



## External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Dance Practice
Level(s)	Higher

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. 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 question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

# Comments on candidate performance

## General comments

The candidates were well prepared for the visiting assessment.

The candidates presented choreography that was well conceived and written work that was well researched.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Planning essay

- ◆ In general, the essays were well structured and covered all the relevant sections with sufficient detail.
- ◆ There was evidence of good use of appendices.
- ◆ There was evidence of sound knowledge of choreographic devices, structures and form.
- ◆ Candidates demonstrated knowledge of planning their own personal development in improving their own technique in terms of skills and performance in preparation for the Visiting Assessment.

### Technique

- ◆ On the whole, candidates were very well prepared for the two solo performances.
- ◆ Candidates demonstrated the skills at the desired level for the Higher dance qualification.
- ◆ There was evidence of performance qualities, use of space, and direction.
- ◆ Some candidates also demonstrated an excellent grasp of technical skills in terms of alignment, strength and flexibility.

### Choreography

- ◆ Some candidates demonstrated a sophisticated grasp of themes and concepts in the development of their movement material.
- ◆ There was evidence of the thorough grasp of choreographic devices, shape and form required at this level.
- ◆ Candidates, on the whole, selected music and design elements that suited and enhanced their chosen themes.

### Evaluation

- ◆ Most evaluations were well written and covered the relevant points required.
- ◆ There was evidence of some very good reflection on candidates' own work and recommendations for the future.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

Some planning essays should have been confined more towards the suggested word count. Centres should ensure that the personal action plans are contained within the text of the essay and not in the appendices.

Some candidates should continue to work on their posture, alignment and technical skills with attention to performance qualities and stagecraft.

Although some of the choreography was of a high standard, some of the work was over the length required.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

Centres should continue to develop the technical skills of their candidates with attention to the detail of alignment, core control, strength and flexibility; with the additional performance skills including stage presence, focus and use of space.

Centres should continue to encourage candidates to explore their creativity and develop their own choreographic voice to develop work that reflects their own themes, thoughts and ideas in an innovative and fresh way.

Centres should continue to adhere to the marking instructions and guidance notes in guiding candidates through the assessment procedures and standards.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	380
Number of resulted entries in 2015	102

## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 200				
A	60.8%	60.8%	62	140
B	26.5%	87.3%	27	120
C	9.8%	97.1%	10	100
D	0.0%	97.1%	0	90
No award	2.9%	-	3	-

For this Course, grade boundaries have been stable for a number of years and the intention was to set similar grade boundaries to previous years. The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

## 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.