



External Assessment Report 2009

Subject	Gaelic (Learners)
Level	Intermediate 1

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 standard of response was very high with over half the candidates being awarded an A Grade. All candidates performed better in Reading than in Listening.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Reading was particularly well done. A notable number of candidates had prepared thoroughly for Writing and some performed to an extremely high standard.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Some candidates performed poorly in the Writing section, despite other candidates from within the same centre(s) producing Writing of a very high standard. This would seem to highlight that centres are addressing the need to prepare thoroughly for Writing and that some candidates fail to do so, despite the relatively predictable nature of the tasks given.

It also appears that some candidates ran out of time and rushed their answer to the Writing section: the credit given to accuracy of response allowed some candidates to gain valuable marks here, despite their answer lacking length.

The following vocabulary was found demanding:

Reading

- 1b *An Fhraing*
- 3d *neoni*
- 3g *not agus caogad sgillinn - £1.50*

Listening

- 7 *spaideil*
- 11a *eilean beag*
- 11b *air bàta*
- 12 *teth agus tioram - hot and dry, sometimes teth given as warm instead of hot*
- 15b *seann togalaichean - old buildings*
- 17 *Bidh mi air ais – I will be back*

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres are advised to continue to address the discrepancy between the performance in Reading and Listening by giving candidates as wide an experience of listening to different voices, accents and dialects as possible. Candidates should be reminded of the benefit of thorough preparation for Writing tasks and advised to manage their time effectively in order to complete the exam.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	69
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	24
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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 - 180				
A	50.0%	50.0%	12	126
B	29.2%	79.2%	7	108
C	12.5%	91.7%	3	90
D	4.2%	95.8%	1	81
No award	4.2%	100.0%	1	-

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.