



## External Assessment Report 2015

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 2015 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 very similar to previous years, although the number of candidates fell from two to just eight, from two centres, mainly due to this being the last year of the course.

Most candidates achieved a pass (A–C), and candidates presented for the exam gained an award. Given that seven out of the eight candidates presented were in S3, this is an excellent performance.

The average candidate score in the examination was 72.7% — 2.7 marks above the A/B interface, and 2.6 marks above the 2014 average. Reading scores were up by 1.8 marks to 24.9, the highest mark in many years. Listening marks rose slightly by 0.3. The writing grades showed an improvement of 1 mark to 10.8, thus achieving the highest average on record. The speaking average fell by 0.5 to 26, but was still above all previous years before 2014. However, with such a low number of candidates, these marks must be regarded with caution.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

In Reading, all four texts were relatively well done. Candidates, by and large, had been well prepared by centres. Teachers in these centres had clearly read and followed advice given in previous reports. Overall, it was a good paper, which allowed candidates to demonstrate their understanding of German.

In Listening, questions 1a and 1b were very well done, with most candidates supplying the correct answer to questions very appropriately to this level.

There was a noted improvement also in the standard of writing this year, showing the candidates had been very well prepared for the exercise.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

In Reading, there were three questions that presented greater demand. The first passage dealt with a 9-year-old's comments on Mother's Day. In question (b) candidates were asked 'when else does he go to his mum?'. The question required them to translate '*wenn der Papa nein sagt*' (*when Dad says 'no'*). This was very poorly attempted.

Text 3 usually poses some challenges for candidates, being concerned about the World of Work. Responses to question (c), which asked 'At what time in the morning did Georg begin work?' indicated that a good number of candidates were unable to render 'halb acht' as 'half past seven', or '7.30' to gain the mark. Problems with time were also indicated in some poor

responses to question (f): 'Why did he find his placement tiring' — he had to stand for 5 hours (*weil ich fünf Stunden lang stehen musste*).

In the Listening paper, there were two questions where the performance of candidates was less strong. In 2(a) they were being asked where the mother worked (*in einem Büro* –in an office) and in question 6(a) about the weather (*viele Wolken und wenig Schnee* - many clouds and little snow). The examining team felt this was vocabulary they should have known.

## **Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

With the end of Intermediate 1 this year, it is difficult to give any advice on the future preparation of candidates. Centres are encouraged to try to ensure that all four skills are appropriately covered during the teaching and learning of the course.

Congratulations to the small number of candidates involved in the 2015 examination at Intermediate 1 level 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 2014	22
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	9
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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	44.4%	44.4%	4	70
B	33.3%	77.8%	3	60
C	0.0%	77.8%	0	50
D	0.0%	77.8%	0	45
No award	22.2%	-	2	-

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.