dance is assisting with this.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Performance

Candidates performed well across the board in the performance component. Although we still see the presentation of jazz and contemporary styles, there is an increase in the utilisation of varied dance styles, allowing candidates to demonstrate the most appropriate style for their learning.

There is still a range in levels of presentations and this is largely dependent on the skills and experience of the presenting centre. However, presentations and skills are improving year on year. Very few candidates were inappropriately presented or did not achieve.

Component 2: Practical activity

Candidates presented a varied level of choreographic work, with particular areas of strength in this component demonstrated in choreographic reviews presented by S5/6 level candidates.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Performance

Candidates performed well across the board. However, there is still a specific focus on technical skills, with centres not providing as much focus on performance aspects. This also particularly depends on the presenting centre, but it is important that candidates are given the opportunity to access the full range of marks by appropriate delivery of the qualification.

Component 2: Practical activity

There is still a lack of understanding by the delivery staff, particularly in the school sector, regarding the requirements of creative choreography to a theme as opposed to choreography for technical skill and performance. However, the SQA has worked hard with the recent understanding standards work for this component and it is increasing awareness across the board, and we have seen improvement this year on previous sessions.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Performance

Centres should ensure that adequate time is given on all aspects of this component. This means ensuring that candidates are provided with opportunities to learn performance skills as well as practical technical skills so that they can access the full range of marks.

Component 2: Practical activity

Centres should ensure that candidates fully understand what is meant by creative choreography to a theme. This can be aided by increasing understanding of motif phrases, development of movement and task based work for the creation of a unique movement vocabulary specific to a theme.

Whilst it was pleasing to see that the conditions of assessment for coursework were adhered to in the majority of centres, there were a small number of examples where this may not have been the case. Following feedback from teachers, we have strengthened the conditions of assessment criteria for National 5 subjects and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher. The criteria are published clearly on our website and in course materials and must be adhered to. SQA takes very seriously its obligation to ensure fairness and equity for all candidates in all qualifications through consistent application of assessment conditions and investigates all cases alerted to us where conditions may not have been met.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	427
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	427
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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 -				
A	57.1%	57.1%	244	98
B	22.7%	79.9%	97	84
C	13.1%	93.0%	56	70
D	2.3%	95.3%	10	63
No award	4.7%	-	20	-

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.