



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Gaelic (Learners)
Level	Intermediate 2

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 performance of candidates was excellent, with 93.9% gaining a pass at grade A–C. It was very pleasing to note some outstanding performances in all three papers, which resulted in 9.4% of candidates gaining a band 1 pass. Centres should be commended on thoroughly preparing candidates for the exam.

Areas in which candidates performed well

There was not great disparity between Reading and Listening. Some candidates achieved close to full marks in the Reading and Listening papers, demonstrating good preparation.

A few candidates scored very highly in the Writing paper, having produced a lengthy and demanding piece of writing. Some of these candidates showed a very sound knowledge of Gaelic grammar and very good use of idiomatic phrases in their writing.

Areas which candidates found demanding

The performance of some candidates in the Writing paper was particularly disappointing, given the predictable nature of the paper. Centres should ensure that candidates are fully prepared for the demands of the Writing paper.

The following vocabulary was found to be demanding:

Listening

Question 1 (b) – *anns an Ògmhios*

Question 5 – *mu*

Question 7 – *ostail ùr airson sgoilearan*

Question 10 – *math dha-rìribh*

Question 15 – *Bidh* (future tense)

Reading

Question 1 (c) – *eadar-nàiseanta*

Question 2 (e) – *not enough detail provided for 4 marks*

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

Centres should pay particular attention to the thorough preparation of candidates for the Writing paper. Candidates need to ensure that they answer the question that is asked, and do not draw on material from NABs, which is irrelevant. Candidates should also be reminded that a short writing piece might not allow them sufficient opportunity to demonstrate a wide enough range of structures.

Centres should continue with their good work in preparing candidates for the Reading and Listening papers.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2010	59
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	33
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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	33.3%	33.3%	11	126
B	30.3%	63.6%	10	108
C	30.3%	93.9%	10	90
D	0.0%	93.9%	0	81
No award	6.1%	100.0%	2	-

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.