



## External Assessment Report 2010

Subject	<b>German</b>
Level	<b>Advanced Higher</b>

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

Overall performance was broadly in line with previous years. At the upper end there were, as always, some very laudable performances, with candidates showing evidence both of very real ability and of good preparation. At the lower end there was evidence of, at best, a fairly rudimentary grasp of German grammar and vocabulary.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

In 2010, performance in the translation was notably better than in previous years, in which this task has proved very demanding for many candidates. As always, Examiners commented favourably on candidates' performance in the Speaking test, noting a real commitment on the part of most candidates to take part in a genuine dialogue and discussion.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

Discursive writing continues to pose significant challenges for many candidates. Command of the case structure, word order, adjectival endings, and verb forms — indeed the whole range of grammar, syntax and vocabulary — is on occasion so tenuous as seriously to impede communication. There are still frequent instances of candidates producing prepared essays that do not, or at best marginally, address the specific question set.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

### Translation

Candidates should be made aware that this exercise is one that demands high standards of accuracy. Omission of lexical items, wrong tenses, and failure to recognise and reproduce the passive voice, result in the imposition of penalties. This is not an exercise in gist rendering.

### Folio

There are still many instances where the choice and formulation of titles are such as to preclude the possibility of an analytical and critical engagement with the subject. Narrative and descriptive topics or approaches should be treated with great caution.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2009	151
Number of resulted entries in 2010	161

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark — 200				
A	37.3%	37.3%	60	140
B	20.5%	57.8%	33	120
C	24.2%	82.0%	39	100
D	7.5%	89.4%	12	90
No award	10.6%	100.0%	17	–

### 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, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.