



Course Report 2015

Subject	Drama
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 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 assessment and marking instructions for the examination.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question paper

Overall this year candidates performed well in the question paper. The majority of questions were well answered and had obviously been read accurately and understood.

There was a mixture of production and acting roles chosen for Section 1 responses, with the majority choosing acting.

In Section 2 all three stimuli were used and candidates developed a vast array of dramas in response to their chosen stimuli. Many used the additional pages to note down and develop their ideas.

Component 2: Performance

Overall this year candidates achieved well in the Performance component of the National 5 Drama Course. Again, this year, most candidates chose the acting option. The majority of centres had chosen appropriate texts for performance and had prepared candidates well.

Visiting Assessors (VAs) complimented centres about the way they were received and the attempts by many centres to change the centre assessor this year to allow more colleagues the experience of applying the national standard. The commitment of staff and candidates was praised, and many VAs commented on the high standard of acting and technical roles.

A wide range of plays were used and candidates who had suitable texts, in terms of creativity, age appropriateness and length, were able to access the full range of marks available.

In the collaborative marking model, the standard of professional dialogue was excellent and VAs commented on how many staff welcomed and embraced the opportunity.

Many centres took the option to film their sample of candidates.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Question paper

Section 1 was generally well answered. Some candidates lost marks in Question 3 due to a lack of evaluative statements, or evaluation of their group instead of themselves.

Candidates responded well to the unseen stimulus and were able to form creative ideas under exam conditions and talk particularly well about target audience and an important scene.

Section 2 questions 4(b), 6(b), 7(b) and 8(b) seemed to be the most challenging questions for the candidates. Lack of appropriate knowledge and vocabulary, especially in questions 4(b), 7(b) and 8(b) was evident.

Many candidates had created quite complex dramas for Section 2. It did appear that some candidates had pre-prepared a scenario for Section 2. This should be discouraged as some scenarios did not suit the stimuli.

Component 2: Performance

Candidates performed very well in the Performance exam. Most centres had prepared candidates well and chosen appropriate texts. Many VAs commented on the positive experience they had visiting centres and seeing work of a high standard. It was obvious that candidates thoroughly enjoyed this experience and approached the task with real enthusiasm. Most centres presented a range of candidate abilities.

Where suitable and appropriate texts had been chosen, acting candidates on the whole managed to access the full range of marks.

Although still in the minority, many technical candidates achieved an excellent standard, with VAs impressed by not only their creativity and skills in their chosen area, but the knowledge these candidates displayed through research on their text.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Question 1(a) and (b): Most candidates knew how to address these questions, and answered well. Candidates were able to describe the themes/issues of their drama and explain and justify the desired audience response.

Question 2: Many candidates answered this question well and described appropriate practical activities they had undertaken to prepare for their presentation.

Question 4(a): Most candidates answered this question well. Many gave both time and place. Candidates gave a clear reason for their choice.

Question 5(a): Most candidates gave an appropriate target audience with an excellent reason.

Question 5(b): Most candidates explained an expected target audience response; many justified this with detailed explanations linking to the characters or theme/issue of their drama.

Questions 6(a): Most candidates gave a good explanation of a moment in their drama when one character clearly showed their feelings towards one other character.

Questions 7(a): Most candidates fully described their most important scene with relevant justification.

Questions 7(b): Most candidates described their set well although some did not include areas of the stage terminology in their answers.

Questions 8(a): Most candidates fully and clearly identified the mood or atmosphere they wished to create at the beginning and end of their drama with appropriate justification.

Component 2: Performance

Acting

Candidates who had been cast appropriately and had a suitable character, managed to achieve depth and reference textual clues. Most candidates applied skills with relevant and effective use of voice. Lines and cues were remembered well and characters were sustained. Many candidates achieved high marks and had clearly been directed well by staff, showing a depth of understanding about their character.

Technical

Candidates who had clearly documented the process of developing ideas, designs and had researched their skill/ideas achieved higher marks than those who hadn't. Many candidates had developed effective ideas and demonstrated a high level of skills.

Lighting and Sound candidates generally were very knowledgeable and executed their role with a high level of skill.

