

## Principal Assessor Report 2002

**Assessment Panel:**

Gaelic

**Qualification area**

**Subject(s) and Level(s)  
included in this report**

Standard Grade Gaelic (Learners) - Credit, General and  
Foundation  
Standard Grade Gaelic (Learners) Writing  
Intermediate 1 Gaelic (Learners)  
Intermediate 2 Gaelic (Learners)

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## Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	Standard Grade 386
	Standard Grade Writing 158
	Intermediate 1 7
	Intermediate 2 14
<b>Post appeal</b>	

Number of entries in 2002	
<b>Pre appeal</b>	Standard Grade 331
	Standard Grade Writing 148
	Intermediate 1 17
	Intermediate 2 34
<b>Post appeal</b>	

### General comments re entry numbers

There has been a decrease in presentation entries at Standard Grade level. However, at Intermediate 1 and 2 there has been a substantial increase. This increase may account for the decline at Standard Grade as some presenting centres have implemented Intermediate courses to replace Standard Grade.

### General comments

At Standard Grade, most of the cohort was presented at Credit and General levels. Of the Credit presentations, the majority were at lower end of the spectrum. There are twenty-seven centres presenting for Standard Grade, five for Intermediate 1 and twelve for Intermediate 2. Some of these centres differ from the previous year. There were some very able and talented candidates presented at Intermediate 1.

## Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

### Standard Grade Reading

Grade 1	51
Grade 2	35
Grade 3	39
Grade 4	29
Grade 5	31
Grade 6	23

### Standard Grade Listening

Grade 1	41
Grade 2	30
Grade 3	31
Grade 4	24
Grade 5	21
Grade 6	15

### Intermediate 1

Upper A	84%
Lower A	70%
B	60%
C	50%

### Intermediate 2

Upper A	84%
Lower A	70%
B	59%
C	48%

## General commentary on grade boundaries

### *Notional percentage cut-offs for each grade*

Question papers and their associated marking schemes are designed to be of the required standard and to meet the assessment specification for the subject/level concerned.

For National courses the examination paper(s) are set in order that a score of approximately 50% of the total marks for all components merits a grade C (based on the grade descriptions for that grade), and similarly a score of 70 % for a grade A. The lowest mark for a grade B is set by the computer software as half way between the C and A grade boundaries.

## Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

### Standard Grade

The Standard Grade papers proved more challenging than in the previous year. Consequently, the cut-off scores were lowered.

### Intermediate 2

The listening paper proved more challenging than in the previous year. Consequently, the cut-off scores for a grade B and C were lowered.

## Comments on candidate performance

### General comments

In all three examinations, teachers/lecturers and candidates are to be commended for their preparation for this diet of examinations.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

There were some outstanding performances from areas where Gaelic is the community language. This was particularly evident at Standard Grade Credit. Performances from centres where Gaelic is less prevalent represented a more realistic achievement.

#### Standard Grade Reading

The papers covered a wide range of language areas and purposes, but were more testing than in the previous year and contained a proportion of challenging questions, which readily differentiated candidates.

At Credit level, some candidates achieved full marks. However, at General and Foundation levels the best performances were 2 or 3 marks short of this.

#### Standard Grade Listening

Overall, the papers were fair but were interwoven with challenging questions. These questions resulted in the papers proving to be more challenging than in the previous year. The standard of audio materials was very good.

#### Standard Grade Writing

There was an improved standard of writing this year, which resulted in a slight increase in Grade 1 awards and a substantial increase at Grade 2. Candidates responded well and accurately to Section A, especially when writing about themselves.

#### Intermediate 1

The papers were sufficiently testing for this level, and contained some complex vocabulary and structures to ensure challenge. A wide range of language areas and purposes were sampled. On the whole, the folio items were excellent and exemplified an innovative use of Information Communication Technology. However, there were some very basic submissions.

