



Course report 2024

Advanced Higher Physical Education

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2024 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 943

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 990

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	157	Percentage	15.9	Cumulative percentage	15.9	Minimum mark required	67
B	Number of candidates	256	Percentage	25.9	Cumulative percentage	41.7	Minimum mark required	56
C	Number of candidates	273	Percentage	27.6	Cumulative percentage	69.3	Minimum mark required	46
D	Number of candidates	232	Percentage	23.4	Cumulative percentage	92.7	Minimum mark required	35
No award	Number of candidates	72	Percentage	7.3	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Project

Candidates did not perform as well as expected in the project.

Some candidates did not provide a clear project proposal before stage 1(a).

Stages 1(b), 2(b), 4(a) and 4(c)(ii) proved to be the most demanding.

Stages 1(a), 3 and 4(b) were found to be the most accessible.

Performance

The performance component performed as expected. A range of activities were verified this session. Centres appear to have embraced the chance to allow personalisation and choice in the activity chosen by candidates.

Very few centres were outwith the tolerance in marking the performance and these centres took on board the feedback given to ensure that they were in line with the national standard.

The live assessment verification was welcomed in most centres, although this represented a challenge for some centres as some of their candidates were assessed in activities outwith the centre setting.

In some centres, the verification was completed through live assessment on the day of the visit and in other centres it was completed using video evidence of the live assessment.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Project

Some candidates did not provide a clear project proposal before stage 1(a) and some of these candidates' investigations did not support the establishment of a clear focus. This lack of focus often led to a broad range of topics being included in the project with marks only able to be awarded for one of the topics.

A few candidates achieved 'connection' marks through analysis in stages 1(b), 2(b) and/or 4(a).

Stage 1(a)

Most candidates provided relevant explanations of the appropriateness of their selected methods. Some candidates highlighted relevant features of their chosen methods but did not establish relevant explanations.

Stage 1(b)

A few candidates, who gathered detailed qualitative and quantitative information in 1(a), successfully analysed the information in depth. A few candidates included analysis of information which made connections between analytical points and established a different perspective and/or provided new insight.

Many candidates included analysis which lacked the depth required at Advanced Higher level. Some candidates chose data gathering methods which did not allow for the required depth of analysis at Advanced Higher level

Some candidates' analysis lacked focus towards a chosen topic and, as a result, could not be awarded marks.

Stage 2(a)

Most candidates successfully conducted research by reviewing appropriate sources.

Some candidates presented information without appropriately referring to the source(s) and, as a result, could not be awarded marks.

Many candidates presented information that lacked a focus towards establishing a Personal Development Plan and/or the depth required at Advanced Higher level. This had an impact on their ability to carry out analysis in stage 2(b).

Stage 2(b)

Most candidates found this section very demanding, often as a result of insufficient information relating to the creation of a Personal Development Plan in stage 2(a).

Most candidates included analysis which lacked the depth required at Advanced Higher level.

Stage 2(c)

Some candidates set targets which were not related to their chosen topic.

Some candidates did not justify their targets and, as a result, could not be awarded marks.

Some candidates set targets which were linked to the application of their Personal Development Plan only but with no link to their performance and, as a result, could not be awarded marks.

Stage 3

Most candidates produced a summary of their Personal Development Plan in the main text and referred to a detailed record of their Personal Development Plan implementation contained in the appendices.

A few candidates referred to their Personal Development Plan which included incorrect approaches for their performance focus and, as a result, could not be awarded marks.

A few candidates included only an excerpt of their Personal Development Plan in their appendices. This was insufficient to be awarded marks.

Stage 4(a)

Candidates found this stage demanding. This was often the result of the data they gathered lacking depth and quality for analysis.

Stage 4(b)

Many candidates successfully included generic and specific evaluative comments about the value of the process of carrying out their Personal Development Plan.

Some candidates included evaluative comments, however, did not provide the evidence from stage 3 and/or stage 4(a) to substantiate the comments and, as a result, could not be awarded marks.

Stage 4(c)(i)

Some candidates did not provide evidence of new development need(s) being supported by information gathered from the post-Personal Development Plan analysis and/or evaluation of their Personal Development Plan and so no marks could be awarded.

