



External Assessment Report 2011

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 exam papers were generally well received. Performances were satisfactory, with 60% of candidates gaining a grade A–C. It should be noted that there were no outstanding performances.

Candidates generally performed significantly better in Reading than they did in Listening and Writing. None of the candidates had any previous qualifications in Gaelic (Learners).

Areas in which candidates performed well

Candidates had prepared well for the Reading paper and were familiar with vocabulary. One candidate gained full marks in the Reading paper.

Areas which candidates found demanding

The performance of candidates in the Writing paper, despite its predictable nature, was on the whole, disappointing and it is an area that centres should seek to address urgently. Some candidates' responses were very limited, either through lack of preparation or poor time management, and did not allow them to demonstrate an appropriate range of language structures.

The following vocabulary was found to be demanding:

Listening

Question 5 – *tòrr mheasan*

Question 6 - *milis*

Question 10 - *ri taobh*

Question 13 – A bheil thu math air còcaireachd?

Reading

Question 2 (f) – *tioram*

Question 4 (a) – *co-ogha*

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

To improve candidates' performance in Listening, centres should ensure that candidates have the opportunity to listen to a range of Gaelic speakers with different voices, accents and dialects.

Centres should ensure that all candidates are thoroughly prepared for the Writing paper. Candidates need to be able to write in different formats eg a letter, a report and a diary extract. Candidates must also make sure that they answer appropriately the question that is asked. For example, if the question asks for a letter, the answer should be set out in the correct format.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2010	10
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	10
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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	30.0%	30.0%	3	126
B	30.0%	60.0%	3	108
C	0.0%	60.0%	0	90
D	0.0%	60.0%	0	81
No award	40.0%	100.0%	4	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that 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, though, 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.