



Course Report 2016

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 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

Component 1: Question paper

Overall this year candidates performed reasonably well in the question paper. The majority of questions were answered satisfactorily as they had 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 considerable assortment of dramas in response to their chosen stimuli. Many used the additional pages to note down and develop their ideas.

Candidates responded well to the unseen stimulus and were able to form creative ideas under exam conditions.

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

Component 2: Performance

Overall, candidates performed very well in the performance exam. Most centres had prepared candidates well and chosen appropriately challenging texts. Visiting assessors commented on the positive experience they had visiting centres and seeing work of a high standard.

Most centres presented a range of candidate abilities. The collaborative marking model continues to be a very positive experience for both markers and centres.

Centres were praised by visiting assessors about the way they were received and the attempts by many centres to change the centre assessor to allow more colleagues the experience of applying the national standard. The commitment of staff and candidates was commended, and many visiting assessors commented on the high standard of acting and technical roles.

A wide variety of plays were used and, where appropriate texts had been chosen and candidates had been suitably cast, acting candidates on the whole managed to access the full range of marks.

There was an increase in the number of technical candidates, many of whom achieved an excellent standard. Visiting assessors were impressed by not only their creativity and skills in their chosen area, but also the knowledge these candidates displayed through research on their text.

Many centres took the option to film their sample of candidates in order to be able to engage fully with Results Services.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Question 1: Many candidates answered this question well and justified the chosen audience. Occasionally some candidates offered a negative justification.

Question 3: Many candidates answered this question well and described appropriate changes they would make to their final concept.

Question 4(a): Most candidates answered this question well, stating a clear purpose. Many also gave a clear reason. A minority of candidates did not understand what 'purpose' was and instead gave a theme or message.

Question 4(b): Most candidates answered this question well, stating an ideal audience with clear justification.

Question 5: Most candidates explained clear feelings and/or emotions with excellent reasons.

Question 6(a): Most candidates answered this question well, stating a character they considered important with a justification.

Questions 6(b): Many candidates gave a good description of a relationship the character had with one other character.

Questions 9(a): Most candidates identified a moment of tension with relevant justification.

Component 2: Performance

Acting Role: Candidates who had been cast appropriately and had a suitable character, in terms of creativity, age appropriateness and challenge, managed to achieve depth and reference textual clues. Most candidates applied skills with relevant and effective use of voice and movement.

Lines and cues were remembered well, and characterisation was sustained. Many candidates achieved high marks and had on the whole been directed well by teachers, showing a depth of understanding about their character.

Production Role (Technical): Candidates who had clearly documented the process of developing ideas/designs and had researched their skill/design concepts 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 technically knowledgeable and executed their role with a high level of skill. Costume candidates impressed visiting assessors with their

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

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Question 2: Some candidates didn't access marks as their answers were about a group challenge, rather than their own individual challenge.

Question 7: Many candidates did not give clear explanation of a rehearsal activity, only stating the name of the activity, and showing no understanding of the activity's purpose. Justifications were often generic and could be applied to any activity/storyline and did not relate directly to the characters in their drama.

Question 8(a): Some candidates didn't achieve marks due to lack of terminology. Most candidates showed some understanding of status. However, the standard of voice terminology was poor.

Question 8(b): Some candidates didn't achieve marks due to lack of terminology. Most candidates showed some understanding of status. However, the standard of movement terminology was poor.

Question 9(b): Many candidates did not access the full range of marks for this question due to lack of correct production terminology used in their answers (make-up, lighting, sound and set design). Candidates also failed to explain how their ideas would help to create tension.

Component 2: Performance

Some candidates did not possess the level of acting skills required at this level and some candidates were cast in small/minor roles that did not allow them scope for character development and were therefore unable to access the full range of marks. 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 who had been cast in duologues failed to achieve sufficient depth in their performance and were unable to access the full range of marks. A few centres used duologues from the previous Higher, some of which failed to meet the required minimum length for National 5. Also, lack of interaction with other characters disadvantaged some candidates.

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

Candidates who were cast in texts that were repeated by all candidates in a centre were at a disadvantage 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 — for example, lack of planning sheets, incorrect cue sheets, and no designs.

Some technical candidates were prepared to demonstrate their skills but there was no performance of the text they had designed for. This meant certain marks were affected as the skills must be applied as part of a performance.

Some centres did not have suitable/appropriate resources to allow technical candidates to fulfil their role — especially make-up — thus preventing access to the full range of marks. Visiting assessors reported a significant increase in candidates selecting hair and make-up, though many failed to create hair and make-up designs for every character in the drama or apply these designs to every actor, meaning they were unable to access all available marks.

