



## Course Report 2017

Subject	Dance
Level	National 5

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

For course assessment, candidates perform one technical solo in their chosen dance style. This solo should allow for the demonstration of both technical ability and performance skills appropriate to National 5 level.

The collaborative marking model of a sample of 12 candidates was well received by all centres — the positive feedback centres gave highlights the benefits to centres of this approach to assessment. Visiting assessment for National 5 Dance in 2017 was both a successful and positive experience for centres.

Jazz and contemporary were the most common styles of dance presented at National 5.

Centres presented candidates with a range of abilities, and a wide range of marks were accessed, giving a clear indication that national standards are understood. Centres were able to meet the demands of performance through suitably choreographed dances that were appropriately challenging and well received by candidates.

Almost every centre was very well prepared for visiting assessment, with all documentation and candidate mark sheets complete and ready for use. This, in turn, streamlined assessment time and helped make the process run smoothly.

### Component 2: Practical activity

The practical activity component for National 5 Dance consists of the creation of a piece of choreography for two dancers, coupled with a choreography review that demonstrates the candidate's ability to research, plan, review and evaluate their whole creative process. The review can be presented in a variety of formats.

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### Choreography

Building from the Understanding Standards training event in November 2016, which had a focus on choreography, there was clear evidence that centres had worked hard to help candidates gain the skills to be more creative and informed in their use of original movement. There was a slight move away from the replication of a number of more predictable themes into candidate choreography which was creative and imaginative.

Almost every centre was very well prepared for visiting assessment, with all documentation and candidate mark sheets complete and ready for use. This, in turn, streamlined assessment time and helped make the process run smoothly.

### **Choreography review**

The assessment evidence for choreography review was, for the most part, presented as a written report. Centres were asked to mark the reviews prior to the assessment day and this provided more time for professional dialogue between the visiting assessor and the centre assessor. This change was very well received by all centres who found it to be conducive to the assessment process.

The majority of centres showed that they were fully in line with the national standard. A few centres were identified as requiring some support and appreciated the opportunity to explore the options available to them with the visiting assessor.

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

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1: Performance**

There was evidence shown tutor-choreographed dances provided greater depth and challenge, allowing candidates the opportunity to access the full range of marks.

There was evidence in many centres that time had been taken to ensure the required technique (the foundations of performance) were put in place before focus was given to personal performance. This resulted in candidates being able to concentrate on the performance quality of their movement, as they were equipped with the required technical skills for National 5 Dance.

It was evident that a number of centres had worked hard to develop and improve candidate performance quality. This ensured that candidates were able to access the full range of marks.

The majority of candidates were well prepared for their chosen solo assessment and were able to concentrate and focus, ensuring they produced the best performance possible. Centres are commended for this attention to detail.

In general, jazz was the most popular dance style selected at National 5 and was performed well.

#### **Component 2: Practical activity**

##### **Choreography**

There was strong evidence in a few centres that candidates had really built on their learning from the Dance: Choreography unit and produced work that was very creative and high in

quality.

Where the stimulus was well researched and developed into an effective original motif, the choreography was able to access the full range of marks. Centres that were able to support candidates to develop creativity during the Dance: Choreography unit, found the transition to the final choreography more straightforward.

Some candidates were able to demonstrate effective use of space and choreographic devices above the standards set for National 5.

### **Choreography Review**

The majority of candidates produced a written report supplemented with a mood/stimulus board.

In general, the level of candidate work for the review was excellent. It was clear that when a rich learning journey was experienced, this supported discussion and reflection in a meaningful way for the choreography review.

The majority of candidates were able to articulate their creative ideas in the review in a concise and organised manner.

Candidates' reviews of their skills as a choreographer were reflective and, in some cases, extensive which, in turn, demonstrated the development of transferrable life skills.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: Performance**

Where attention to the development of a strong and appropriate technical skills base was not evident, candidates struggled to perform well. For some candidates, a lack of centre and alignment impacted on almost every aspect of their performance.

Lack of technical ability meant that attention could not be given to performance quality as candidates in some cases gave their full focus to completing the performance correctly. In such cases, candidates were unable to access the full range of marks.

In a small number of centres, the centre-choreographed technical solo presented for examination had limited technical requirements and style-specific steps that lacked challenge and breadth. It is vital candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate their technical skills as appropriate to the dance style to reach the national standards at National 5 level.

Some centres could work with candidates to develop a greater understanding of the essence of contemporary dance. This could, in some cases, have provided more opportunities for candidates to observe professional dance works that would afford a greater insight into the performance of key style-specific steps, characteristics and features that are essential in contemporary dance performance.

## **Component 2: Practical Activity**

### **Choreography**

In some centres there was evidence of a lack of knowledge and understanding about what equates to original movement and how it could be developed. Focus given to the creative journey and the development of movement throughout the year is key to providing the foundations for choreography.

In a few centres, candidates' use of set steps within choreography proved very limiting when awarding marks for creativity.

In some centres, candidates focusing on telling a long narrative story inhibited creativity. Candidates would be better advised to focus on the development of one key aspect of the story.

### **Choreographic Review**

When candidates were unable to follow a methodical structure it was challenging to follow their thoughts in an organised manner. Centres are encouraged to help candidates structure the order of their paragraphs.

In a few centres, candidates were unable to relate the use of their choreographic devices to the creative theme/intention in any depth. Candidates are to be encouraged to explore each device and the value and impact of its use within their own choreography.

The majority of candidates were able to discuss their own strengths and weaknesses as choreographers, but could not be allocated the full range of marks because they did not discuss the impact that this had on their choreographic process.

## **Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Performance**

- ◆ Centres should ensure that candidates have a strong technical foundation from which to build, prior to embarking on set dances.
- ◆ Centres should ensure that they give the essential attention to the development of a strong performance quality appropriate to the chosen dance style. Centres should consider the best way to support this development and not leave it to chance or make it the sole responsibility of the candidate.
- ◆ To control nerves, some candidates would benefit from more opportunities to perform solo before the final assessment day.

## **Component 2: Practical Activity**

### **Choreography**

- ◆ Centres should ensure that the foundations for developing creative movement are in place before allowing candidates to embark on choreography.
- ◆ Centres should spend time to establish what an initial motif is and how its development is key to the theme/stimulus.
- ◆ Centres should focus on using a structure and devices appropriate to a theme for two people.
- ◆ Centres should discourage long, drawn-out storytelling and concentrate on developing original movement with a clear focus.

### **Choreography Review**

Centres should present the choreographic review to candidates with a methodical structure that encourages logical thinking. When candidates are allowed to present their thoughts in a disorganised manner, they often miss significant opportunities to gain marks. More often than not, the assessor can see that the candidate has an understanding of the area to be discussed from the choreography produced, but cannot allocate marks because this paragraph has been omitted from the final review.

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	521
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	499
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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	52.3%	52.3%	261	70
B	23.8%	76.2%	119	60
C	16.2%	92.4%	81	50
D	2.6%	95.0%	13	45
No award	5.0%	-	25	-

## 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.