

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Gàidhlig/Gaelic (Learners)

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
Included in this report**

Gaelic (Learners) Advanced Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	11
Pre appeal	

Number of entries in 2003	21
Pre appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

The significant increase in numbers is welcomed.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

Grade	Minimum Mark for Grade (Maximum Mark = 315)
Upper A	268 (85%)
Lower A	220 (70%)
B	188 (60%)
C	157 (50%)

General commentary on passmarks and grade boundaries

- While SQA aims to set examinations and create mark schemes which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum 50% of the available marks (notional passmark) and a very well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70%, it is almost impossible to get the standard absolutely on target every year, in every subject and level
- Each year we therefore hold a passmark meeting for each subject at each level where we bring together all the information available (statistical and judgmental). 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 senior management team at SQA
- We adjust the passmark downwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly more demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- We adjust the passmark upwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly less demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- Where the standard appears to be very similar to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries
- 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 are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. And just because SQA has altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry 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
- Our main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain standards across the years, even as syllabuses evolve and change

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

In line with previous years' grade boundaries.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

There was a good range of performance, and all questions proved to be accessible. Some good attempts at Folio and Personal Study presentation. There was quite a wide range of responses – no unsatisfactory performances.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

There were good performances in all areas. No questions can be highlighted as presenting considerable difficulty, although some marks were lost due to insufficient attention to detail.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

No areas of outstanding difficulty were apparent – candidates performed well.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Candidates should be encouraged to choose topics for their Personal Study which reflect their particular interests.