



## Course report 2019

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| Subject | Gàidhlig   |
| Level   | National 5 |

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. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any post-results services.

## Section 1: comments on the assessment

### Question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)

Candidates performed very well in the reading question paper. It was considered that the passage was relevant and was set at an appropriate level. There were no issues raised by presenting centres or by candidates.

The passage was about the SS *Politician*, which ran aground on reefs off the coast of Eriskay in 1941. The salvage of its cargo of whisky resulted in the Compton Mackenzie book *Whisky Galore*.

It was evident that candidates were able to understand and relate to the passage. The questions also posed no particular problems for candidates. The questions enabled candidates to show their understanding of the passage and to undertake appropriate analysis of the passage. There were no particular questions which performed badly. Some candidates found a few of the questions more challenging but there has to be an element of discrimination. The more able candidates coped well with all the questions. Less able candidates gave insufficient information in some of the questions. It was considered that there was a wide enough range of questions to enable all candidates to demonstrate their ability, without presenting any barriers to comprehension.

Statistical evidence shows that most of questions performed very well. Candidates performed less well in questions 3, 9(a) and 11.

### Question paper 1: Litreachas (Literature)

The overall performance of candidates in the literature question paper was good. There were five questions offered covering the genres of poetry, short story, novel, drama and film or television. The majority of responses were on poetry or short stories. There was an even split between the number of responses on poetry and the number of responses on short stories. This has been the pattern for many years. It would be good to see more responses on the other genres. However, it is accepted that there are fewer resources available in centres on these genres.

The best responses showed good familiarity with the chosen text. The best responses also answered the specific question being asked, rather than delivering a general answer. Many candidates showed an ability to undertake detailed analysis of the text, with relevant supporting evidence from the text. Good use of quotations was in evidence in the best responses.

There were a number of responses which had little content and showed little evidence of an ability to undertake textual analysis. A number of candidates' responses were difficult to read due to poor handwriting.

Candidates provided responses on a wide range of texts. The most popular short story texts were *A' Dol Dhachaigh*, *An Taghadh*, and *Ann Am Bosnia*. In terms of poetry, the most popular texts were *Ar Cànan 's ar Clò*, *Aig an Fhaing* and *Màiri Iain Mhurch' Chaluim*.

Overall, candidates performed well. Most responses were well structured, with good analysis of the texts. A good number of responses made good evaluative comments and provided a personal response to the chosen text.

### **Question paper 2: Èisteachd (Listening)**

The performance of candidates in the listening question paper was good. It was evident during the marking process that the paper was set at an appropriate level and that candidates were able to cope well with the passage and with the questions.

The principal purpose of the listening question paper is to allow candidates to show their understanding of the passage that they hear. There is also an element of giving a personal reaction to the passage. The passage was considered to be topical and relevant. It was about the short films made by Danny MacAskill, a cyclist who has come to the attention of the public due to his cycling activities along the ridges of the Cuillin hills in Skye. Candidates were able to understand the passage and to correctly identify the information required by the questions. There were no specific issues identified with the listening question paper during the central marking exercise.

Most questions posed no real problems for candidates. Statistical evidence shows that candidates performed less well in questions 5, 7(b) and 9.

Overall, this was a good listening question paper in which candidates performed well.

### **Obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)**

Candidates performed well in the assignment–writing. They have the option of submitting a piece of creative writing or a piece of discursive writing. This year there was an equal split between the number of creative responses and the number of discursive responses. It was pleasing to see candidates covering a wide range of topics.

The best responses in discursive writing clearly presented different sides of an argument and came to some conclusions. Most of the candidates' responses were well presented and well structured. Topics covered included: An e rud math no droch rud a th' anns an NC 500? Am bu choir don h-uile duine a bhith Vegan? An e deuchainnean an dòigh as fheàrr air comas sgoilear a mheas?

There was evidence in most responses that candidates had undertaken relevant research and were familiar with the chosen topic. Where candidates are able to choose a topic, they will almost inevitably write on a topic in which they have a particular interest.

The best responses in creative writing showed good imagination. Most of the responses were well structured.

The assignment arrangements allow time for candidates to consider what they wish to write about, to play to their own strengths and to redraft their work. They should present their work in a clear legible format. However, some candidates' handwriting in their responses was difficult to read.

### **Còmhradh (performance–talking)**

Of the samples observed, all candidates performed as expected. Candidates participated in conversations that covered a range of subjects that supported them in their performance. Performances were all in the specified conversation model and this benefited candidates greatly. Some samples were outwith the suggested assessment length.

It is worth noting that candidates rarely benefit from unnecessarily prolonged conversations and though candidates are not penalised for going over the suggested time allocation, an excessively long conversation could be self-penalising.

## Section 2: comments on candidate performance

### Areas that candidates performed well in

#### Question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)

Candidates performed well in the reading question paper. They were able to cope well with most of the questions. The marks ranged from 1 to 3, depending on how much information was required. Generally, candidates find it easier to gain marks for information from the text. Some candidates find it more difficult to gain marks in questions which ask them to make inferences based on information in the text or to give their own opinions.

