



Course report 2022

Subject	Dance
Level	National 5

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. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	760
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	32.8	Cumulative percentage	32.8	Number of candidates	250	Minimum mark required	69
B	Percentage	24.2	Cumulative percentage	57.0	Number of candidates	185	Minimum mark required	58
C	Percentage	24.0	Cumulative percentage	81.0	Number of candidates	180	Minimum mark required	47
D	Percentage	13.6	Cumulative percentage	94.6	Number of candidates	105	Minimum mark required	36
No award	Percentage	5.4	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	40	Minimum mark required	N/A

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

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 more statistical reports on the statistics page of [SQA's website](#).

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Overall, centres were well prepared for visiting assessment with all documentation and candidate mark sheets complete and ready for use. This, in turn, streamlined assessment time and helped make the process run smoothly for the candidates. Most centres selected candidates to demonstrate a range of abilities from across the marking bands for visiting assessment, when there were more than 12 candidates. However, a few centres did not manage to meet the national standards for practical components. The question paper continues to add validity and credibility to the course.

Question paper

The question paper continues to strengthen external assessment for National 5 Dance, allowing candidates to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding developed throughout the course.

Generally, candidates understood the requirements for all three sections in the paper, however many did not provide enough detail to access all marks available for each question.

A large number of candidates did not understand basic dance terminology used for National 5 dance and these candidates were disadvantaged because of this. It is essential that candidates understand all technical and performance skills to fully recognise and interpret the requirements of questions. Many candidates did not understand the command words.

In the 2022 paper a range of dance styles were studied for section 2 including: Jazz, Contemporary, Ballet, Commercial and Hip Hop. Question 7 was more demanding than expected, this was an A-type question. Most candidates did not give the impact on the selected dance style to achieve the marking criteria, and this was taken into consideration at the grade boundary meeting.

It was pleasing to see many centres selecting a professional dance that allowed candidates to analyse the use of key choreographic principles and relate this to the intentions of the piece. However, a few centres continue to use choreographies created for TV shows, musicals and competitions and these candidates have been disadvantaged particularly for question 10 on structure as they were unable to provide the detailed required.

The 2022 question paper provided appropriate balance with a range of A and C type questions, with each section progressing in difficulty of command word and subject content. The marking instructions also helped to differentiate.

Practical activity

The practical activity component performed as expected.

The collaborative marking model of a sample of 12 candidates was well received by all centres and positive feedback was received. Centres presented candidates with a range of abilities and a wide range of marks were accessed giving a clear indication that national standards are mainly understood.

Choreography

It was evident during 2022 visiting assessment that many candidates found it challenging to present choreographies that demonstrate originality and creativity to communicate the intentions of the piece. Some candidates used technical dance steps that have no meaning in relation to the theme or included acting rather than creative gestural movements. This impacts the marking bands that candidates can access, as each choreographic principle assessed within the assessment criteria links to the intentions of the choreography.

Choreography review

The assessment evidence for the choreography review was, for the most part presented as a written report. Centres are required to mark the reviews prior to the assessment event, and this provides more time for professional dialogue between the visiting assessor and the centre's assessor. This assessment process is well received by all centres and found to be beneficial to the smooth running of the day. Many visiting assessors advised that centres clearly understand the requirements of the review and many candidates were able to access the top band of marks for this part of the component.

Performance

The performance component performed as expected.

The collaborative marking model of a sample of 12 candidates was well received by all centres and positive feedback was received. Visiting assessment for National 5 Dance in 2022 was both a successful and positive experience for centres.

Jazz, contemporary, lyrical and commercial were the most common styles of dance presented across all centres at National 5 level. Some centres presented a commercial dance solo for performance, this dance style helps to engage candidates in the subject and allows them to demonstrate their strengths in performance qualities.

Centres presented candidates with a range of abilities and a wide range of marks were accessed with a high percentage of candidates accessing the top band of marks in 2022. This demonstrates that the level of technical ability and performance quality has remained consistent across centres after two challenging years and gives a clear indication that national standards are understood for this component.

Most experienced centres were able to meet the demands of performance through suitably choreographed dances that demonstrated accurate levels of demand for National 5 level and allowed candidates to achieve the marking criteria. However, in some centres the tutor choreography created for the technical solos had a lack of technical complexity for this level and therefore did not allow candidates to access the full range of marks available. In this instance the choreography included too many stylised movements and often the choreography did not meet the requirements as candidates would not start at the beginning of the song or would spend 20 to 30 seconds performing simple movements.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in:

Question paper

Within section 1 question 1(a) the candidates that interpreted and understood the requirements of the question provided a detailed response to demonstrate knowledge of a development method used to improve centre and balance. It was clear that these candidates had been through an integrated approach to learning and teaching whereby the practical and theoretical work is linked and intertwined.

Question 2 on flexibility was well answered, it was evident that most candidates had secure understanding of this area of content, however, some hadn't linked fully to the impact to access all available marks.

