



Course Report 2015

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 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

Many candidates found the question paper to be challenging. A number of candidates misinterpreted the intention of some of the questions and were consequently unable to access the full range of marks available.

Candidates found the scenario question in section 2 to be particularly challenging.

Component 2: Performance

Candidates had, on the whole, been given a wide choice of activities for their single performance event. The planning and evaluation sections were mainly completed in written format.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1: Question paper

Many candidates were unable to access all the available marks — the competences of describing, explaining, analysing and evaluating were not fully addressed.

In section 2, many candidates wrote only about one factor in parts (a) and (b) of the question. This meant they could not achieve all 16 marks available.

Candidates wrote about a wide range of activities they had experienced. Some linked their experiences and skills to the single performance event required for the second component of the course to assist them to complete questions in the question paper.

Overall, candidates did not answer questions with enough detail or depth. Application of knowledge was made more difficult in some instances where candidates appeared to have prepared answers for specific areas of the course. Consequently, the command word given in the question was not addressed fully.

Component 2: Performance

Teachers/lecturers indicated that candidates performed well on the day of their performance. Further feedback suggests that candidates gained higher marks in the planning section of the assessment rather than in the evaluation. A range of marks were gained, with 51.1 being the average.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

- ◆ Question 2(a) most candidates were able to identify two different approaches to develop physical factors.
- ◆ Question 4(a) some candidates were able to demonstrate some acquired knowledge and understanding of the impact of mental factors on performance.
- ◆ Question 4(b) some candidates were able to use personal experiences and knowledge of sport and physical activity to assist them answer this question in relation to model performers.

Component 2: Performance

Candidates were, in general, able to demonstrate the necessary skills and techniques, control and fluency and effective decision-making required for Higher level.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Overall, candidates had difficulty giving enough detail in descriptions and explanations, and in using their knowledge to answer the question, responding to the appropriate command word. Candidates were unable to access the full range of marks within many of the questions. For example:

- ◆ Question 1(a) most candidates gave limited explanations of why it was necessary to collect information about emotional factors before embarking on a development plan.
- ◆ Question 1(b) most candidates did not answer the question which asked for a comparison of personal performance to a model performance. Many listed the attributes of a model performer's emotional strengths. Some candidates did not make evaluations or judgments about their own strengths and development needs.
- ◆ Question 2(a) most candidates' descriptions were limited and lacking in sufficient detail to be able to access all marks available.
- ◆ Question 2(b) most candidates evaluated the benefits of the approach described in part 2(a) but failed to apply this knowledge to the overall impact on performance.
- ◆ Question 3(a)(i) and (ii) most candidates did not give enough detail in description and were unclear about the difference between monitoring and evaluating.
- ◆ Question 4(a) most candidates did not offer analysis of the information provided for two factors. Rather, they wrote about the given factor (mental) only.
- ◆ Question 4(b) most candidates did not explain the assistance a model performance could provide in the performance development process. Many candidates attempted to do this for the given factor (mental) only.

Component 2: Performance

Throughout verification of the performance component, most candidates gained full marks in the 'managing emotions' area, although some lost marks due to lack of knowledge of the rules — such as serving from the wrong side in badminton.

In the planning and evaluation sections, some candidates relied on description rather than focusing on the relevant command words and therefore could not access all available marks.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

Candidates should be encouraged to read the questions carefully to identify what they are required to do with acquired knowledge — for example, to compare or to evaluate the impact on performance.

The purpose of ongoing monitoring should be understood by candidates, and methods to do this should be clearly identified.

Similarly, methods used should be clearly defined to allow evaluation aspects of the performance development process. This would enable candidates to know how to gather evidence so that judgments about the success or otherwise of a process, method or approach, can be made.

In the scenario question of the paper, candidates should be clear that they must answer on two factors to be able to access the full range of marks available.

Component 2: Performance

Teachers/lecturers must ensure that candidates are aware of the requirements of the single performance, and that all assessment conditions are understood.

In the planning and evaluation sections, teachers/lecturers must ensure that candidates respond on their performance in the single performance event.

In question 3(a) care should be taken to make sure that the candidates respond to the command word 'analyse', and break down their response into the component parts of their preparation and link this to their performance.

Teachers/lecturers should refer to the most recent Performance Assessment Task and General Assessment Information documents available on SQA's secure website, to ensure that the correct marks are given.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	0
Number of resulted entries in 2015	6404

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	32.8%	32.8%	2099	70
B	37.0%	69.8%	2368	60
C	22.3%	92.1%	1430	50
D	4.3%	96.4%	276	45
No award	3.6%	-	231	-

For this Course, the intention was to set an assessment with grade boundaries at the notional values of 50% for a Grade C and 70% for a Grade A.

Question 4 was intended to be accessible to all candidates; however due to wording, question structure and layout it proved more difficult than intended. This affected all candidates.

The grade boundaries were decreased by 4 marks for Grade A and Grade C to reflect this. It was felt that, as a consequence of the application of the marking instructions of the course assignment, that demand had been eased in this area.

The grade boundaries were increased by 4 marks for Grade A and Grade C to reflect this. The net result of this was that grade boundaries were set at notional difficulty.

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.