



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Gaelic (learners)
Level(s)	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 number of entries increased this year. The performance of candidates was very good, with 78.0% gaining a pass at grade A–C. It was very pleasing to note some outstanding performances in all three papers, which resulted in 7.3% of candidates gaining a band 1 pass. Centres have again prepared candidates well for presentation at Intermediate 2.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Candidates performed well in the Reading and Listening papers. Some candidates achieved close to full marks in the Reading paper, demonstrating good knowledge of vocabulary and good dictionary skills.

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 excellent use of idiomatic phrases in their writing.

Areas which candidates found demanding

The performance of some candidates in the Writing paper was particularly poor. This is very disappointing, given the predictable nature of the paper. Centres should ensure that candidates are fully prepared for the demands of the Writing paper and are able to write at some length. The performance of many candidates in the Writing paper did not match their performance in the Reading and Listening papers.

The following vocabulary was found to be demanding:

Reading

- Question 1 (e) – *iomadh bonn òr*
- Question 2 (b) – *faisg air*
- Question 2 (e) – *bho chionn fhada*
- Question 3 (b) – *pàirt-ùine*
- Question 4 (d) – *An-drasta 's a-rithist*

Listening

- Question 3 – *obair-dachaigh*
- Question 5 – *gu leth* (candidates should listen for exact detail)
- Question 7 – *a' Chèitean*
- Question 11 – *marcachd*

General

- ◆ Candidates experienced difficulty with questions regarding time and money. Many missed out detail like *'gu leth'*.

- ◆ Often candidates did not include enough detail to gain full marks in 3 and 4 mark questions.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Centres should pay particular attention to the thorough preparation of candidates for the Writing paper.

**Statistical information: update on Courses
Intermediate 2**

Number of resulted entries in 2011	33
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	42
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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	31.0%	31.0%	13	126
B	26.2%	57.1%	11	108
C	19.0%	76.2%	8	90
D	14.3%	90.5%	6	81
No award	9.5%	100.0%	4	-

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.