Generally, questions 4 and 5 in section 2 on style-specific steps and stylistic feature had detailed responses from the candidates, suggesting that candidates have good understanding of this area of content. However, a few candidates provided a description for jazz hands for the style-specific step, and this is a key characteristic not a style-specific step. This was the first time that stylistic feature had been sampled in a paper and it was generally well answered, however, many candidates provided an explanation rather than a description and therefore did not access all available marks.

Section 3 question 9 on costume — candidates were able to provide good responses often providing more detail than required which suggests that candidates are confident in this area of content.

Practical activity

Choreography

It was pleasing to see a small shift away from predictable themes at National 5, some centres have spent time preparing candidates through creative tasks and improvisation workshops as candidates then found the transition to the final choreography more straightforward and were able to apply creativity to the duet presented for examination.

Choreography review

Many candidates are researching their themes thoroughly to ensure secure understanding and can apply this knowledge to review their choice of choreographic principles. Many candidates could articulate their creative decision in detail to access the top band of marks. This will help with the transition to Higher for many candidates.

Performance

There was evidence in many centres that time had been taken to ensure candidates had acquired secure technical skills before preparing for course assessment. This resulted in candidates being able to concentrate on the performance quality of their movement, as they were equipped with the required technical skills to meet the demands for National 5 Dance.

It was evident that some centres had worked hard to develop and improve candidate performance quality. This ensured that candidates were able to access the full range of marks.

Many candidates were well prepared for their chosen solo assessment and were able to concentrate and focus, ensuring they presented their best performance, and centres are commended for this attention to detail.

In general, jazz and contemporary were the most popular dance styles selected at National 5 and were performed well. Many centres used commercial dance style this year too, with many candidates performing well in this area.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

In section 1 question 3 candidates were asked to evaluate their use of quality and dynamics — this area of content has been sampled in previous years. However, candidates still have a lack of knowledge of quality and dynamics as they responded with other performance skills such as musicality or self-expression. Some candidates that fully understood the skill, responded with the wrong command word by explaining rather than using evaluative language and making a judgement about their solo performance.

In section 2 question 6 candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of the key characteristics of music and sound for their selected dance style. Many candidates were stating musical qualities such as 'upbeat' and were not able to give a detailed description to access all the available marks.

For question 7 candidates demonstrated secure understanding of dance history, however, it was evident many misinterpreted the command word and the requirements of the question. Most candidates did not link the historical point or event to the impact on the dance style, and therefore could not access the marks available.

It was evident by the candidate responses for question 8 that candidates did not have secure knowledge of the spatial element 'formation', which is one of the most basic spatial elements and is also used in the practical activity.

For question 10(a) many candidates stated or identified a structure, rather than providing a detailed description to access the marks available.

Practical activity

Choreography

In some centres there was evidence of a lack of knowledge and understanding about what equates to original movement and how to develop key movements through choreographic devices and spatial elements. In some centres candidates are trying to tell elaborate stories in two-minute choreographies, candidates would be better advised to focus on the development of one key aspect of the story and work on communicating a clear structure through the dance. Most candidates used the narrative structure this session and at times other structures such a binary or ternary would have been more suited to the choreographic intentions.

Choreographic review

In a few centres, candidates were unable to relate the use of choreographic devices to the creative theme and intention in any depth.

Performance

In some centres, the tutor-choreographed technical solos presented for assessment had limited technical content and the style-specific steps lacked challenge and breadth. Contemporary dance was one of the weakest styles presented for assessment this year, in terms of the technical content.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

It was evident in the 2022 paper that many candidates did not fully understand the requirements of the command words or have full knowledge of course content. It is essential that learning and teaching prepares candidates with the relevant guidance and study skills to fully equip them for the demands of the question paper.

It is also vital centres encourage the appropriate use of dance terminology, this will ensure candidates understand the demand of questions and will also help them to articulate their knowledge. Quality and dynamics are worth a vital 5 marks in the technical solo, so it is imperative that candidates understand this skill as it not only affects the question paper component but both the performance and practical activity components too and their ability to apply varied quality and dynamics to their choreography within motif development.

Many candidates found it difficult to link centre and balance to a development method, suggesting that they have not been through the process of learning technical exercises and using developments to improve performance.

It was evident that some centres are not delivering the course in its entirety or applying an integrated approach to course delivery. It would benefit candidates if centres linked the practical content with the theory.

A high number of candidates were able to access the top band of marks for the Dance performance, particularly for performance skills. However, candidates have found it challenging to transfer this knowledge to the question paper, for example not being able to articulate the fundamental skills of quality and dynamics in section 1. Technical and performance skills can be taught through an integrated approach to learning both in a practical and classroom setting to ensure candidates fully understand all the key skills in the National 5 course.

It is vital that candidates are familiar with the following command words: describe, explain, and evaluate to fully understand the demands of each question within the National 5 Dance question paper.

