



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Gaelic (Learners)
Level(s)	Standard Grade

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

There was a decrease in the number of candidates presented for Standard Grade Gaelic (Learners) this year but overall, performance in the examination was very good. The papers were fair yet challenging, and they were well received by candidates and centres.

Candidates were well prepared for the examination in all elements. Markers noted that a number of candidates passed the higher of the two papers they sat in Listening and Reading, and most centres are to be commended for presenting candidates at the correct level. The slightly earlier examination date was appreciated by candidates and centres.

There was a considerable decrease in entries for Writing this year, but performance continues to be very good. Candidates are coping increasingly well with the new structure of this paper. The continued percentage decrease in the 'no award' category reflects this. *Mise* and *Saor-làithean* continue to be the most popular topics.

Performance in the Reading element was also very good, with 57.5% of the candidature gaining a Credit award.

Similarly, in Listening, candidates coped well with these papers with 66.9% of the cohort gaining a Credit award and 96.7% achieving Grades 1–4.

Speaking results show a considerable improvement on 2011 results, with 58.8% of the candidature gaining a Credit award.

Areas in which candidates performed well

In Writing, performance was commendable. There were few 'no awards' and, in general, there was a high standard overall with just over half of the cohort achieving a Credit award. The majority of candidates achieved Grades 2 or 3, although fewer candidates gained a Grade 1, principally because of the short length of some written responses as well as errors in basic sentence structures. There were not many errors in dictionary misuse in the Writing paper.

Speaking performance continues to improve at all levels. Reading and Listening papers at all three levels covered a range of vocabulary and language structures, and candidates performed well in these elements also. Some markers commented on centres where a number of candidates scored very highly in Listening and noted with interest that they were not all in Gaelic communities.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Reading – Foundation

Q1 and Q4: Many candidates translated more than three phrases, and then lost marks if any of the first three answers given were incorrect.

Q2: ‘MacLennan’ was ticked a number of times instead of ‘Smith’.

Q5: Many candidates got ‘hot’ and ‘warm’ mixed up.

Reading – General

Q1(b): Many wrote ‘grandfather’ for *mo sheanmhair*.

Q3(a): Many candidates wrote ‘five’ for *ceithir*, which was a basic error at this level.

Q6(b): Identifying months of the year correctly continues to be an issue, and many candidates got this question wrong. Candidates should use the dictionary for multiple-choice questions.

Q6(d): Many wrote ‘dancing’ so did not get the mark as they did not read the whole phrase, *dannsa-ceum*.

Q7(b): A number of candidates wrote ‘mother’ for *m’ athair*.

Q7(c): Many candidates could not recognise *prògraman ciùil*.

Reading – Credit

Q1(d): Only a small minority got the full three marks for this question.

Q3(d) and (e): These questions were challenging for a significant number of candidates. Many of those who failed to correctly identify the answer to (d) then also answered (e) incorrectly.

Q3(f): Not many candidates answered this correctly as they did not read the whole phrase, *ceud ’s fichead mìle neach*.

Q5(g): Very few candidates scored full marks for this question, mainly because they did not recognise the irregular future tense word, *nì*. Also, *nas fhasa* was commonly mistaken for ‘better’. Candidates working towards Credit level must have a good understanding of comparative phrases.

Q6(b): A number of candidates wrote ‘concert’ as their answer, but this was in the question for (a).

Q6(e): Some misread this question as ‘Why did Amy go there?’ and therefore answered the question incorrectly, losing two marks.

Listening – Foundation

Q11(a): Many candidates did not know the colours.

Q12(b): Many candidates did not know *a' leum*.

Listening – General

Q3(b): A number of candidates did not recognise *a' teagasg*.

Q8(b): Very few candidates knew *a h-uile latha and* so did not get this mark despite it being a multiple choice question.

Q10 (c): Many candidates did not recognise *furasta*.

Q11: Candidates did not recognise months of the year.

Q12(b): *meadhan a' bhaile* is a common phrase but many got this wrong.

Q13(a): *cofhurtail* was not recognised by many candidates.

Q13(b): There was some confusion between *a' chiad* and *ceud*.

Q14: *gu mòr* was challenging for some, who thought the phrase referred to Edinburgh being a big city.

Listening – Credit

Q2(c): Many did not recognise *mu* as an essential part of this answer.

Q4: Many candidates did not know the colours.

Q6(a): *currain* was mistaken by many for 'curry' or 'currants'.

Q7(a): *Na Stàitean Aonaichte* was not familiar to a number of candidates.

Q7(b): Many candidates did not know *an-uiridh*.

Q8: *fad an latha* was challenging for some.

Q10(b): A number of candidates wrote 'hot' for *blàth*.

Q11(a): Centres must ensure candidates know the points of the compass.

Q12(a): Some candidates did not know *oilthigh*.

Q12(b): *fiacclair* was only known by a small minority of the candidature.

Q12(c): *ùr* was omitted in many candidates' responses.

Q13(a) and (b): Very few candidates achieved full marks for these questions. The majority knew *sgriobh* but were unfamiliar with *sgèulachd ghoirid*.

Q14: Some candidates struggled to identify the meaning of *dh'obraich sibh cruaidh*.

Writing

- ◆ Correct sentence structure in basic phrases such as describing hair or eye colour.
- ◆ Use of possessive pronouns (*leis, ris, oirre, aice*). Use of possessive pronouns in the first person was correct on the whole but weak when candidates were writing in the third person.
- ◆ Candidates were, at times, becoming confused in their use of *Tha* and *'S e*.
- ◆ Writing at length to ensure a Grade 1 is achievable. Some candidates wrote too little and this affected their overall grade as there was not enough evidence to demonstrate their competence at Grade 1.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres must impress upon candidates the importance of revising basic vocabulary such as colours, months, weather phrases, points of the compass, etc.

Centres should continue to expose candidates to a range of voices, accents and dialects and make full use of authentic Gaelic listening materials.

Candidates must be made aware that they will lose marks if they give extraneous information or give options for their answers in Reading and Listening papers. For example, if, in a question asking for three points, they give five points, only the first three points given will be considered. Candidates must not provide alternatives, but select the points they consider to be correct as their answer.

Centres should encourage all candidates working at Credit/General level to sit the Writing paper as this is very good preparation for continued study at Higher level. Furthermore, candidates sitting the Writing exam should write at length. There is more scope for full, lengthy writing now that the structure of this exam has changed from two responses to one and the topics are predictable. Some responses this year were of a very good quality but only achieved a Grade 2 because they were too short and could not demonstrate full competence at Grade 1.

Centres should impress upon candidates the importance of correct sentence structure in basic phrases such as describing hair or eye colour and in their use of possessive pronouns.

Statistical information: update on Courses

STANDARD GRADE

Number of resulted entries in 2011	362
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	308
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Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of overall awards

Grade 1	35.1%
Grade 2	24.4%
Grade 3	24.0%
Grade 4	10.4%
Grade 5	3.6%
Grade 6	1.0%
Grade 7	0.3%
No award	1.3%

Grade boundaries for each assessable element in the subject included in the report

Assessable Element	Credit Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		General Max Mark	Grade Boundaries		Foundation Max Mark	Grade Boundaries	
		1	2		3	4		5	6
R	60	41	28	50	34	25	40	31	25
L	50	34	24	40	28	20	30	22	15
W	Directly Graded								