



## External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Gaelic (Learners)
Level(s)	Standard Grade

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. 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 question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

# Comments on candidate performance

## General comments

The number of candidates presented for Standard Grade Gaelic (Learners) this year was 309, but fewer candidates were presented for the optional Writing paper.

Achievement on the whole was not as high this year as it was in previous years, as Listening and Reading papers in particular provided more of a challenge to the candidature. Markers commented on having to mark the lower of the two levels that many candidates sat in both elements. 51.6% of candidates achieved a Credit Listening award and achievement in Reading followed a similar pattern with nearly half – 49% - achieving a Credit award. Cumulative percentages for overall grades 1-4 are largely in line with previous years.

30.8% of this year's candidature achieved Grade 1 for Speaking, which is similar to previous years while fewer candidates achieved Grades 2 or 3.

Achievement in Writing followed a similar pattern. 33.5% of the candidature achieved Grade 1, but the cumulative percentage of candidates gaining Grade 1–3 dipped compared to previous years. By Grade 4, however, the cumulative percentage was slightly down on 2012, but in line with achievement in 2010 and 2011.

Fewer written pieces merited a Credit grade this year, often due to a lack of detail. Some centres are still not presenting all Credit/General candidates for the Writing paper, and this is likely to explain less successful performances in Listening and Reading this year, as these candidates are missing out on the chance to learn and use vocabulary in this skill. *Mise* and *Saor-làithean* continue to be the most popular questions.

Some centres had a high number of no awards.

Some centres had a number of responses where large sections of candidates' Writing were almost identical. Over-preparation led to candidates not engaging fully with the Writing process, and resulted in little sign of personal input or personal opinion. It is important that teachers support candidates' Writing, but they must also encourage individuality and creativity.

Other centres entered an abnormally high level of Grade 1 candidates whose Writing surpassed even that of fluent speakers.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

Centres and candidates are to be commended on their preparation prior to this, the final diet of Standard Grade examinations.

A few candidates achieved high scores in the Credit Listening and Reading papers, and it was pleasing for markers to note that they were not all from schools in traditionally Gaelic-

speaking areas. Some candidates gained full marks for the Credit Reading or Listening paper. Both Foundation level papers and many General scripts were completed well.

In some Writing scripts, it was apparent that a great deal of work had been done to enable candidates to write comprehensive, accurate responses. Some candidates made an attempt to convey and seek information. Furthermore, some candidates structured the *Mise* response as an e-mail, as required by the question.

A number of responses showed a good awareness of a variety of tenses with candidates stating, for example, what they will do or would like to do when they leave school. The predictable nature of this paper has again led to some examples of good quality work from those who have prepared thoroughly.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Listening: Foundation

- ◆ Question 4a): 'school' alone was not enough for this mark. Candidates needed 'primary school'.
- ◆ Question 11: Many candidates could not identify the correct day.
- ◆ Question 12: Although this was a multiple choice question, many candidates did not recognise the correct family member.
- ◆ Question 13: Some candidates struggled to identify all three countries correctly.
- ◆ Question 15: Some candidates could not identify the answer correctly.

### Listening: General

- ◆ Question 3a): Very few candidates answered this question accurately.
- ◆ Question 3b): Very few candidates recognised *a-mach*.
- ◆ Question 4: Most candidates did not know *sean*.
- ◆ Question 5a): A number of candidates thought *caogad* was 40.
- ◆ Question 7b): Some candidates did not give sufficient detail for the full three marks.
- ◆ Question 8b): Many wrote 'good' as *fior mhath* was challenging.
- ◆ Question 9a): Very few candidates wrote 'first' for this question – many confused *a' chiad* with *ceud*.
- ◆ Question 9b): Very few candidates recognised *airgead*.
- ◆ Question 10: *dithis* proved difficult.
- ◆ Question 11b): A number of candidates wrote Modern Studies for *Cruinn-eòlas*.
- ◆ Question 12a): Many candidates did not know Norway.
- ◆ Question 12c): Very few candidates knew *sgòthach*.
- ◆ Question 14a): Candidates had difficulty recognising the month.
- ◆ Question 14b): *Seallaidhean* was known by only a minority of candidates. Some interpreted this as 'chalets'.

### Listening: Credit

- ◆ Question 2: Many candidates did not know *òrain*.
- ◆ Question 4: 'Good knowledge of the place' was not given in sufficient detail by many candidates.
- ◆ Question 5: Candidates found *aodach* and *taighean* challenging. Candidates should be aware of the need to distinguish between singular and plural nouns.