For section 2 it is important that centres take the time to guide candidates through learning and teaching activities, to allow candidates to develop secure knowledge and understanding of the key characteristics, stylistic features, history, and developments of the selected dance, before candidates undertake independent learning activities.

Candidates should be encouraged to provide detailed responses for written tasks and practice papers in preparation for the question paper.

Question 7 — It is important to note that dance history and the developments of the selected dance style are often sampled in section 2, and it is essential that these questions are approached in different ways each time. Therefore, teachers and lecturers should take this into consideration when developing learning materials and practice papers.

Question 8 spatial elements – formation: this skill should be learnt through choreography workshops and when learning about the professional choreography for the question paper.

To prepare fully for the question paper candidates are expected to watch a full dance production created for stage that includes the key choreographic principles listed in the course specification. This allows candidates to fully explain, describe and evaluate the choreography in detail and justify in relation to the theme and/or intentions.

It is vital that centres select an appropriate professional choreography to study for section 3 and engage in the full piece. Candidates need to develop knowledge and understanding of the use of theme, movement, structure, devices, spatial elements, and theatre arts to be fully prepared for the demands of the question paper. Some candidates could not access the full range of marks due to the professional work selected not having enough choreographic content for the candidates to discuss.

The question paper is still in its infancy, with this being the third year, therefore the 2022 question paper sampled new content. This content is listed in the mandatory content in the course specification, and it is important that teachers and lecturers are familiar with this document.

Practical activity

Choreography

Centres should ensure that the foundations for developing creative movement are in place before allowing candidates to embark on their own choreographic process. Centres should spend time to establish what an initial motif is and explore motif development to help communicate the theme or stimulus. If the candidates understand how to apply this approach it may discourage them from creating new steps all the time and using technical dance steps.

In some centres it was clear that candidates had been guided through choreography and improvisation workshops to gain the skills and confidence required before starting the choreographic process. This allowed the candidates to apply creativity to develop original movement, with a slight move away from candidates selecting predictable themes. It is strongly recommended that all centres adopt this approach, as candidates must be guided through the process and gain knowledge and understanding of all the choreographic principles before embarking on their own choreography journey.

Candidates should be guided to use the most appropriate structure for their piece. Focus given to the creative journey and the development of movements, devices, spatial elements, and structure throughout the year is key to providing the foundations for creating original movements that reflect the choreographic intentions.

Centres should focus on using a structure and three devices that are appropriate to the selected theme for two people. It is useful if candidates are encouraged to plan the use of choreographic principles before starting the rehearsal process with their dancers.

Candidates **should not** be performing in their own choreography. If an issue arises in advance of the assessment event, the centre assessor or SQA coordinator must contact SQA to receive advice before the live assessment.

Choreography review

When candidates were unable to follow a methodical structure, it was challenging to follow their thoughts in an organised manner. Centres are encouraged to help candidates structure the order of their paragraphs. Centres should present the choreographic review to candidates with a methodical structure that encourages logical thinking. When candidates are allowed to present their thoughts in a disorganised manner, they often miss significant opportunities to gain marks.

Many candidates were defining the devices or stating the skills in the evaluation, but the marking criteria clearly asks for a description, therefore, if this approach is adopted candidates will not access all the available marks. Candidates will not access marks for giving a definition only. If giving a definition they must also describe how they have used the devices in their own choreography to access the available marks. Candidates' understanding of this and the use of these command words should be strengthened due to the implementation of the question paper component as this will support course delivery across components.

Candidates should be encouraged to explore each device and explain the impact of its use within their **own** choreography rather than giving generic definitions.

Performance

Centres should ensure that candidates have a strong technical foundation from which to build before embarking on set technical dances.

It is vital candidates are given the opportunity to demonstrate their technical skills as appropriate to the dance style to reach the national standards for National 5 Dance. Some centres could work with candidates to develop a greater understanding of the essence of contemporary dance. This could, in some cases, have provided more opportunities for candidates to observe professional dance works that would give a greater insight into the performance of key style-specific steps, characteristics and features that are essential in contemporary dance performance.

Centres should ensure that they give attention to the development of performance quality as appropriate to the selected dance style. Centres should consider the best way to support the development of performance skills and not leave it to the responsibility of the candidate.

It is important that the choreography for commercial dance challenges candidates and still allows them to utilise the marking criteria. While this option is encouraged for the performance component to ensure the National 5 course is current for candidates, commercial dance does not lend itself to section 2 of the question paper as it is difficult to define the history of the ever-growing dance style that is still developing and changing alongside current music trends.

To help control nerves, some candidates would benefit from more opportunities to perform the dance as a solo before the final assessment day. Centre assessors should choose an appropriate environment for the live assessment as it is important that candidates have had time to practise in the space before the live assessment event. If using a dance studio, it is

good practice to either perform away from or cover the mirrors as this often impacts the candidate's mark if they perform towards the mirrors rather than to the assessors.

Appendix 1: 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.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in very different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2022. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2022 Awarding—Methodology Report](#).