

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Gàidhlig/Gaelic (Learners)

Qualification area

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

Gaelic (Learners) Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	146
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Number of entries in 2003	133
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General comments re entry numbers

Entry numbers decreased by 13 from 2002, ie by 9%. This may have been due to a general decrease in school rolls.

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

Grade	(Maximum Mark 240)	Minimum Mark for Grade (Maximum Mark 240)
Upper A		204 (85%)
A		172 (72%)
B		148 (62%)
C		125 (52%)

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

Grade boundaries were unchanged from 2002.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

There was a good range of performance, and few questions posed significant difficulties with all questions being accessible. Some good attempts at Folio presentation. There was quite a wide range of responses – ranging from satisfactory to very good. Listening was very well done.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

There were good performances in all areas. All questions were considered to be accessible and no questions can be highlighted as presenting considerable difficulty, although candidates lost some marks due to insufficient attention to detail.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

No areas of outstanding difficulty were apparent, difficulties tended to be particular to specific candidates.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

In Folios, centres should clearly identify which piece of writing is which, ie. “Short Story”, “Interview”, in order to prevent candidates from losing marks because something is wrongly labelled. Folios should conform to the word limits recommended in the arrangements documents for the subject. No specific feedback is recommended for Listening and Reading.