



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	German
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

As has been the case in many previous years, the 2014 examination was regarded by markers and other interested parties as a very fair and balanced one with the content being appropriate to the level and the topics covered. The performance of the candidates was overall better than in previous years, although the number of candidates fell from 331 to 22, mainly due to the move to the new National 4 course, but also reflective of the reduction in entries for German in Scottish schools after S3. 65% of candidates were in S5 or S6.

Overall the performance of candidates achieving a pass (A–C) rose slightly to 95.5% from 94% last year. 'A' passes remained constant at almost 55%. All candidates presented for the exam gained an award.

The average candidate score in the examination was 70.1% — 1 mark above the A/B interface, and 1 mark above the 2013 average; this reflected the improved performance of candidates. Reading scores were up by 1.3 marks to 23.1, the highest mark in many years. Having reached its highest score ever (13.3 out of 20 marks) in 2013, Listening fell back considerably by 2.6 marks to be the lowest listening mark in five years (10.7). Both speaking and writing grades showed an improvement of over 1 mark each.

Areas in which candidates performed well

In Reading, all four texts were relatively well done. It was most encouraging to see a sustained improvement to candidates' ability to engage successfully with the third text on the World of Work, and on holiday jobs in particular. Candidates scored well in almost every question. Centres have clearly read and followed advice given in previous reports. Overall, it was regarded as a fair paper which allowed candidates to demonstrate their understanding of German.

In Listening, questions 2, 6, 7 and 10(a) were very well done, with over 75% of candidates supplying the correct answer to questions very appropriate at this level.

There was a noted improvement also in the standard of the writing this year.

Areas which candidates found demanding

In Reading, there were two areas which candidates found demanding. In Text 2, which was about Bochum Zoo, candidates were asked in question (a) what animals were the important (*wichtig*) ones in the zoo. They did not read the full sentence with the answer in the second clause (*nicht mehr Bären und Elefanten sondern kleine Tiere* — 'no longer bears and elephants, but small animals'). Only one candidate got this correct.

In Text 3 on Holiday Jobs, candidates were asked in question (i) when exactly Anna worked, but did not give the full exact answer (*jeden Sommer von April bis September*), opting for either the 'every summer' or 'from April to September'..

In the Listening paper, quite a number of areas gave the examiners concerns. Questions 1(a) and 10(b) involved numbers and were poorly done; this has been an area of weakness for many years. In question 4(a) candidates found it very difficult to work out the recommendation given (*Vergessen Sie nicht, den Zoo zu besuchen!* – Don't forget to visit the zoo!). In question 5(a), candidates lost marks for not giving details, even when asked what **exactly** had been lost (a **gold** earring – *ein goldener Ohrring*). In questions 5(b) and 9, many candidates were too economic in their answers to gain the points.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Over the last four years centres have been advised to continue to focus more rigorously on listening skills in the classroom, and on the drilling of basic vocabulary learning, to prepare their candidates more fully for the demands of the external assessment in this skill. Last year this advice seemed to be having a positive impact but this year the listening skill had deteriorated significantly. Centres are encouraged to try to ensure that all four skills are appropriately covered during the teaching and learning of the course.

Candidates continue to lose marks in both the Reading and Listening papers for failing to give the required amount of information. Candidates still need to be reminded by teachers to read the questions carefully and ensure there is enough detail in their answers.

In writing, the majority of centres had prepared the candidates well and they could write three sentences under each of the main headings.

It is hoped that centres and candidates will be able to act on the advice being offered in this report to ensure that they enjoy success in the 2015 German examination at Intermediate 1 level. Congratulations to the small number of candidates involved and to the teachers at the centres who helped and prepared them so to do.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	343
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	22
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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 100				
A	54.5%	54.5%	12	69
B	22.7%	77.3%	5	59
C	18.2%	95.5%	4	49
D	4.5%	100.0%	1	44
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

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.