



## External Assessment Report 2013

Subject(s)	Gàidhlig
Level(s)	Advanced Higher

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 in 2013 was 19 — down on 2012's 34, but slightly higher than the 2011 figure.

100% of the candidates achieved levels A–C. The spread of marks was broadly in line with recent years, but with a higher number of level As.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

Part (i): The writing pieces, both imaginative and discursive, were good to very good. Some of the essays were very well informed, and those based on candidates' own experience were particularly effective.

Part (ii): The practical criticism question, which has proved difficult in the past, was well handled by most this time. This was particularly true of the prose section, which proved relatively straightforward. The poetry section was more challenging but most candidates tackled it adequately or well.

Part (iii): There were some very good answers in the literature section.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

Part (ii): Although the practical criticism proved less challenging than in the recent past, some candidates found the ironic statements in the song lyrics misleading, taking them instead at their face value. The word 'fàsgadh' in the prose piece was misread by most as 'fasgadh', leading to a quite different conclusion to what the writer had intended.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- ◆ Attention could usefully be paid to interpretation of irony, in both poetry and prose, as this has also posed difficulties in previous exams.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to read more articles on current affairs, written in a formal register, and also to do more 'close reading' of poetry.
- ◆ In regard to translation — a small part of the exam but a useful life/work skill — candidates should be encouraged to transfer the gist of the passage into Gaelic rather than attempting to translate the individual words, which can produce a stilted effect.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2012	34
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Number of resulted entries in 2013	19
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## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	57.9%	57.9%	11	140
B	31.6%	89.5%	6	120
C	10.5%	100.0%	2	100
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	90
No award	0.0%	100.0%	0	-

## General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.