Course report 2019

Subject	Italian
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: Reading

The reading question paper consisted of three texts of equal difficulty and weight. The three reading texts covered the contexts of learning, society and employability.

The question paper performed in line with expectations. Feedback from the marking team, teachers and lecturers, indicated it was positively received by centres. The paper was fair and accessible for candidates. The majority of candidates understood what was required and completed the questions for the three texts in the allocated time.

Question paper 1: Writing

The writing question paper required candidates to reply by email to a job advert for the role of waiter or waitress at a beach club. In the email, candidates should include the information specified in the six bullet points and the two unpredictable bullet points. The unpredictable bullet points asked candidates to state 'what you do to keep fit' and 'to ask for information about accommodation'. These were relevant to the context and allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

The job application was appropriate to National 5, and candidates were able to access the full range of marks available.

Question paper 2: Listening

The listening monologue and dialogue were on the context of culture, with 8 marks for item 1 and 12 marks for item 2. In item 1, Lidia spoke about the winter festive period in Italy and in item 2, Giovanna and Alessandro talked about their Christmas and their plans for the New Year.

Overall, this paper performed as intended. The marking team found the paper to be fair and appropriately challenging for the level.

Assignment–writing

Candidates submitted a piece of writing in Italian focusing on a context of society, culture or learning. This is the second year of the assignment–writing and candidates performed well, with most candidates achieving 12 or more marks.

Performance–talking

The performance– talking assessment task remained in the same format as last year, and centres used it effectively.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Reading

Most candidates identified information correctly, as follows:

Text 1

Question (a): *Non hai voglia di fare in compiti?* — 'Do you not want to do your homework?'

Question (b)(ii): *chiamare i tuoi amici* — 'call/phone your friends', *fare una merenda* — 'have/make a snack'.

Question (e): *se ci sono persone attorno a te che stanno studiando sarà più semplice concentrarti* — 'if there are people around you studying it will be easier to concentrate'.

Question (f): *ti senterai più sveglio e avrai un atteggiamento più positivo* — 'you will feel more awake and you will have a more positive attitude'.

Text 2

Question (a): *mi fa sentire molto arrabbiata* — 'makes me feel very angry', *è un modo di vivere la vita* — 'it's a way of life'.

Question (b): *non lavora-* does not work, *non guadagna molto al mese* — 'does not earn a lot a month'.

Question (d): *le faccio tanti complimenti* — 'I give her lots of compliments'.

Text 3

Question(a): most candidates were successful in this 'true or false' supported question.

Question (e): *rimbosarmi le spese di viaggio* — 'reimburse my travelling expenses'.

Question paper 1: Writing

Almost all candidates were able to show they had prepared well for this task by writing sentences with good content, accuracy and language resource, particularly in the first four bullet points, which candidates would practise during the course. Most candidates attempted both unpredictable bullet points, and were more successful in addressing the first one 'what do you do to keep fit'.

Most candidates achieved 12 or more from the 20 marks available, and all candidates attempted this question paper.

Question paper 2: Listening

Most candidates identified information correctly, as follows:

Item 1

Question (d): *caramelle, cioccolatini o piccoli giocattoli* — 'sweets, chocolates or small toys'.

Question (e): *la gente va fuori a mangiare al ristorante o in casa di amic*i — 'people go out to eat in a restaurant or to a friend's house'.

Item 2

Question (d): *Aspettano la mezzanotte bevendo, ballando e ascoltando della musica tradizionale* — 'they wait for midnight drinking, dancing and listening to traditional music'.

Assignment–writing

Candidates performed very well in the assignment–writing assessment task. Candidates covered a good range of topics within the specified contexts of society, culture and learning, with many opting to write about their school, holidays or family relationships. In this element of course assessment, most candidates achieved 12 marks or above from the 20 marks available.

Performance–talking

As in previous years, candidates performed well in the performance–talking. They were well prepared and with the support of encouraging assessors, were able to use a range of detailed language which allowed them to gain higher marks.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Some candidates had difficulty in identifying the detail in the following questions:

Text 1

Question (b)(iii): *forse non avrai abbastanza tempo per finire tutti i compiti* — 'You might not have enough time to finish all of your homework'. Many candidates did not convey the idea of uncertainty by omitting *forse* from their response.

