

## Principal Assessor Report 2004

**Assessment Panel:**

Gaelic

**Qualification area**

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

Gaelic (Learners) — Intermediate 1 and 2

## Statistical information: update

<b>Number of entries in 2003</b>	Intermediate 2 — 35 Intermediate 1 — 24
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<b>Number of entries in 2004</b>	Intermediate 2 — 44 Intermediate 1 — 9
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## General comments re entry numbers

Intermediate 2 — The total number of entries was 44. The total entries continue to rise. There was an increase of 9 from the previous year.

Intermediate 1 — The total cohort was 9. This represents a decrease of 15 in comparison to the previous year.

## **Statistical Information: Performance of candidates**

### **Distribution of awards**

At Intermediate 2, the majority of candidates were awarded a grade A.

At Intermediate 1, all the candidates achieved a grade A.

### **Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards**

At Intermediate 2, the majority of candidates were awarded a grade A. This is consistent with the previous year but that there was a decrease in the total number of Band 1 grade As awarded. There is an increase in the distribution of the other awards.

At Intermediate 1, all the candidates achieved a grade A. There is a substantial increase in the number of upper As. This represents an improvement on the previous year.

## Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

### Intermediate 2

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	50.0	75.0	33	77
B	18.2	93.2	8	66
C	4.5	97.7	2	55
D	2.3	100.0	100.0	
No award				

### Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Grade boundaries were consistent with the previous year.

### Intermediate 1

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	100.0	100.0	9	77
B				66
C				55
D				
No award				

### Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Grade boundaries were consistent with the previous year.

### 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 candidate performance

### General comments

At all levels, candidates were not competent in:

- ◆ recognising whether nouns were singular or plural
- ◆ contextualising vocabulary accurately
- ◆ fulfilling choices when presented with options
- ◆ recognising tenses
- ◆ recognising numbers.

### Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

#### Intermediate 2 — Listening

The paper was reasonably challenging with total marks ranging from 30–13/30. The paper sampled a good range of language areas and purposes. The standard of audio materials was very good. Responses were written in good English and were mindful of the total number of marks. The candidates were mixed; some were very good while others were more challenged. The lateness of the examination could well have impacted on candidate performance.

#### Intermediate 2 — Talking

Performances were mixed. However, while many centres appeared to err by being generous, there were some very good performances. In some instances, even where a recommendation to alter marks was made, it was evident that the guidelines had been adhered to during the conduct of tests.

Centres have been sent the results of the Moderation Exercise, but should also be made aware of the observations and recommendations noted elsewhere in this report.

#### Intermediate 2 — Reading

There was a good standard which attracted scores ranging from 30–18/30. The texts combined a balance of accessible and challenging language. The candidature was mixed with those operating at the lower end of the spectrum exemplifying inarticulate English.

#### Intermediate 2 — Writing

A mixed range of writing. The best pieces were well constructed.

## Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

### Intermediate 2 — Listening

The following areas proved challenging:

- Q2 — *Bha iad a' dèanamh biadh Albannach*
- Q7 — *Cheannaich mi clàr ùr Ameireaganach*
- Q8 — *Bidh mi ag èisteachd ris na naidheachdan a h-uile madainn*
- Q9 — *ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig*
- Q11 — *Tha ùidh aige ann an actairean*
- Q12 — *Chòrd e rium, ach bha am film fada*

### Intermediate 2 — Talking

Please insert information from the Moderator's report.

### Intermediate 2 — Reading

The following areas proved challenging:

- Q1 — *mu  
biadh Greugach*
- Q3 — *Reòiteag agus cèicean*
- Q4 — *a' sreap nam beann*

### Intermediate 2 — Writing

A mixed range of writing. The best pieces were well constructed. In contrast, the remainder were limited. Some submissions were not of two different types, as requested by the arrangements document. Others were of an abbreviated nature and did not fulfil the standard required by the grade descriptions. In some cases, it was evident that writing had been produced in controlled conditions. Unfortunately, in other cases it was questionable whether evidence was authentic. Even the most able candidates were careless with regard to the use of apostrophes, accents, prepositions and possessives. Other common errors entail:

- ◆ Verbs and tenses
- ◆ The misuse of a dictionary, eg *Basaidh airson a' chonsairt, Sgìth mi mo rùm, Is e aiteigin airson an oigridh gu croch a-mach, Dh'fhuasgail e ceithir òrain singilte*
- ◆ Pronouns
- ◆ Prepositional Case.

## Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

### Intermediate 1 — Listening

The total number of candidature was very small, representing a similar number of presenting centres. They were a competent group who demonstrated a good grasp of a cross-section of language areas and purposes. The paper was challenging and sampled a good range of language areas and purposes. The standard of audio materials was very good. Generally, the responses were of a good standard with the majority of candidates giving adequately detailed responses. English communication was well articulated.

### **Intermediate 1 — Talking**

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### **Intermediate 1 — Reading**

The paper was well received, with candidates producing detailed and accurate responses to texts which combined contexts that were both straightforward and challenging. Dictionaries were well accessed to support candidates in understanding more complex vocabulary.

### **Intermediate 1 — Writing**

The standard of writing was exceptionally high. Some candidates presented evidence that exceeded the suggested length and the demands of the course. This may suggest that candidates were presented at the wrong level, or that controlled conditions, as outlined in the arrangements document, are not being adhered to.

## **Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty**

### **Intermediate 1 — Listening**

The following areas proved challenging:

Q4 — *Thàinig mi dhachaigh aig aon uair deug*

Q6 — *Bha mo phiuthar agus mo charaid còmhla rium ann an Dùn Èideann*

Q7 — *Dh'fhalbh sinn Disathairne agus bha sinn air ais Diciadain*

Q10 — *Bha na bùthan uabhasach daor*

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Q4 — *Bidh mi a' dol dhan taigh-dhealbh*

*Seo an cur-seachad as fheàrr leam*

*còig notaichean agus leth-cheud sgillinn*

*Tha mi sgìth de ...*

*Chan eil an telebhisean a' còrdadh rium*

## Recommendations

### Feedback to centres

#### General comments

Teachers/lecturers and candidates are to be commended for their preparation for this diet of examinations. Candidates were of a high standard. English communication was well articulated.

#### Presenting centres should ensure that:

- ◆ Guidelines on allocation of candidates to Gàidhlig or Gaelic (Learners) are adhered to.
- ◆ Presentation levels are considered carefully.
- ◆ More time is devoted to developing the skill of writing.
- ◆ The language areas, purposes and grammar listed below are integrated within the learning and teaching process.

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