



## External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Gaelic (learners)
Level(s)	Intermediate 2

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

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

Numbers entered for the qualification continue to remain small. There was a further decrease in the numbers of candidates this year. However, it was pleasing to see two new centres and three returning centres offering the qualification.

The level of demand of the examination has been constant and no change was noted. Therefore, the examination was once again appropriate in terms of content and context.

Candidates did not perform as expected in all three of the externally-assessed elements. Only 60% of candidates gained a grade A–C. Unlike previous years, 85% of the candidates had progressed to the qualification from Standard Grade Gaelic (learners).

The overall picture is the same as in previous years; it suggests that many candidates had not been well prepared for the demands of Intermediate 2 exam. Centres must carefully consider what level candidates are presented at.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

Many candidates performed significantly better in the Reading paper than in the Listening paper. A few candidates achieved close to full marks in the Reading paper, demonstrating good recall of vocabulary and sound dictionary skills.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

As with previous years the performance of candidates in the Writing paper was of concern. Many candidates' writing pieces were very limited. Candidates must demonstrate an appropriate range of language structures and vocabulary in their writing piece. Candidates should also be reminded to write the number of the question attempted at the top of their writing piece.

The performance of candidates in both the Reading and Listening papers had improved this year. The average mark in the question paper increased to 60.2%. However, many candidates did not demonstrate an understanding of basic vocabulary, which is very disappointing.

The following vocabulary was found to be demanding:

### Listening

- ◆ Question 2: very few managed to answer '*the fourth of February*' correctly.
- ◆ Question 3: £68 — very few managed to answer this correctly.
- ◆ Question 5: many answers lacked the detail required to gain full marks.
- ◆ Question 7: detail was missing in answers. Candidates should know common phrases like 'I prefer'.
- ◆ Question 12: detail was missing in answers, and few got all three marks.

- ◆ Question 15: very few candidates gave the correct answer.

## Reading

- ◆ Question 1(a): 'about' — most answered just 'six'.
- ◆ Question 1(e)(ii): money was very poorly answered.
- ◆ Question 2(a): many failed to translate 'posh/smart'.
- ◆ Question 2(c): many only answered '7 o'clock'. At this level, there will always be a more detailed time.
- ◆ Question 2(e): many did not answer 'free'.
- ◆ Question 3(a): 'lively' — few knew this term.
- ◆ Question 3(b): Many candidates only wrote 'island'. Candidates should look to see how many marks are allocated to the question to judge how much detail is needed.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

### General

Centres should encourage candidates to ensure that handwriting is legible. If a candidate has handwriting difficulties, centres should consider the use of ICT.

Centres must consider carefully what level they enter candidates for.

### Reading/Listening

In answering questions in the Reading and Listening papers, candidates should be guided by the number of points awarded for each question. The question itself usually indicates the amount of information the candidate is required to give by stating in bold, eg 'Give a **detailed** answer'.

In preparation for the Reading Paper, centres should ensure candidates are familiar with the common areas of vocabulary: time, months, days, money, numbers, place-names, countries, weather, common adjectives, comparatives, etc. Many candidates would also benefit from more focused practice of dictionary skills, to avoid common mistakes ie using the noun instead of the verb.

Particularly for the Listening Paper, centres should ensure that candidates have enough time to refine their exam technique by working through past papers. Their attention should be drawn to the large bank of past papers available on the SQA website.

### Writing

Centres need to give further guidance to candidates on what constitutes an adequate amount of writing, with sufficient variety in vocabulary and language structures, appropriate to this level.

Candidates need to be able to write in different formats, eg a letter, a report and a diary extract.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	38
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	22
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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	13.6%	13.6%	3	126
B	27.3%	40.9%	6	108
C	13.6%	54.5%	3	90
D	22.7%	77.3%	5	81
No award	22.7%	-	5	-

## 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.