Text 2

Question (g): *non riesco a sopportare questa situazione* — 'I am unable to stand this situation'. Candidates who chose this part of the text to answer the question, mistranslated sopportare as 'support'.

Non so se posso fidarmi delle mie amiche — 'I don't know if I can trust my friends'. Many candidates stated 'she doesn't trust her friends anymore', and missed the *non so se* to be able to gain the mark.

Text 3

Question (c)(i): some candidates were unable to translate *curriculum* as 'CV' and, therefore, were unable to gain the 2 marks.

(Question c)(ii): *le pagine davano già il nome di una persona e l'indirizzo di un ufficio specifico* — 'the pages already gave the name of a person and the address of a specific office'.

Question paper 1: Writing

Overall, candidates performed well in this question paper. In some cases, candidates had difficulty in answering the unpredictable bullet points in a full and balanced manner. This was the area where instances of dictionary misuse and an inability to manipulate verbs was most evident. This was particularly the case in some responses to the second unpredictable bullet 'ask about accommodation'.

Question paper 2: Listening

The following are questions which candidates found challenging:

Item 1

Question (b): *ricevono regali anche il 6 gennaio* — 'They also receive presents on the 6th January'. Some candidates wrote 'June' instead of 'January'.

Question (c): *È una vecchia signora vestita di nero con un capello in testa* — 'An older lady dressed in black with a hat on her head'. Some candidates were only able to state that she is an older lady and therefore only gained 1 of the 2 marks available.

Item 2

Question (a)(i): *sono andata a casa della mia migliore amica* — 'I went to my best friend's house'. Some candidates were unable to translate *migliore* and were unable to gain the mark.

Question (a)(ii) *Dopo aver mangiato una bella cena in casa le ho dato il suo regalo di Natale* — 'She had a nice meal/dinner and she gave her her Christmas present'.

Assignment–writing

Overall, the candidates completed the assignment–writing with a high degree of accuracy and detailed language appropriate to National 5.

Candidates who achieved less than 12 marks wrote lists, and the language resource was weak for the level. The marking team noted that this was particularly true where candidates chose to write about their school, and did not go beyond basic structures in order to demonstrate a strong knowledge and understanding of the language.

Performance–talking

In the sample verified, candidates generally prepared well for this assessment and most gained high marks.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates should be encouraged to leave time to check over their answers and ensure that their answers in English are clear and make sense. Candidates risk losing marks for poor expression if the markers cannot understand their response. Candidates should prepare for some false friends throughout the text. A list of the most common words and phrases would be advantageous in preparation for this task.

Question paper 1: Writing

Centres should continue to encourage candidates to attempt all six bullet points in order to access the full range of marks available. When using learned material for the first four bullet points, candidates should check spelling carefully and ensure basic information, for example age and numbers is accurate.

If candidates are writing that they are fluent in the language they should ensure that the Italian is accurate for this phrase. Overall, centres are preparing candidates well for this assessment.

Question paper 2: Listening

Listening continues to be an area which candidates find most challenging. Centres might consider emphasising strategies to overcome this, for example note-taking in the modern language or phonetic equivalents to allow candidates to review the information.

Cognates are used frequently in the listening question paper, and centres should continue to prepare the candidates to understand these in unfamiliar contexts and expressions.

Numbers and dates continue to pose difficulty to some candidates and are common in listening questions.

At National 5, candidates are expected to answer in detail, including qualifiers.

Assignment–writing

Candidates attempted the assignment–writing very successfully. It is evident that centres have prepared students well by using improvement codes, and reference materials, to support candidates.

Centres should support candidates in choosing a topic that enables them to produce detailed language with a range of structures, opinions and reasons. Simple listing of nouns should be limited or avoided at National 5.

Performance–talking

The performance–talking assessment task is now well established in centres. Assessors generally ask supportive questions which enable candidates to produce a high level of performance in this element of course assessment.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	286

Number of resulted entries in 2019	217

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	56.7%	56.7%	123	86
B	19.8%	76.5%	43	74
C	12.4%	88.9%	27	62
D	8.3%	97.2%	18	50
No award	2.8%	-	6	-

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.