



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Gaelic (learners)
Level(s)	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 felt to be of a consistent standard to other years. The number of candidates sitting Intermediate 1 Gaelic (learners) was very small. 40% of candidates gained a grade A–C and, in general, performed significantly better in Reading than in Listening and Writing. None of the candidates had any previous qualifications in Gaelic (Learners).

Areas in which candidates performed well

The performance of candidates was better in the Reading paper than in either Listening or Writing.

Areas which candidates found demanding

The performance of candidates in the Writing paper, despite its predictable nature, was on the whole, very poor. This is very disappointing and it is an area that centres should seek to address urgently. Some candidates' written 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.

Listening

Question 2 (b) – candidates must write names in English.

Question 2 (f) – candidates should listen out for phrases like *'gu leth'*

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Teachers should consider very carefully the level at which they present candidates.

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 the question that is asked. For example, if the question asks for a letter, it should be set out in the correct format with address.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2011	10
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	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	0.0%	0.0%	0	126
B	0.0%	0.0%	0	108
C	20.0%	20.0%	2	90
D	0.0%	20.0%	0	81
No award	80.0%	100.0%	8	-

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.