



Course Report 2016

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: Question paper

The question paper consists of two sections totalling 40 marks. It generally performed in line with expectations, and feedback from the marking team, and from practitioners, suggested that it was fair in terms of course coverage.

The question paper allowed candidates to demonstrate acquired knowledge through a range of individual and team activities.

Question 3(b) did not perform as expected, with 15% of the presented cohort not attempting the question. The grade boundary was adjusted by one mark to address this.

Component 2: Performance

The performance component of the course was similar to last year, as were the marks awarded. A wide range of activities was verified, and reports from centres indicate an even wider range 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 should 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.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Question 1(a) was answered well overall. Candidates were generally able to provide information about an appropriate method that could be used to collect information on the impact of mental factors on performance.

In Section 2, question 4(a) was answered relatively well. Candidates provided a range of explanations as to why performance could be positively or negatively affected by the presence of others. Candidates were also able to use the given performance prompt — a series of three pictures and some associated text — to demonstrate applied knowledge.

Component 2: 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.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

The command words proved challenging for candidates, especially when the more complex skill of analysis was required.

- Question 1 (b) Candidates did not address the command word effectively. Many strayed into explanations as to why the information gathered could be useful.
- Question 2 (a) Describing a long- and short-term goal proved challenging for most candidates. Crucially, the timescale within which these could be set was not addressed. Candidates found it difficult to describe what a goal could look like for a performance period.
- Question 2 (b) This question allowed candidates to make use of acquired knowledge about goal setting. Those candidates who scored highly were the ones who referred to the factor named in the question, for example explaining how SMART could be used when developing **emotional factors**.
- Question 3 (a) More detail was required to access the full range of marks. Explanations often lacked development or exemplification to fully explain the point being made.
- Question 3 (b) Explaining possible future development needs for physical factors seemed very challenging for candidates. Some candidates gave descriptions about what course of action they could take to deal with these needs, and therefore did not access marks.
- Question 4 (b) Candidates overall did not answer this question well. Many described the approaches they could use while others explained the appropriateness of the approach. Very few actually deconstructed, took apart or established the relationship between the parts of the approaches that could be used.

Component 2: 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.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

Candidates should be given more practice in applying their knowledge related to performance development across all four factors. This would help them to be able to identify what each of the command words requires them to do with the relevant knowledge.

All answers should refer to the **given factor** to access all marks available. For example, **generic** answers on reasons for monitoring performance development will not achieve full marks at Higher.

Candidates should be advised to use the performance prompt to answer section 2 of the paper. In this way, marks are more easily achieved because reference is made to the 'scenario problem' consistently throughout the answer.

Candidates should be commended and encouraged to use the full range of sport and physical activity contexts they experience. This year many used knowledge of elite performers or sporting events effectively to reinforce points within their answers.

Centres are also reminded that exemplification of the national standard is available on the SQA website. Understanding Standards materials can also be viewed here, supporting centres in assessment decisions relating to the course.

Component 2: 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. The 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 clips 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 planning and evaluation, some candidates' responses were very lengthy. Some had detailed description, which gained no marks; others had detailed responses, which would 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 which 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.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	6404
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	9714
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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	27.3%	27.3%	2651	74
B	35.8%	63.1%	3474	64
C	26.6%	89.7%	2584	54
D	6.1%	95.8%	594	49
No award	4.2%	-	411	0

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.