



Course report 2022

Subject	Gaelic (Learners)
Level	Advanced Higher

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	10
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	50.0	Cumulative percentage	50.0	Number of candidates	5	Minimum mark required	140
B	Percentage	20.0	Cumulative percentage	70.0	Number of candidates	0	Minimum mark required	120
C	Percentage	30.0	Cumulative percentage	100.0	Number of candidates	5	Minimum mark required	100
D	Percentage	0.0	Cumulative percentage	100.0	Number of candidates	0	Minimum mark required	80
No award	Percentage	0.0	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	0	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

Question paper: Reading and Translation

Candidates performed well in the reading and translation paper. The context was accessible to all candidates and the subject was topical, on care for older people in the United Kingdom.

The question paper performed according to expectations, with some candidates submitting responses of a high standard. Although some candidates found the overall purpose question challenging, many performed well giving a comprehensive overview of the writer's purpose.

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

The listening section of this question paper presented candidates with a monologue about the Scottish Whisky industry and a dialogue, which was an interview with an owner who recently opened a whisky and gin distillery. The assessment contexts were appropriate and relevant to students studying at this level. Some found the paper challenging although many also found it very accessible.

Many candidates chose the culture question in the discursive essay and the level of the writing was varied. The paper performed in line with expectation and was accessible to all candidates.

Portfolio

The portfolio provided candidates with personalisation and choice at Advanced Higher. Candidates' performance was of a good standard. Most candidates completed an analysis of literature in their portfolio and the topics varied. Although the number of candidates selecting the 'language in work' option was low, it is a worthwhile option as there are many potential resources available.

Performance–talking

Most candidates were well-prepared and gave a good account of their speaking skills.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Question paper: Reading and Translation

The reading and translation question paper functioned well and was accessible to all candidates. Candidates gave good responses to most of the set questions. There was some evidence of dictionary misuse and mixing nouns and verbs.

Many candidates provided appropriate answers to the overall purpose question, although some answers did not fully address the question. Most candidates were well-prepared for the translation part of the assessment and several candidates answered this question at the beginning of the paper. Not all candidates attempted the translation, which affected their overall marks.

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

Some candidates performed very well in the listening question while others found it challenging. There was a wide range of marks.

There were some good examples of discursive writing this year. Pegged marking ensured that the full range of marks were accessible to candidates. Most candidates chose the culture question. All candidates found the topics accessible and their writing was of a high standard. However, basic grammar mistakes continue to diminish the writing of a few candidates, for example different tenses being used within a sentence.

Portfolio

Candidates performed well in the portfolio. Candidates focused on a good range of topics in their portfolios, from historical to modern day literature. Most candidates chose literature as their focus of study, and although the number of candidates selecting the 'language in work' option is low, it is a worthwhile option as there are many potential resources available. There was good evidence of an analytical approach and topics being studied in depth.

Performance–talking

Most candidates performed well in the discussion. There were some very good examples of candidates using a level of Gaelic that allowed them to sustain detailed discussions with the visiting assessor and demonstrate a high level of accuracy, while using complex and sophisticated language. These discussions were natural and authentic throughout.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper: Reading and Translation

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ continue to develop dictionary skills, reminding them not to choose the first word that appears in the dictionary without considering the context of the passage and selecting the most appropriate meaning
- ◆ study the questions carefully in order to fully understand what the question is asking
- ◆ look at the marks allocated per question in order to guide them to the level of information required. This also helps with completing the paper on time as they can miss gaining a significant number of marks when the paper is not completed
- ◆ practise frequently the overall purpose question
- ◆ seek to draw inferences from the text and not merely provide factual information or repeat the answers they have provided in the comprehension questions
- ◆ always attempt the translation, and remind them this is where dictionary skills can be of great value
- ◆ read and review their translation once they complete it to ensure it makes sense and reads well in English

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ practise listening exercises as this is an area that requires further development
- ◆ pay particular attention to any numbers and dates, comparatives, or superlatives, singular and plurals, days and months
- ◆ continue to develop their grammar and syntax
- ◆ aim to write correct sentences, as simple errors continue to diminish the standard of writing
- ◆ know the basic points of tenses, cases, plurals and reported speech
- ◆ practise using a dictionary during the discursive writing
- ◆ allocate time in the exam to proofread their essay after they have finished

Portfolio

One of the most important tasks for candidates is choosing the right topic or focus for their portfolio. The title should be clear and lead to critical analysis and a discursive approach.

Teachers and lecturers should discuss with candidates the title they have chosen to ensure that they can develop and research the subject matter at an appropriate depth.

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should:

- ◆ ensure candidates take part in regular talking activities in class to develop the natural element of interaction. By doing this, candidates may show more confidence in using spoken Gaelic with the visiting assessor, and enable them to deal with questions that go beyond their area of study
- ◆ speak Gaelic as often as possible in class throughout the year, as this will greatly benefit candidates' listening and talking skills

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](#).