Course report 2023

National 5 German

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022:   1,497

Number of resulted entries in 2023:   1,490

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	906	Percentage	60.8	Cumulative percentage	60.8	Minimum mark required	84
B	Number of candidates	262	Percentage	17.6	Cumulative percentage	78.4	Minimum mark required	70
C	Number of candidates	179	Percentage	12	Cumulative percentage	90.4	Minimum mark required	56
D	Number of candidates	103	Percentage	6.9	Cumulative percentage	97.3	Minimum mark required	42
No award	Number of candidates	40	Percentage	2.7	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

Please note that rounding has not been applied to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

♦ 'most' means greater than 70%
♦ 'many' means 50% to 69%
♦ 'some' means 25% to 49%
♦ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the statistics and information page of SQA's website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

The 2023 National 5 German course assessment performed as expected and was fair and accessible to all candidates, with a range of differentiation. The assessment sampled language from all contexts and the content was relevant. Most candidates coped well with the level and were able to complete assessments within the allocated time.

Question paper 1: Reading

The reading question paper was comprised of three texts (each worth 10 marks) on the contexts of employability, culture, and society. There were four supported questions (worth 4 marks in total). Candidates engaged well with the texts and performance was better in texts 1 and 2. Some candidates did not perform as well in text 3 as the language was more challenging. Some candidates did not attempt the final three questions, suggesting they may have struggled with time management skills.

The texts in the question paper were relevant to candidates. The question paper was accessible to all candidates while providing the demand and rigour required at National 5. The assessment performed as expected.

There was a full range of performances, and some candidates were able to gain full marks. Some candidates did not provide enough detail from the text to access all of the available marks. The marking scheme allowed candidates to offer a range of answers to demonstrate their understanding from a range of contexts. Most candidates performed consistently across all three reading texts.

There were some no responses, fewer than in previous years, but most candidates attempted to answer all questions.

Most candidates did well in this question paper, with more candidates achieving over 15 marks than in previous years.

Question paper 1: Writing

The writing question paper required candidates to reply to a job advert for a volunteer at an environmental organisation. The job application required candidates to respond to six bullet points, four of which were predictable and the final two bullet points were unpredictable. The unpredictable bullet points were about social media and asking questions about the job.

There was a full range of performances, and many candidates were able to achieve 16 or 20 marks. The proportion of candidates achieving the higher marks increased this session with many candidates achieving 12 marks and above. There was a fall in the number of candidates achieving 0 or 4 marks. There were fewer no responses compared to last year with most candidates attempting all questions.

Question paper 2: Listening

The context of the listening question paper was learning. The texts were about a young person who had moved to a new school. The texts sampled vocabulary from all contexts. The topic was relevant, and candidates performed well with the level of challenge. Overall, the question paper performed as expected. Most candidates coped well with the structures expected at this level, but it is worth noting that there were a few items of basic vocabulary that some candidates were unable to identify, for example *Zug* and *Dorf*.

There was a range of performances. There was a range of topics included within the context of the paper that sampled a wide range of vocabulary.

Assignment–writing

The requirement to complete the assignment–writing was removed for session 2022–23.

Performance–talking

The performance–talking performed as expected. All centres verified this session used SQA's guidelines for the internally assessed component of the course assessment: National 5 Modern Languages performance–talking assessment task.

At this level, candidates are required to deliver an oral presentation on a topic of their choice and take part in a conversation directly afterwards. The recommended duration of the presentation is 1 to 2 minutes, and the conversation should last between 5 and 6 minutes.

Markers applied the marking instructions in line with national standards.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Reading

Overall, candidates performed well in the reading question paper.

Text 1 (employability)

♦ question 1(a): most candidates were able to identify 'a dog walker(s)' in this supported question

♦ question 1(b): many candidates were able to correctly locate the advantages of a part-time job and most answers were the first two, 'teenagers become/are more independent' and 'you can earn your own money'

♦ question 1(c): there was a choice of six answers and most candidates gained both marks in this question. The most common answers were 'they work long hours' and 'they don't see their friends as often'

♦ question 1(d)(i): most candidates gained the mark for saying 'six months'

♦ question 1(d)(iv): most candidates were able to gain the mark for by writing 'getting work experience' or 'it will help in the future'

Text 2 (culture)