- ◆ Question 6: Some candidates struggled to identify the correct countries.
- ◆ Question 7: Most candidates could not recognise 'talking to people'.
- ◆ Question 8a): Many candidates could not identify 'beginning of May'.
- ◆ Question 8b): Many candidates did not know *tuathanas* so this impacted on Question 8c).
- ◆ Question 9a): A number of candidates wrote 'old' for *ùr*.
- ◆ Question 9b): 'out in the country' proved difficult for some candidates.
- ◆ Question 11: Very few candidates recognised *nas blàithe*.
- ◆ Question 13: A number of candidates did not know *glan*.
- ◆ Question 15: Very few got two marks for this question. The phrase *Abair spòrs* elicited a wide range of responses.

### Reading: Foundation

- ◆ Question 1d): A number of candidates failed to get this multiple-choice question correct. Candidates should make use of a dictionary to support these questions.
- ◆ Question 5b): 'Office' alone was not acceptable for *oifis a' phuist*.
- ◆ Questions 8 and 9: Candidates should only answer the required number of points. Some answered all six of the options, losing marks if they got any of the first three wrong.

### Reading: General

- ◆ Question 1b): A number of candidates did not answer in enough detail for two marks.
- ◆ Question 2c): Many candidates omitted 'each/every' from their answers.
- ◆ Question 4e): Very few candidates wrote 'sunbathing'.
- ◆ Question 5a): A very small minority of candidates scored the full three marks. Most got 'brother' but some wrote 'Calum' for *Cailean* and very few recognised *as sine*.
- ◆ Question 5c): Many candidates failed to get three marks for this question.
- ◆ Question 5d): A number of candidates did not answer this question in sufficient detail to gain three marks.
- ◆ Question 6: A surprising number of candidates got full marks for this relatively straightforward question.

### Reading: Credit

- ◆ Question 1a): Many candidates did not identify 'more than' in their answers.
- ◆ Question 2a): 'Last' was omitted in many candidates' responses.
- ◆ Question 2c): *Sionach* was difficult for some candidates.
- ◆ Question 2f): A number of candidates did not answer this question in sufficient detail to gain two marks.
- ◆ Question 3b): Insufficient detail was given to allow candidates to access full marks.
- ◆ Question 3d): *Eòlaichean-saidheans* proved challenging.
- ◆ Question 3e): Most candidates recognised 'part-time' but omitted *an-dràsta* as part of the answer.
- ◆ Question 4a): Insufficient detail was given to allow candidates to access full marks.
- ◆ Question 4e): Many candidates wrote 'bad' for this question because they did not read the whole phrase, *Cha robh am pàigheadh dona*.
- ◆ Question 5a): Some candidates struggled with *air ais* as part of the answer to this question. Some markers commented on candidates not reading this question properly and answering 'When did Amir go on holiday?' with 'Edinburgh'.
- ◆ Question 5b): Most candidates did not know this idiomatic phrase despite being in a rather straightforward context.

## Writing: General/Credit

- ◆ Some candidates struggled to structure some basic phrases, such as describing hair or eye colour, nouns following *mo*, etc, correctly.
- ◆ A number of candidates did not use *iad* when writing about plural nouns, often using *e* instead.
- ◆ Use of possessive pronouns (*oirre, agam, innte, ris*) proved to be challenging. Use of possessive pronouns in the first person was mostly correct, but weak when candidates were writing in the third person.
- ◆ Some candidates tended to overuse the same phrases *'S toigh leam, Cha toigh leam*, etc. A wider range of vocabulary and verbs such as *'S fheàrr leam, a' còrdadh rium, 's fìor thoigh leam, tha mi measail air* would improve the overall grade.
- ◆ A number of candidates needed to write more particularly given that they had an hour to complete their responses and the topics were predictable. Some candidates wrote well but not enough to merit a Credit grade.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

For future courses, teachers should consider:

- ◆ Giving equal preparation for and consideration to **all** language skills.
- ◆ Encouraging candidates to practise writing at length and with fewer basic, minor errors in spelling and sentence structure.
- ◆ The impact that high-quality teaching and learning of grammar can have on overall progress.
- ◆ Continued revision of topics that arise from year to year such as months, countries, numbers, time, weather, common adjectives, comparatives, etc.
- ◆ Continued emphasis on the need to distinguish between singular and plural nouns.
- ◆ Exposing candidates to a range of voices, accents and dialects and make full use of authentic Gaelic listening materials.
- ◆ Encouraging candidates to read questions carefully and to focus on entire phrases/sentences rather than individual words.

**Statistical information: update on Courses**

**STANDARD GRADE**

<b>Number of resulted entries in 2012</b>	308
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<b>Number of resulted entries in 2013</b>	309
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**Statistical Information: Performance of candidates**

**Distribution of overall awards**

Grade 1	28.8%
Grade 2	19.7%
Grade 3	18.1%
Grade 4	21.4%
Grade 5	7.4%
Grade 6	3.6%
Grade 7	0.0%
No award	1.0%

**Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report**

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
R	60	41	0	50	34	25	40	31	25
L	50	32	22	40	28	20	30	22	15
W	Directly Graded								