Stage 4(c)(ii)

Some candidates offered explanations, and showed understanding, of how meeting new development need(s) could have a positive effect on the other three factors that impact on performance.

Performance

Candidates performed very well and many candidates achieved full marks.

Verifiers reported that they observed some excellent performances. Overall, centres were able to provide suitable contexts for assessment. The context for the single performance event must be challenging, competitive and/or demanding.

Personalisation and choice led to strong performances in this component of the course. Candidates provided information on their composition, tactics or roles in a variety of ways including discussion and written information. There were no reports of candidates having difficulty accessing marks in any assessment item of the marking instructions.

There were no reports of candidates struggling with this component. All those involved knew what was expected of them.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Project

Selection and presentation of project proposal

Candidates must state their chosen performance topic at the start of their project.

Candidates should ensure their chosen performance topic gives a clear focus and allows for depth of study across all stages of the project. Candidates may select a focused topic where, potentially, several factors are included, however a clear link must be established when taking this approach.

Candidates should make a personal choice by selecting an issue impacting on their performance. Selecting a topic from previous courses and undertaking similar Personal Development Plans can deprive a candidate of the opportunity to advance their learning and address an authentic issue. It is inappropriate to have several candidates from the same centre producing near identical work.

Analysis within the project

Candidates must include detailed and quality analysis within stages 1(b), 2(b) and 4(a). Opportunity for such detail and quality of analysis is supported by the depth and quality of information gathered and the review of sources at the relevant stages of the project. For stages 1(b) and 4(a), the inclusion of data from a whole performance will present a number of avenues for quality in-depth analysis and in establishing connections.

Referencing

Any recognised method of referencing is acceptable; however, candidates are advised to use footnotes.

Candidates must present their review of sources, with appropriate referencing, in a manner which clearly shows where content has been sourced.

For stage 3, candidates must reference their appendices in their summary to access marks.

Performance

A key aim of the Advanced Higher course is to enable candidates to develop their ability to demonstrate a broad and comprehensive range of complex movement and performance skills in one activity, in a challenging context. Candidates should select, demonstrate, apply, and adapt these skills and use them to make informed decisions. As they develop their knowledge and understanding of how these skills combine to produce effective outcomes, candidates should develop consistency, precision, finesse, control and fluency of movement as they respond to, and meet, the demands of performance in a safe and effective way.

To set it apart from normal learning and teaching activities, the assessment of this single performance must take place in a context which is suitably challenging for an Advanced Higher-level candidate thus allowing the opportunity to access the full range of marks.

Guidance can be found on the [Physical Education subject page](#) of SQA's website to help teachers, lecturers and assessors decide which activities are acceptable for assessment.

Where verification takes place from a video of the live performance, centres must provide a detailed performance assessment record to explain assessment judgements. This could include the exact time in the video when a skill, decision or other relevant assessment item has taken place. Centres may also decide to overlay a commentary on the video to justify the marks awarded. These commentaries would provide evidence which could be used in the centre for future internal quality assurance.

Centres are reminded that when providing video evidence for verification they must follow the guidelines set out in the coursework assessment task. Centres must ensure that the footage is of an acceptable length of the performance and that the candidate is always clearly identifiable.

Understanding Standards

Further information is available on SQA's [Understanding Standards website](#). This includes exemplification of detail included for preparing candidates for future assessment.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

During the pandemic, we modified National Qualifications course assessments, for example we removed elements of coursework. We kept these modifications in place until the 2022–23 session. The education community agreed that retaining the modifications for longer than this could have a detrimental impact on learning and progression to the next stage of education, employment or training. After discussions with candidates, teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and others, we returned to full course assessment for the 2023–24 session.

SQA's approach to awarding was announced in [March 2024](#) and explained that any impact on candidates completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, would be considered in our grading decisions and incorporated into our well-established

grading processes. This provides fairness and safeguards for candidates and helps to provide assurances across the wider education community as we return to established awarding.

Our approach to awarding is broadly aligned to other nations of the UK that have returned to normal grading arrangements.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [National Qualifications 2024 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).