#### Intermediate 2

The reading paper was sufficiently challenging and sampled a range of language areas and purposes. Some able A-grade candidates performed very well in the listening paper. The standard of audio materials was very good. Generally, the folio items were of a very high standard with good attention to grammatical accuracy, spelling and detail. There were many examples of candidates fulfilling the targets outlined in the grammar grids. Folios were well presented and were made visually attractive by the use of Information Communication Technology.

## Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

### Standard Grade Reading

- ◆ There was a tendency to not answer in sufficient detail and precision.
- ◆ There was evidence of very low achievement at all levels.
- ◆ Candidates were not competent in recognising months, comparisons and whether nouns were singular or plural.
- ◆ The following text proved difficult in the General paper:

5b - *trì notaichean ach deich sgillinn*

6b - *tha àireamh ... a' dol suas*

7g - *... a bhith faiceallach*

7h - *bhon mhullach* (Answers attracted **Mull**)

8a - *Gàidhealach*.

- ◆ The following text proved difficult in the Credit paper:

1g - *air falbh bhon sgoil*

2d - *mu* was omitted

2j - *uaireannan* was omitted

3b - *làn* was confused with *Iain*

4f - *deugairean* was rarely recognised.

### Standard Grade Listening

- ◆ At all levels, candidates were given an opportunity to settle in to the exam. However, each level presented a challenge with examples of candidates failing to understand text.
- ◆ The papers contained a number of 2 or 3 part questions. If candidates failed to understand the first part of the question they were penalised in subsequent related parts.
- ◆ Candidates were not competent in recognising plurals, months, countries and comparisons.
- ◆ The following text proved difficult in the General paper:

9a - *Dihaoine*

9b - *...a' dol don taigh-dhealbh*

9c - *peathraichean* (Only a small minority recognised this.)

10 - *leabhraichean agus irisean*.

- ◆ The following text proved difficult in the Credit paper:

4b - *... Èirinn* often attracted the response Italy

5c - *neach-frithealaidh*

6c - *as sine* was translated as "older"

7b - *ceathrar*

8 - *caol* (Tended to be translated as "cool!")

13 - *Uibhist a Tuath*

14b - *Thog sinn dealbhan*

14c - *...reòite ach tioram agus grianach*.

### **Standard Grade Writing**

- ◆ While candidates' responses were impressive for Section A, candidates had difficulty in articulating their communications for Section B. Consequently, there was a variance in the two grades awarded. This reduced the overall grade.
- ◆ Some candidates were unfamiliar with the structure of a letter, especially in how to begin and conclude their communications.
- ◆ There were many incidents of misuse of a dictionary.

### **Intermediate 1 Reading**

- ◆ The candidates had difficulty with the recognition of plurals.
- ◆ The following questions proved challenging:

1c - *trang*

2a - Mother and Father were confused

3b - *gillean, nigheanan*

4e - ... *m'athar* was associated with mother.

### **Intermediate 1 Listening**

- ◆ The following questions proved challenging:

3 - *mo phàrantan*

7 - *ag iasgach*

9a - *blasta, saor*

10a - *aodach*.

### **Intermediate 2 Reading**

- ◆ Some candidates tended to answer in insufficient detail.
- ◆ The following questions proved challenging:

1d - *inntinneach*

1e - Tended to be associated with car repairs

2e - *a' sreap*

3d - *a' reic*

4c - *ceapairean*

4d - *Dh'fhàs mi reamhar*.

## Intermediate 2 Listening

- ◆ This paper proved to be testing with a distinct categorisation between A-grade and C-grade candidates emerging. There were some examples of low achievement as a result of failure to recognise text, answer in sufficient detail, and a tendency to confuse and muddle vocabulary. As the paper was harder than last year, the cut-off scores were lowered.
- ◆ The following questions proved challenging:
  - 1 - *am bi thu...?* was often transcribed as *What*
  - 3 - *a h-uile*
  - 4 - *eile*
  - 5b - *mo mhàthair* was often associated with father
  - 7 - *ùra* was often omitted. *Ainmeil* was rarely recognised
  - 12a - *teaghlach* was rarely recognised
  - 12b - *Lunnainn* attracted a range of places.