Statistical evidence shows that candidates performed best in questions 1, 2(a), (b), 4 and 5.

Question 1: candidates were required to provide three reasons why visitors come to the islands. Three pieces of information were required and most candidates were able to correctly identify those reasons. However, a few candidates only gave two reasons.

Question 2(a): this was a short 1 mark question. The words in the question ‘...sa Gheamhradh 1941...’ directed candidates to the answer in the passage: ‘...bhuail am bàta mòr ... air sgeirean far costa Eirisgeidh.’ This was a straightforward question which most candidates answered correctly.

Question 2(b): required two pieces of information, although that was not specified in the question. Most candidates got the first part of the answer (b’ e àm a’ chogaidh a bh’ ann) although a few candidates did not get the second part (nach b’ e rud annasach a bh’ ann bàtaichean a bhith a’ dol a dhìth).

Question 4: required two short pieces of information and most candidates provided the information correctly, although a few failed to get the second part of the answer (that it was difficult for the captain to see where they were going).

Question 5: required two pieces of information. The marking scheme provided three options. Candidates could provide two from three possible answers. Most candidates did this successfully.

More able candidates performed well in questions where they had to make deductions or provide a personal opinion (for example questions 7 and 11).

### **Question paper 1: Litreachas (Literature)**

Some candidates gave particularly good responses and addressed the specific question which they were asked. It was good to see that candidates gave responses on a wide range of texts, although these were almost entirely on short stories and poetry.

Most candidates gave good personal analysis of their chosen text and there was little evidence of candidates giving a prepared response.

### **Question paper 2: Èisteachd (Listening)**

Candidates performed well in the listening question paper. The questions are generally straightforward, and mostly require the identification of information in the passage. If candidates understand the passage, they will generally get the answers correct. The two questions which performed best in the listening question paper were questions 2 and 8.

Question 2: candidates had to identify what Catriona's opinion was on the film in the Cuillin. Most candidates answered the two parts of the question correctly.

Question 8: candidates had to identify two things which frighten people. 2 marks were available for the two short pieces of information required. Most candidates got both pieces of information (although there were some interesting spellings of 'damhain-allaidh' - dafin ali!!)

### **Obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)**

Most of the responses were very interesting. Most of the pieces of creative writing showed good imagination and there were responses on a wide range of topics.

Most of the discursive pieces showed good evidence of research and covered a wide range of topics.

### **Còmhradh (performance–talking)**

Candidates performed well when discussing their chosen topics, and in general conversation regarding their courses and interests. Candidates were well-prepared and discussed a range of different topics that allowed them to perform to the best of their abilities.

All performances were of a natural discussion between the assessor and the candidate. Candidates selected topics that were appropriate to support them in achieving the best possible mark.

The nature of the discussions were of a conversational style, which fully supports candidates in achieving to the best of their ability. Some candidates did take full control of the conversation and lead the discussion. This allowed these candidates to fully demonstrate their ability and achieve marks that reflected this. Candidates performed very well in this element of course assessment.

## **Areas that candidates found demanding**

### **Question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)**

There were no specific areas which candidates found demanding. The questions in which candidates performed less well were questions 3, 9(a) and 11.

Question 3: candidates had to explain the effect that a particular sentence had on the passage (Minich a' bhuidh a tha aig an t-seantans 'Ach bha rudeigin air leth sònraichte mun bhàta seo'... air an earrainn). There was a range of responses to this question. Many candidates gave responses which were too vague and did not really explain the significance of the sentence in the context of the passage as a whole.

Question 9(a): candidates had to identify evidence which shows that Compton Mackenzie's book was successful. Many candidates failed to get two pieces of evidence here. Most candidates failed to identify 'bha air a mheas èibhinn agus tlachdmhor'. However, most candidates identified 'chaidh film a dhèanamh a bha stèidhichte air'.

Question 11: candidates had to give a personal reaction to the passage. They were asked to identify ways in which the passage had been successful and to provide evidence from the passage to support their opinions. While most candidates gave valid reasons as to how the passage had been successful, many failed to give strong supporting evidence from the passage. Some of the responses, particularly from less able candidates, were too brief to justify 3 marks.

All candidates should be aware of the number of marks allocated to each question and ensure that their response adequately reflects the number of marks available.

Candidates must ensure that if they are required to give a personal opinion with supporting evidence from the passage, they provide both parts in their answer. It is important that the supporting evidence is relevant to the opinion they give.

Some of the less able candidates struggled with questions where they had to make deductions or provide a personal opinion (for example questions 7 and 11).

### **Question paper 1: Litreachas (Literature)**

Candidates performed well in this paper and there were no specific areas of difficulty identified.

Candidates should read the wording of the question carefully and answer what is specifically required. The best responses address the specific question asked.

### **Question paper 2: Èisteachd (Listening)**

There were no particular areas of the listening question paper which candidates found demanding. The three questions which candidates found most difficult were questions 3, 7(b) and 9.