♦ question 2(b)(i): most candidates gained a mark for this multiple-choice question

♦ question 2(b)(ii): most candidates were able to use their dictionary to get the two animals, 'deer' and 'squirrels'. A few candidates only wrote one correct answer and did not gain the mark. It is rare for candidates to gain a mark at this level for single word answers

♦ question 2(b)(iii): most candidates gained at least 1 mark, with many gaining both marks for this question. A few candidates used the next paragraph for their answer to this question and had transposed the answers

♦ question 2(c)(ii): most candidates gained at least 2 marks in this question. Some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain all the marks

Text 3 (society)

♦ question 3(a): most candidates correctly identified 'hills' in this supported question and gained the mark

♦ question 3(c): most candidates were able to identify the cognate '*Lungenprobleme'* and many candidates were able to break up the composite noun '*Bleivergiftung'*

Question paper 1: Writing

Most candidates attempted the first four predictable bullet points, displaying a good range of vocabulary, grammatical structures and tenses, and seemed well-prepared for the task.

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates performed well in this question paper.

Item 1: monologue

♦ question 1(c): most candidates were able to pick out one of the correct answers. The most common answer was '(very) friendly'

♦ question 1(d): many candidates were able to correctly identify that Melinda had no friends or that she missed her old life. A few candidates were able to pick out that she needed to get to know the school building

♦ question 1(f): most candidates were able to pick out that she did her homework after school

Item 2: dialogue

♦ question 2(e)(i): most candidates were able to correctly identify that she wanted to find a work placement, work in an art gallery or work as a gardener. A few candidates guessed that she wanted to be a fashion designer, which was mentioned in the second part of the question

♦ question 2(e)(ii): there was a range of answers

Performance–talking

At National 5 level, candidates performed well when the topics chosen for the presentation were covered in detail, with well-structured responses and opinions, including an introduction and conclusion.

All candidates covered a different context in the conversation. Overall, most candidates coped well with the conversation at National 5.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Text 1 (employability)

♦ question 1(a): some candidates guessed 'jobs with a dog'. A number of candidates guessed and wrote 'dog trainer' or 'dog sitter'

♦ question 1(d)(ii): some candidates were unable to identify that 'you are on your feet all day'. There were a range of answers, including 'you spend the whole day moving, you need to get a move on, you have to walk a lot'

♦ question 1(d)(iii): some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain the marks. At National 5 level, *kennen lernen* has to be translated as 'to get to know'. Some candidates made reference to people, which was not specific enough, and reference had to be made to the 'customers being friendly and polite' and that 'he gets on well with his colleagues'

♦ question 1(d)(iv): most candidates were able to gain the mark, but there were issues with some candidates' expression in English

Text 2 (culture)

♦ question 2(a)(i): most candidates did not provide enough detail here and focused on the number. Most candidates missed the idea of 'more than'

♦ question 2(a)(ii): most candidates were unable to identify that the two rivers formed the border. Many candidates had identified the word 'river' and guessed the answer

♦ question 2(b)(i): some candidates had provided only one animal and were not awarded the mark

♦ question 2(b)(ii): some candidates were not specific enough in their language and were not awarded a mark for 'to see nature'

♦ question 2(c): some candidates did not provide enough detail to gain the mark, for example historic abbey, Roman ruins, plum cake. A few candidates had confused Roman with Romanian

Text 3 (society)

♦ question 3(d)(i): some candidates missed out the idea of 'no longer' and had confused it with 'not so green'

♦ question 3(d)(ii): some candidates missed the idea of 'hanging the washing outside'. Some confused the answer with 'washing up'

♦ question 3(e): this was the question with the highest proportion of no responses

♦ question 3(f): some candidates mentioned the wrong body part or mentioned 'breathing problems' from the previous question

♦ question 3(g): some candidates mixed up *wachsen* with *waschen* and there were many responses about 'children not getting washed'

Question paper 1: Writing

Overall, there was an improvement in candidate performance in this question paper, but there were a number of areas where some candidates did not perform well:

♦ some candidates are writing a formal introduction, which is no longer required, and some struggle to do this well

♦ in the first four bullet points, some candidates were not well-prepared for these, despite the predictability

♦ some candidates only attempted the first and/or second bullet points

♦ some candidates did not always understand what they were writing and made errors when writing from memory