## **Recommendations**

### **Feedback to centres**

In all three examinations, teachers/lecturers and candidates are to be commended for their preparation for this diet of examinations.

### **Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well**

There were some outstanding performances from areas where Gaelic is the community language. This was particularly evident at Standard Grade Credit. Performances from centres where Gaelic is less prevalent represented a more realistic achievement.

#### **Standard Grade Reading**

The papers covered a wide range of language areas and purposes, but were more testing than in the previous year and contained a proportion of challenging questions, readily differentiating candidates.

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Overall, the papers were fair but were interwoven with challenging questions. These questions resulted in the papers proving to be more challenging than in the previous year. The standard of audio materials was very good.

#### **Standard Grade Writing**

There was an improved standard of writing this year, which resulted in a slight increase in Grade 1 awards and a substantial increase at Grade 2. Candidates responded well and accurately to Section A, especially when writing about themselves.

#### **Intermediate 1**

The papers were sufficiently testing for this level, and contained some complex vocabulary and structures to ensure challenge. A wide range of language areas and purposes were sampled. On the whole, the folio items were excellent and exemplified an innovative use of Information Communication Technology. However, there were some very basic submissions. Candidates were not disadvantaged by an error on the audio tape. However, SQA are researching this error to ensure that future tapes are accurate.

#### **Intermediate 2**

The reading paper was sufficiently challenging, sampling a range of language areas and purposes. Some able A-grade candidates performed very well in the listening paper. The standard of audio materials was very good. Generally, the folio items were of a very high standard with good attention to grammatical accuracy, spelling and detail. There were many examples of candidates fulfilling the targets outlined in the grammar grids. Folios were well presented and were made visually attractive by the use of Information Communication Technology.

## Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

### Standard Grade Reading

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### **Intermediate 1 Listening**

- ◆ The following questions proved challenging:

3 - *mo phàrantan*

7 - *ag iasgach*

9a - *blasta, saor*

10a - *aodach*.

### **Intermediate 2 Reading**

- ◆ Some candidates tended to answer in insufficient detail.
- ◆ The following questions proved challenging:

1d - *inntinneach*

1e - Tended to be associated with car repairs

2e - *a' sreap*

3d - *a' reic*

4c - *ceapairean*

4d - *Dh'fhàs mi reamhar*.

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  - 3 - *a h-uile*
  - 4 - *eile*
  - 5b - *mo mhàthair* was often associated with father
  - 7 - *ùra, ainmeil*
  - 12a - *teaghlach*
  - 12b - *Lunnainn*.

## General comments

- ◆ There were some outstanding performances from areas where Gaelic is the community language. This was particularly evident at Standard Grade Credit. While this is to be commended, centres should ensure that candidates are assigned to Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig courses appropriately to ensure challenge, progression and so as not to disadvantage the true Gaelic language learner.
- ◆ Some candidates failed to choose the required number of responses in multiple choice questions. They often selected an extra answer or selected all the options offered. In these cases, candidates are penalised for not following instructions.
- ◆ While some Folio items were outstanding there were others that were very basic and disadvantaged candidates. Teachers/lecturers are advised to issue clear guidelines on what types of writing are appropriate for submission as a folio item.
- ◆ It was evident that some Intermediate 1 candidates would have benefited from studying at a more advanced level. Centres are advised to utilise the unit, *Accelerated Language Focus* for able continuers and beginners. This unit then links to Intermediate 2, or 1 depending on the candidate's ability. This route ensures that candidates are following a sufficiently challenging course and are not disadvantaging candidates whose ability level is at Intermediate 1.

## **Feedback to centres from Senior Moderator, on Talk**

Candidates' performance was generally very good.

It is recommended that the following feedback be relayed to centres:

- Interviews/talks should not exceed the times specified
- Teachers should not intervene except when necessary
- On some tapes there was evidence of reading
- Teachers should identify candidates, and, if possible submit a separate tape for each candidate – if this is not possible, a gap should be left between candidates' performances.

The attention of centres should be drawn to the rule regarding the reading of scripts and the use of notes.