



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Gàidhlig
Level(s)	Higher

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 candidates sitting the 2015 traditional Higher, at 48, was down substantially on previous years, many centres having opted for the new exam.

There was the expected spread of marks, with most candidates performing well or satisfactorily.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Question A: Most candidates coped well with this question.

Question B(i): Most candidate answered the factual questions well. Questions on style or requiring interpretation of imagery were, on the whole, handled better than usual.

Question B(ii): Stories and essays were, for the most part, written well or satisfactorily.

Question B(iii): The literary questions were mostly well handled. Candidates were well prepared for this section.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question A: A few candidates found the idiomatic style of the passage more challenging than had been anticipated.

Question B(i): Some candidates had difficulty with the questions on stylistic features or interpretation of imagery, eg questions 6, 11 and 12.

Question B(ii): Pieces of writing, both imaginary and factual, tended to be on the short side.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	122
Number of resulted entries in 2015	48

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark – 150				
A	29.2%	29.2%	14	105
B	39.6%	68.8%	19	90
C	14.5%	83.3%	7	75
D	10.5%	93.8%	5	67
No award	6.2%	-	3	-

The Course assessment functioned as intended therefore grade boundaries were benchmarked to 2013 notional boundaries.

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.