



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	PHYSICAL EDUCATION
Level(s)	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 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.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

This year there was a significant decrease in the number of candidates being presented at Higher level. This was expected due to the introduction of the new qualifications.

Most markers felt that there seemed to be an improvement in the quality of candidates' responses in the upper ranges. Also, the number of very low-scoring scripts was considerably down in comparison to previous years. This resulted in an overall increase in the 'A' grade awards.

There is still evidence of a very small number of candidates answering in the area of Performance Appreciation. In the other three areas of the question paper there seemed to be an equal spread of questions being attempted.

A range of activities were apparent from the answers written by candidates.

Candidates appeared to be writing much more when answering questions.

Areas in which candidates performed well

When answering questions where the competence was to 'describe', candidates tended to respond well. This was highlighted in:

- ◆ Question 3(b) where candidates were able to describe the range of fitness requirements for effective practice.
- ◆ Question 5(c) where candidates were able to describe the methods used to gather information on their performance.
- ◆ Question 7(b) where candidates were able to describe a role they had performed within a Structure, Strategy or Composition.

When answering questions where the competence was to 'explain', candidates tended to respond slightly better than in previous years. This was highlighted in:

- ◆ Question 2(a) where candidates were able to explain what they understood about mental factors.
- ◆ Question 4(a) where candidates were able to explain the importance of physical fitness in a role or performance they carried out.
- ◆ Question 5(c) where candidates were able to explain why the methods of collecting information were appropriate.

At Higher level, candidates are required to demonstrate particular key concept knowledge. This was answered better than in previous years. This was highlighted in question 4(c) where candidates were able to show good knowledge about the principles of training.

Areas which candidates found demanding

There is still evidence of candidates' responses lacking depth in their answers when they are asked to 'discuss' or 'justify' their answer. Many candidates still tend to 'describe' and 'explain', rather than show critical thinking in their answers. This was evident in questions:

- ◆ Question 3(d) where many candidates described the information gathered from monitoring, but were unable to discuss how this information was used.
- ◆ Question 7(a) where candidates described the factors they would take into account when selecting a Structure, Strategy or Composition but did not discuss them.
- ◆ Question 8(a) where candidates described the strengths required to successfully implement a Structure, Strategy or Composition but failed to discuss them.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

There are still examples where candidates have pre-planned answers which they are using to answer questions. This restricts the depth of response given, and often candidates then do not answer the question being addressed. This has an effect of disadvantaging all candidates in achieving the best possible mark for the whole question.

There are also centres where all candidates have the same strengths and weaknesses and then follow identical programmes of work. This also can lead to very similar and self-restricting answers being used and often disadvantages candidates.

Staff in centres should try and give candidates as much practice as possible in answering questions where justification or discussion is required as this continues to be the competency poorly answered.

Staff should try to give candidates advice on exam technique in preparation for the exam. There is still evidence of candidates not reading questions carefully and fully answering the actual question being asked.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	7385
------------------------------------	------

Number of resulted entries in 2015	2731
------------------------------------	------

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	26.7%	26.7%	728	70
B	31.2%	57.9%	853	60
C	28.3%	86.2%	774	50
D	7.9%	94.1%	215	45
No award	5.9%	-	161	-

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.