Question 5 asked: Carson nach biodh dol às aig Danaidh nan deigheadh càil ceàrr aig a' mhullach?' The required answer was quite precise: Thuiteadh e do na glinn mìle meatair shìos fodha. However, many candidates failed to gain 2 marks because their answers were insufficiently precise. Some wrote 'thuiteadh e astar mòr' or 'thuiteadh e far nam beann' or 'cha dèanadh e film gu bràth tuilleadh'.

Question 7(b) asked: 'Dè na dòighean anns an toir an t-eagal deagh bhuaidh air daoine eile?' Most candidates got the part of the answer about fear proving an inspiration to some people, but many failed to get the part about some people getting pleasure or enjoyment from being in dangerous situations.

Question 9: candidates had to give their own personal opinion on the main message in the passage, along with supporting evidence from the passage. While some candidates gave good answers, many focused solely on Danny's exploits on his bicycle rather than mentioning the wider aspects mentioned in the passage: how people face up to dangerous situations, and the different ways in which people react to dangerous situations. Some candidates gave insufficient evidence from the passage to support their answer.

Candidates need to be aware of the number of marks allocated to each question and ensure that their response has sufficient detail to reflect the number of marks.

### **Obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)**

Most candidates performed well in the assignment–writing. However, there were a few points to note.

In creative writing, some responses from less able candidates' contained little creativity and were merely a narrative of an event or a description of a particular place.

Some assignments contained unnecessary typing errors. Candidates should check text to ensure that it does not have 'auto corrected' text in it.

There was also evidence in some responses of misuse of dictionary for translation purposes.

### **Còmhradh (performance–talking)**

Some candidates found it difficult to initiate the conversation; however, they were able to keep the conversation flowing with some encouragement from the assessor. In the samples verified, there was no evidence of candidates choosing a topic which was too complex, however some did lack vocabulary regarding their chosen topic. As a result, further focus on vocabulary specific to the chosen topic should be incorporated into preparation for the assessment.



## **Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment**

It is important that centres and candidates indicate what type of work is submitted, whether sources were used for information, and that possible welfare issues have been addressed.

Candidates are advised to:

- ◆ use a fairly large font size, such as 12, and 1.5 line spacing for ease of legibility
- ◆ proofread the final version of their response to avoid inappropriate auto check spelling
- ◆ use dictionary translations with care

Some candidates' handwriting is very difficult to read. Centres are advised to make use of support mechanisms which may be available to candidates who have poor handwriting.

Teachers, lecturers, assessors and candidates are encouraged to make use of the available Understanding Standards materials.

### **Question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)**

In the reading question paper, candidates need to bear in mind the number of marks allocated to each question, and ensure that their responses reflect the number of marks

### **Question paper 1: Litreachas (Literature)**

Candidates performed well in the Literature question paper, suggesting they had prepared well for the assessment.

### **Question paper 2: Èisteachd (Listening)**

Candidates should not write notes within the answer booklet. Centres should provide extra paper for notes. It is important that only final answers are submitted. The scripts are scanned and marked on computer, and notes or extraneous material could cause confusion.

### **Obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)**

Only one piece of work is to be submitted. There were a few examples this year where two pieces of work were submitted.

Centres and candidates must be clear about how they use reference material. Some candidates claimed to have used no research materials; however, their responses showed that they were quoting information which they could not have known without undertaking some research.

### **Còmhradh (performance–talking)**

Candidates should ensure that they have knowledge of, and can apply, vocabulary that is specific to their chosen topic in a natural manner. Assessors must continue to ensure that the assessment consists of a conversation.

Preparation should take into consideration the recommended length of the performance. Candidates rarely benefit from unnecessarily prolonged conversations and though candidates are not penalised for going over the suggested time allocation, an excessively long conversation could be self-penalising.

## Grade boundary and statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on courses

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of resulted entries in 2018 | 183 |
|------------------------------------|-----|

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of resulted entries in 2019 | 195 |
|------------------------------------|-----|

### Statistical information: performance of candidates

#### Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

| Distribution of course awards | Percentage | Cumulative % | Number of candidates | Lowest mark |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|
| <b>Maximum mark</b>           |            |              |                      |             |
| <b>A</b>                      | 50.8%      | 50.8%        | 99                   | 84          |
| <b>B</b>                      | 29.7%      | 80.5%        | 58                   | 72          |
| <b>C</b>                      | 11.3%      | 91.8%        | 22                   | 60          |
| <b>D</b>                      | 7.2%       | 99.0%        | 14                   | 48          |
| <b>No award</b>               | 1.0%       | -            | 2                    | -           |

## General commentary on grade boundaries

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

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional 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 every year for each subject at each level to bring together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The principal assessor and SQA qualifications manager meet with the relevant SQA head of service and statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. Members of the SQA management team chair these meetings. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper has been more, or less, challenging than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper is more challenging than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual.
- ◆ Where standards 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 to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for question papers set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the question papers that they set themselves.