♦ some candidates did not provide a range of tenses, and some had particular difficulty in forming the past tense, particularly in bullet point 4

♦ some candidates only coped with the language in the first two bullet points

♦ other points of difficulty for some candidates were adjective endings, word-order and verb agreement

♦ a few candidates wrote very few sentences or did not attempt the task at all, which could be the result of exam technique, or the candidate had spent too much time on the reading

♦ a few candidates had over-prepared the first four bullet points and it was clear that they did not always understand what they were writing

♦ the language was so complicated in parts that some candidates made errors that detracted from the overall impression, particularly where chunks of learned material were missed out

♦ bullet point 3: a few candidates wrote about free-time activities with no mention of skills and qualities. Free-time activities are often mentioned without any relevance to the job, for example going to the cinema and their favourite types of films

♦ bullet point 4: some candidates chose to write in the present tense, which limited the range of tenses in the piece overall. A few candidates had very little detail

♦ most candidates attempted bullet points 5 and 6. The accuracy of the bullet points deteriorated significantly in the last two bullet points and a considerable number of candidates were unable to form basic sentences using two verbs. The result was unconjugated verbs and incorrect word order

♦ bullet point 5, some candidates:
— made serious errors and at times it was not immediately obvious what they were trying to say
— showed evidence of dictionary misuse, particularly for the verb 'to use'
— instead of writing detailed language, tried to express ideas that were beyond their writing ability in German
— tried to write extended answers but made significant errors in terms of grammar and vocabulary

♦ bullet point 6, some candidates:
— were unable to form basic questions, which resulted in unconjugated verbs or dictionary misuse

    — were unable to deal with question words, auxiliary and modal verbs, which led to confusion with conjugations and word order
- most candidates attempted all six bullet points, but many encountered difficulties in the final two unpredictable bullet points, particularly number six, indicating that writing spontaneously seemed to be challenging
- many candidates kept the final two bullet points simple, which worked overall

Question paper 2: Listening

Item 1: monologue

- question 1(a): some candidates were unable to isolate the information about a small village and had instead written a town or city. Some candidates were unable to identify France. Some candidates wrote Frankreich or Frankfurt. Others had written France on its own and not mentioned the border
- question 1(b): some candidates had heard some key words, but their answers did not accurately convey the intended meaning, for example 'it is very technological', 'there are many computer rooms', 'there's a technology class'. Others did not provide enough detail and had just written 'technology', which had to be qualified to gain the mark
- question 1(e): some candidates were either not able to pick out the subjects 'German' and 'Biology' or were unable to translate *Schulnoten* to 'grades'. There was some guesswork, and some candidates wrote that 'her parents are strict' or 'they wanted better marks in German', which was not close enough to the expected answer

Item 2: dialogue

- question 2(a): some candidates translated *wir verstehen uns sehr gut* as 'they understand each other'. Others confused *Interessen* with 'interesting'
- question 2(b)(i): most candidates were unable to cope with *im Wald spazieren*
- question 2(c): there was a choice of six answers in this question. Most candidates got at least 1 mark, with some candidates getting 2 or more marks. Some candidates confused the meaning and wrote about the subject being 'creative' or that 'it is good for her hand'. Others did not provide enough detail, for example 'the teacher is good'
- question 2(d)(i): many candidates were unable to identify 'train' as the correct answer
- question 2(d)(ii): this is the question that candidates found most challenging, and most did not achieve a mark

Performance–talking

A small number of candidates had prepared a presentation that did not include detailed language expected at this level. Some candidates used their job applications for the basis of their presentation, which covered a range of topics. The presentations that did well were structured and stayed on the same topic but went into detail.

Some conversations and discussions were unnecessarily long or too short. Particularly when conversations and discussions were short, candidates were unable to demonstrate detailed language.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ practise their dictionary skills to help them select the most appropriate translations in the context of the text

♦ answer the question being asked, and know that the information comes in a chronological order and the questions include hooks to support them throughout the text

♦ read each question carefully and highlight or underline key words to help them find the correct answer in the text

♦ read the questions and their answers at the end of the paper to ensure that the question has been answered and what they have written in English makes sense

♦ are guided by the marks available for each question and provide as much detail as they have understood. Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail to gain the marks

♦ are aware that it is rare for a single word answer to be sufficient detail at National 5. They should look at what comes before and what comes after to ensure that they include all the necessary detail