Costume and Make-up candidates impressed VAs with their creativity.

Set design and Props candidates were in the minority, but those with appropriately chosen texts showed a flair for design, originality and imagination.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Question 2: A small number of candidates answered on their technical role from Unit 2 — *Drama: Production Skills* and not on the performance they described in Question 1 (a) and 1 (b), and Question 3.

Question 3: Some candidates gave answers which were descriptive and not evaluative. Some candidates evaluated the group instead of themselves.

Question 4 (b): Many candidates wrote about staging and not a venue.

Question 6 (b): Some candidates did not access the full range of marks for this question due to lack of understanding of the activities they were writing about. They failed to explain their impact, directorially, on making the moment they had described in Question 6 (a) effective. Some candidates, especially those in an acting role, repeated practical activities (from Question 2). Although they were able to identify rehearsal techniques, some lacked the depth of knowledge to explain the purpose of these.

Questions 7 (b): Some candidates described the setting of this scene rather than the appearance of their set.

Question 8 (b): Many candidates did not access the full range of marks for this question due to lack of correct production/technical terminology used in their answers. Some candidates failed to explain how their chosen production skills would enhance the mood and atmosphere they had described in Question 8 (a).

Component 2: Performance

Some candidates found the challenges of acting certain texts/characters too demanding and failed to achieve depth in their performance. Candidates who had been cast as the opposite gender did not perform well in general.

Some candidates did not possess the level of acting skills required at this level, and some candidates were cast in minor roles which did not allow them scope for character development and therefore were unable to access the full range of marks.

Some candidates who had been cast in duologues failed to achieve depth in their performance and were unable to access the full range of marks. Lack of interaction with other characters was disadvantageous to candidates. Many duologues used were Higher extracts and failed to meet the required minimum length for National 5.

At times, blocking and movement was weak, with lack of consideration to character interaction or understanding of character motivation.

Candidates who were cast in texts which were repeated by all candidates in a centre were disadvantaged due to lack of appropriate casting and repetition of blocking.

Some technical candidates lacked the required paperwork and/or minimum requirements for their role, and seemed to be unaware of what the marks allocation was for their chosen production role. Many Lighting and Sound candidates did not have annotated scripts.

Some centres did not have the appropriate technical resources to allow technical candidates to access the full range of marks.

Some centres had completed pre-show checks for technical candidates before the VA arrived, meaning candidates had to repeat these for the VA.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

In Section 1 candidates should be able to clearly state their own performance or design concept and how it was developed from initial ideas to performance. They should be able to evaluate either themselves or others in their group. They should be able to state their responsibilities and explain it using correct terminology.

In Section 2 candidates should be encouraged to use the additional space provided to note down their ideas in response to their chosen stimuli. This allows them time to formulate and work through their ideas and transfer this information into their answers. Candidates who did not utilise this tended to have less detailed or fluid answers in Section 2.

Candidates should be encouraged to read all of the Questions in Section 2 before attempting to respond to the stimulus. This allows them to see the through line of the questions and avoid repetition.

Candidates are expected to use drama terminology. Candidates would benefit from increased knowledge and understanding of all terminology. Although some candidates answered using terminology, it was clear in a number of answers that they did not fully understand the vocabulary/concept/language they were using. Some candidates used very little or no terminology in their answers, especially in Section 2. Lack of technical terminology and understanding of practical application of technical equipment was apparent in these cases.

