



Course Report 2017

Subject	Physical Education
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

Component 1: Performance

There was no change in the performance component of the course from last year, and the marks awarded were similar. A wide range of activities was verified, and reports from centres indicate an even wider range of activities was assessed for the single performance event. The marking instructions allowed centres to award candidates a full range of marks.

In the planning and evaluation, candidates were able to respond to all the questions and access the available marks. The slight change to Question 1(b) was used by most centres and must be used in the future.

Some centres were lenient in their marking of the planning and evaluation. These centres adjusted their marks to the correct standard before submitting them.

Component 2: Question paper

The paper consists of two sections totalling 40 marks. It was organised to allow candidates to be eased into the examination with a 'Describe' question, worth four marks, as the first question.

The question paper performed in line with expectations. Feedback from the Higher exam team and from markers suggested that it was accessible and fair in terms of course coverage and level of demand.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Performance

Centres report that, on the whole, candidates performed well on the day of their single performance event. Candidates scored more highly in the planning section of the planning and evaluation than in the evaluation section.

Component 2: Question paper

Question 1(a) was answered well, with over half of the candidates achieving at least half marks. Description of how performance was affected by mental factors was found to be satisfactory, with some candidates making four points about **one** area of the mental factor and others giving four points about the impact of different areas of the factor.

Question 2(a) was also answered well with the average mark achieved being 2.72 out of the four available. Candidates were able to write about a range of methods that could be used to gather information on the social factor. Detailed description was given, with many candidates providing more than the required number of descriptive points.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Performance

There were no reports of candidates having difficulty accessing all areas of the marks available for the single performance. The context of the single performance must be challenging, competitive and/or demanding.

In the planning and evaluation sections, some candidates found analysing the effectiveness of their preparation more difficult than explaining their challenges (section 3a). Some candidates did not link this response to their preparation.

Component 2: Question paper

Candidates on some occasions did not access the full range of marks as a result of disregarding the command word. This led to answers lacking detail or candidates giving explanations when they were not required.

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| Question 1(b) | Some candidates did not give a full explanation about the need for effective feedback when developing mental factors. |
| Question 2(b) | Explanations given were not fully developed; ie candidate makes the point that <i>the profiling wheel can be used to gather information on social factors because it doesn't take a lot of time to carry out</i> . However, adding <i>enabling me to complete it without wasting training time</i> would access the mark for explanation. |
| Question 3(a) | A number of candidates failed to provide a description of an adaptation or change made to a personal development programme. Instead they identified a possible change eg 'increased frequency' but did not then qualify or quantify what that might look like. |
| Question 4(a) | Many candidates did not refer to the performance scenario given. This meant answers lacked focus and were very general in terms of how overall performance was affected by different factors that impact performance. |
| Question 4(b) | Recognition and application of the command word in answering this question proved difficult for some candidates. Many answers were descriptive and did not evaluate, or give a judgement about the approaches that could be used to develop future performances. |

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Performance

Centres must ensure that the activity chosen will allow candidates to access marks in all sections of the assessment. Throughout the performance, candidates must be able to demonstrate a broad and well-established repertoire of complex skills. These skills should

be controlled and fluent, with effective decisions being made. Candidates should abide by the rules and show appropriate etiquette.

All of this must be demonstrated in a suitably demanding context. If centres cannot provide a context to allow the candidates the opportunity to access these marks, a different activity must be considered. There are videos on the SQA secure site that exemplify the standard. Guidance on activities that are acceptable for assessment in Physical Education can be found at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Activities_for_Assessment_in_PE_guidance.pdf

In the evidence for the planning and evaluation, some candidates' responses were very lengthy. Some contained detailed description which gained no marks; others had detail which could have gained well above the maximum marks possible. Centres should encourage candidates to take notice of the command word and structure their response appropriately. There are exemplars on the SQA website that exemplify the standard.

Centres must not over-direct their candidates. The planning and evaluation marks form part of the overall final mark, and assessors are reminded of the assessment conditions where the planning and evaluation should be conducted under some control and supervision. Planning must be completed before the single performance takes place. While it is acceptable to allow candidates to give an evaluation immediately following the single performance and then revisit the response after time for reflection, it is not reasonable to have numerous re-drafts.

Component 2: Question paper

Centres must emphasise the need to identify the command word given in each question. This should direct candidates as to how their acquired knowledge should be used. Using the number of marks available as a guide to how many points need to be made would save candidates time giving unnecessary descriptions or explanations.

Specifically, in Section 2 of the exam, centres should reinforce the importance of referring to the performance scenario given, so that answers are focused, allowing access to all the available marks.

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	9714
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	9672
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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	22.7%	22.7%	2196	76
B	35.0%	57.7%	3383	66
C	28.5%	86.2%	2756	56
D	7.6%	93.8%	736	51
No award	6.2%	-	601	-

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.