



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Gaelic (learners)
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests

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 at this level are small, and are made up of pupils in S5 and S6. However, it was pleasing to see two new centres offering the qualification.

None of the candidates who sat Intermediate 1 had any previous qualifications in Gaelic (Learners). Only 33% of the candidates gained a grade A–C.

In general, the data suggests that many candidates were not presented at the correct level as they did not meet the expected standard in all three of the externally assessed elements of the course.

Areas in which candidates performed well

The average mark for candidates' performance in the internally-assessed Speaking element was 36/60, demonstrating that candidates were well prepared for this element of the course.

Areas which candidates found demanding

The performance of candidates in the Writing paper, despite the predictable questions, was poor. Centres should ensure that candidates are well prepared to complete the Writing paper. Candidates should be taught to manage their time in the exam to complete the paper and be prepared to answer writing questions with a range of vocabulary and structures.

The performance of candidates in both the Reading and Listening papers was also poor. Many candidates struggled with basic vocabulary such as money, the weather and months of the year. The following vocabulary was found to be demanding:

Listening

- ◆ Question 2: months of the year were poorly answered.
- ◆ Question 3(a): money — no candidates gave the correct answer.
- ◆ Question 4(a): time — this question was challenging for candidates.
- ◆ Question 5: detail was missing in answers.
- ◆ Question 11: detail was missing in answers. Candidates should listen for phrases like 'quite'.
- ◆ Question 15: no candidates gave the correct answer of 'enjoyed it'.

Reading

- ◆ Question 1(a): Candidates did not answer this question well. They should be reminded of dictionary skills, like taking out the 'h' if it is after the first letter (lenition).
- ◆
- ◆ Question 1(b): detail was missing in answers. Candidates should be told to look at the marks allocated for the question, as a guide to the amount of information needed in their answer.
- ◆ Question 3(a): very few translated 'hill walking' correctly.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

The number of poor performances at this level and the high number of estimated 'no awards' suggests that some centres should be re-examining the level at which they are entering candidates.

Centres should encourage candidates to ensure that their handwriting is legible. If handwriting is a problem, the centre should consider the use of ICT.

Reading/Listening

In answering questions in the Reading and Listening papers, candidates should be guided by the number of points awarded for each question. The question itself usually indicates the amount of information that the candidate is required to give by stating in bold eg 'Give a **detailed** answer'.

In preparation for the Reading Paper, centres should ensure candidates are familiar with the common areas of vocabulary topics for Intermediate 1. Common vocabulary topics that arise most years are: time, months, days, money, numbers, place-names, countries, weather, common adjectives, comparatives etc.

Candidates would also benefit from more focused practice of dictionary skills to avoid common errors. They should be taught to use the code at the start of the dictionary, so that they know the difference between a noun and a verb.

At this level, there are a large number of past papers available on the SQA website. Candidates should be encouraged to use these to improve their exam skills.

Writing

Centres need to give further guidance to candidates on what constitutes an adequate amount of writing, with sufficient variety in vocabulary and language structures, appropriate to this level.

Candidates need to be trained to write in different formats eg a letter, a report and a diary extract. They must ensure that they answer the question accurately, eg if the question asks for a letter it should be set out in the correct format with an address.