Component 2: Performance

- ◆ Preparation for performance responses can be written or typed and should **not exceed 400 words**.
- ◆ These should be written in open-book conditions and **must be completed and marked by the centre assessor before the VA arrives**. The VA should not be given a folio of work instead of the Preparation for Performance response.
- ◆ A **private, quiet space** must be provided for the VA to read the Preparation for Performance responses, and for the VA and centre assessor to discuss national marking standards and decisions. This space should be for the sole use of the VA and centre assessor, ie not a school staff room.
- ◆ Plays must be published and be of a suitable standard for National 5. Again some iconic Higher and Advanced Higher texts were used and this was not always appropriate for National 5 candidates. Some VAs commented on pupils struggling to interpret their role adequately where these texts had been used.
- ◆ Centres that had selected suitable text and cast appropriately provided candidates with opportunities to achieve excellent marks.
- ◆ Some groups were too big and some plays too long. Centres should make sure **minimum and maximum time limits** are adhered to.
- ◆ Some centres chose Higher duologue acting pieces which were too short and did not allow candidates to access the full range of marks. Duologues are not advisable to be used for all candidates in a centre.
- ◆ Some centres chose to repeat texts (especially duologues). Repetition of scenes with similar/same blocking is disadvantageous to candidates.
- ◆ Acting candidates should be cast in only **one** role.
- ◆ All paperwork (candidate mark sheets and sample sheets) should be completed and ready when the VA arrives. It may be advisable for the teacher/centre assessor to have their own copy of the paperwork to record marks. The centre assessor must ensure photocopies of the relevant paperwork are done before the VA leaves. The VA will bring the EX6 on the day of the examination.
- ◆ Some centres asked VAs to mark only one or two candidates in each performance and to watch every group in the centre. This is not appropriate. VAs, as a guide, should watch between two and four performances during the examination day, marking between two and six acting candidates and between two and four technical candidates, depending on group size, during each performance. When the VA has left, the centre assessor should then continue the examination, marking the remaining candidates – as soon as possible and within two working weeks. The VA is not at the centre to watch all candidates being presented. The sample of 12 should be made up from between two and four groups as a guide.
- ◆ Centres should allow one full day for the examination to be carried out.
- ◆ Centre assessors should not operate sound/lighting, cameras or deal with pupil issues which distract them from fully engaging in assessing.

- ◆ Centre assessors should be familiar with SQA marking instructions and have a copy ready for the assessment.
- ◆ A suitable audience should be provided and be available for the duration of the examination. Some VAs were left waiting for long periods of time before the next class arrived to form an audience.
- ◆ Technical candidates must share their folio of work with the VA to allow them to mark cue sheets/designs/lists/charts. Minimum requirements set out by SQA for their chosen role must be met.
- ◆ Technical candidates must carry out their pre-show checks in front of the VA.
- ◆ Make-up: candidates must design for all actors, and apply make-up to all actors. The VA will observe make-up designers applying **one make-up**, but all other actors must have make-up on for the production, as otherwise the assessor cannot mark the effectiveness of the make-up design and its application in performance.
- ◆ Costume: candidates must have a design and a costume for all actors so that the VA can mark the effectiveness of the costumes in performance. They should also have made or adapted **one costume** in line with their design.
- ◆ Lighting: candidates must have **eight lanterns**. A minimum of **seven lighting cues and five states** should be designed. The candidate should produce a detailed lighting plot and create a lighting cue sheet (this includes an annotated script). The candidate should operate the equipment on cue and at the levels specified in the lighting cue sheets during the performance.
- ◆ Sound: candidates must have a **minimum of six different sound effects and eight sound cues**. The candidate should source and edit music and effects, and provide a back-up plan. The candidate should produce a sound cue sheet detailing volume, duration and type (this includes an annotated script). The candidate should operate the equipment during the performance in accordance with the sound cue sheet.
- ◆ Set Design: candidates must have working designs and plans for the set, including an **elevation**. Detailed **ground plans** must be produced. The final set should reflect the candidate's own creative design as well as being functional in performance.
- ◆ Props: candidates must have a minimum of eight different props from two of the three areas of personal, pre-set or hand props. **One fully functional prop** should be designed and created for use in the performance. The candidate should produce a master props list. The candidate should label and store props effectively. The candidate should organise the props table for the performance.

Please check the SQA document – Drama Performance General Assessment Information – for guidance and examination requirements.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	4146
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	4716
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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 - 100				
A	55.4%	55.4%	2613	70
B	24.5%	79.9%	1157	60
C	13.2%	93.2%	623	50
D	3.1%	96.2%	145	45
No award	3.8%	-	178	-

The intention was to set a similar grade boundary to last year. The Course Assessment functioned as intended therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.