♦ are familiar with a range of grammatical structures as outlined in the productive grammar grid at National 5. This should help them in identifying the relationship between the words in the sentence, including the tense if there is more than one verb in the sentence

♦ are aware that comparative adjectives and composite nouns are common features at National 5

♦ know that the tense of the question should give them a good idea of the tense they should be using in their response

♦ are discouraged from giving additional information that is not related to the text or the question, as this could negate any correct information and they could miss gaining the marks

Question paper 1: Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ are aware that a formal introduction or conclusion is not required

♦ for bullet point 3:
— know that the information should be relevant to the job
— the context of the paper is a job application
— if free time is mentioned, it should be linked to the skill, otherwise they bullet point may not be covered
— remember that the bullet point is looking for information on skills and interests that make them right for the job

♦ in bullet point 4, try to show a range of tenses accurately to achieve a higher mark

♦ in bullet point 2, avoid listing, particularly school subjects

- for the unpredictable bullet points, have opportunities to practise a range of these. It may help teachers and lecturers to look to other languages for ideas
- attempt all six bullet points to ensure that they have written enough, as this can have an impact on their overall mark
- check that all bullet points have been covered and use their dictionary to check the accuracy of what they have written
- practise a range of productive grammar skills, including how to form questions
- are made aware of the marking criteria so that they know what is expected of them in this paper, and to help them achieve as high a mark as possible
- can use detailed language and give opinions and reasons
- use a range of tenses (where appropriate) and include examples of inversion and subordinate clauses

Question paper 2: Listening

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- read the introduction and are aware of the context
- read the questions carefully
- highlight key words to help them structure the text
- write in bullet points and score out any notes with a single line
- regularly practise taking extensive notes in class
- know that notes should be confined to the side of the paper. Some candidates drew a line down the middle of the paper, which made it more difficult for markers to find the correct answers
- as they hear both the monologue and the dialogue three times, use the third time to check the accuracy of what they have written
- are guided by the number of marks available for each question to ensure that sufficient detail is provided
- know that it is rare for a single word answer to be sufficient detail at National 5, for example a country on its own would not be sufficient detail
- revisit some basic vocabulary, for example countries, numbers, weather expressions, transport and question words to ensure that sufficient detail is provided
- do not provide a range of alternative answers using oblique lines (/). Some candidates missed marks if it was not clear what their answer was, or if the two answers contradicted each other
- provide accurate answers. A few candidates negated the correct answer by providing additional information that was incorrect

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ use detailed language as per the productive grammar grid. At this level, long lists of nouns (for example places in the town and school subjects) or repetitions of straightforward descriptions (for example names, ages, pets and descriptions of hair and eyes) are unlikely to allow candidates to use a suitable range of structures and vocabulary to access the higher pegged marks

♦ are guided carefully in their choice of topic and should avoid topics that are better suited to Higher and require greater levels of maturity (for example smoking, drinking alcohol) or a variation of the job application or a presentation with a range of topics, which does not allow sufficient depth

♦ are guided to choose one topic and use a range of structures, tenses, and vocabulary appropriate to the level

♦ avoid overly rehearsing discussions: the discussion at National 5 should contain spontaneous and natural language

♦ prepare for their assessment independently to personalise their performance. This means candidates can select their own topics of interest, vocabulary, and grammatical structures

♦ do not respond to questions with mini presentations. Longer answers can appear to be overly rehearsed, and conversations should include a range of short and long answers

♦ have a range of strategies for asking questions to be repeated, or language structures and phrases to say when they have not understood an aspect of the discussion

Teachers and lecturers should make use of the Understanding Standards materials for National 5 German talking performances (IACCAs) published on SQA's secure website.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

♦ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
♦ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
♦ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures was developed to support learners and centres. This included modifications to course assessment, retained from the 2021–22 session. This support was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while recognising a lessening of the impact of disruption to learning and teaching as a result of the pandemic. The revision support that was available for the 2021–22 session was not offered to learners in 2022–23.

In addition, SQA adopted a sensitive approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining

standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams continue to do so in different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019 and 2022.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2023 and the ongoing impact the disruption from the pandemic has had on learners. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and the removal of revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2023 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the National Qualifications 2023 Awarding — Methodology Report.