

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Gaelic

Qualification area

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

Gaelic (Learners) — Advanced Higher

Statistical information: update

Pre appeal	
Number of entries in 2003	21

Pre appeal	
Number of entries in 2004	27

General comments re entry numbers

The continuing increase in numbers is welcomed.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

See section on Grade Boundaries.

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

The percentage of awards at Upper A was slightly down from 2003 (4.8% down to 3.7%). Lower A awards increased to 66.7% to 70.4%. B awards decreased from 28.6% to 18.5%, while 7.4% of candidates gained a C award compared with 0.0% in 2003. All candidates gained an award at one of the four grades.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	74.1	74.1	20	220
B	18.5	92.6	5	188
C	7.4	100.0	2	157
D				
No award				

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 arrangements evolve and change.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Maximum mark	315
Lowest mark for Upper A	268
Lowest mark for Lower A	220
Lowest mark for B	188
Lowest mark for C	157

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

There was a good range of performance, and few questions posed significant difficulties. 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. Personal Studies were generally well done.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

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

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Perhaps centres should encourage candidates to choose topics for their Personal Studies to reflect the particular interests of candidates. No areas of criticism requiring feedback to centres.