Section 3: Advice for the 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 the process and/or the performance. 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 and 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.

General

Centres should ensure that:

- ◆ Candidates have a clear of understanding of the uses of rehearsal activities.

- ◆ There is appropriate use of production roles, and that candidates use production terminology. In some cases, production terminology was not only poor but incorrect.
- ◆ Candidates should avoid any tendency to use a predetermined response to the stimulus. Some predetermined responses did not allow candidates to fully respond to the requirements of the question paper.
- ◆ Encourage candidates to provide imaginative responses to the stimuli. In some cases, candidates copied stories directly from soap operas, reproduced the plot of a play they had read (including character names), or simply continued to answer on the performance they had identified in Section 1.
- ◆ A greater emphasis is placed on encouraging candidates to develop storylines in which they can demonstrate a clear vision of how the response itself could be performed. The picture stimulus was the most commonly used, although this prompted a number of creative responses; many used shark attack / drowning scenarios. This isn't inappropriate on its own, but the repeated scene of someone being attacked / drowning did suggest that the candidates were demonstrating no awareness of how this could be practicably staged (indeed, in some cases the candidates had actually described their piece as a 'movie').
- ◆ Encourage candidates to provide clear descriptions in directorial answers using voice and movement. Terminology was very general and lacked clear descriptions, ie no explanation of what tone they would use or what posture they would adopt. It is not enough to simply state a voice or movement term without a clear description and understanding of how it would be used.

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 visiting assessor arrives. The visiting assessor should not be given a folio of work instead of the Preparation for Performance response.
- ◆ 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 visiting assessors commented on pupils struggling to interpret their role adequately where these texts had been used.
- ◆ Centres that had selected suitable texts and cast appropriately provided candidates with opportunities to achieve excellent marks.
- ◆ Some groups were too big, and some productions too long. Centres should make sure minimum and maximum group size and 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. It is not advisable to use duologues 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.
- ◆ Centre assessors should not operate sound/lighting, cameras or deal with pupil issues which would detract from their fully engaging in the assessment process.
- ◆ Centre assessors should be familiar with SQA marking instructions and have a copy of the relevant grade descriptors ready for the assessment.

Make-up and hair: candidates must design for all actors, and apply make-up and hair to all actors. The visiting assessor will observe Make-up designers applying their make-up and hair design to one actor, but all other actors must have had make-up and hair designs applied in advance for the production, otherwise the assessor cannot fully mark the effectiveness of the make-up and hair design and its application in the performance. Theatrical make-up must be used.

Costume: candidates must have a design and costumes for all actors so that the visiting assessor 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 use and have access to 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 covering the whole production, 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.

The visiting assessment event

A private, quiet space must be provided for the visiting assessor to read the Preparation for Performance responses, and for the visiting assessor and centre assessor to discuss national marking standards and decisions. This space should be for the sole use of the visiting assessor and centre assessor, ie not a school staff room accessed by others during the assessment process.

All paperwork (Candidate Mark Sheets and Sample Sheet) should be completed and ready when the visiting assessor arrives. It is 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 can be made before the visiting assessor leaves. The visiting assessor will bring the EX6 on the day of the examination.

Some centres asked visiting assessors to mark only one or two candidates in each performance and to watch every group in the centre. This is not appropriate. Visiting assessors, as a guide, should watch between two and four performances during the assessment day, marking between two and six acting candidates and two and four technical candidates, depending on group size, during each performance. When the visiting assessor has left, the centre assessor should then continue the examination, marking the remaining candidates — as soon as possible and within two working weeks. The visiting assessor 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 wherever possible.

Centres should allow one full day for the examination to be carried out.

A suitable audience should be provided and be available for the duration of the examination. Some visiting assessors were left waiting for long periods of time before the next class arrived to form an audience.

Technical candidates must design for a production that is going to be shown in a performance and must carry out their pre-show checks in front of the visiting assessor. Technical candidates must share their folio of work with the visiting assessor to allow them to mark cue sheets/designs/lists/charts. Minimum requirements set out by SQA for their chosen role must be met. This material should also be referred to during the assessment by the candidate as a working document.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	4716
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	4589
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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	52.5%	52.5%	2411	69
B	24.5%	77.0%	1123	59
C	14.8%	91.8%	680	49
D	3.9%	95.7%	178	44
No award	4.3%	-	197	-

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.