Course report 2019

Subject	Urdu
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

The question paper performed in line with expectations. Feedback from the marking team and teachers suggested it was comprehensive in terms of coverage, and appropriately demanding. Some questions were accessible to all candidates while others were more challenging.

Question paper 1: Reading

The reading question paper consisted of three texts, equal in difficulty and of equal weight. The three reading texts sampled the contexts of society, culture and employability.

The reading question paper performed as expected, and feedback from markers suggested that it was fair in terms of course coverage, and the level of demand was appropriate to National 5.

Question paper 1: Writing

The writing question paper asked candidates to write an email application for the role of a receptionist in a company that organises holidays. Candidates were required to include information specified in the six bullet points, including the two unpredictable bullet points.

The unpredictable bullet points required candidates to state their language skills so that they can communicate with customers in different languages, and state the knowledge of seven famous historical places of Pakistan and give suggestions to customers. This allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge and access the full range of marks available.

Question paper 2: Listening

The listening monologue and dialogue were based on the context of learning. In item 1, Ryaan talks about learning styles and, in item 2, home schooling. Overall, this paper performed as intended and the marking team found it to be fair and appropriately challenging for the level.

Assignment–writing

Candidates were asked to submit a piece of writing in Urdu, focusing on a context of society, culture or learning. Candidates performed well, with most achieving 16 marks or more.

Candidates prepared well for the assignment and produced some interesting pieces of writing. It gave candidates the chance to write about something they enjoy, that is of their own choice.

Performance–talking

Centres verified for the performance–talking, had used the SQA course assessment task effectively and assessed candidates appropriately.

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 with very few candidates giving no response to questions. Some areas of text 2 proved to be more challenging but overall, candidates gave enough detail to gain the marks available.

Text 1 — context: society (technology)

The majority of candidates coped well with most of the questions in this first text and were able to give enough detail to achieve the marks. Question 1 was answered well.

Text 2 — context: culture (a cultural evening celebration)

Candidates performed very well with the questions in this second text. Questions 2(a), 2(d)(i) and 2(f)(ii) were particularly well answered and candidates provided enough detail to gain the marks available.

Text 3 — context: employability

Overall performance was good for this question.

Question paper 1: Writing

Most candidates had prepared well for the question paper and wrote sentences with good content, accuracy and language resource. Most candidates responded to the first four bullet points well, which may have been practiced during the course. In addition, many candidates attempted both unpredictable bullet points. All candidates attempted this section of the question paper.

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates performed well in the listening question paper, which indicates that the context of learning was a familiar vocabulary area to the majority of candidates. Item 1 included vocabulary from classroom learning and learning styles. Item 2 included vocabulary, for example learning in school and learning at home, comparison, advantages and disadvantages of learning at home and school.

There was evidence from many candidates of techniques used, for example underlining key words in the questions and/or notes at the side. Overall, many candidates knew a lot of the vocabulary covered in both items.

The candidates performed well in questions1(a), (b), (c), 2(a) and (f).

Assignment–writing

The overall presentation of candidates' work was very good. Most candidates had well-structured essays written in paragraphs with a clear beginning and a conclusion.

The majority of assignments had a range of vocabulary, including tenses, and most assignments used longer, detailed sentences, and included a wide range of reasons, ideas and opinions.

Performance–talking

In performances sampled, candidates used detailed and complex language according to the required level, and a variety of tenses with accurate grammar. The interlocutors encouraged candidates to do their best by asking open-ended questions and allowing them enough time to respond.

Overall, candidates performed very well and achieved high marks for the performance–talking.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Many candidates found the reading accessible and were able to gain marks of over 25 to 30. However, some candidates did not provide the appropriate level of detail in their answers and were not able to access the higher marks.

Some candidates found questions 1(a), 2(d)(ii) and 2(c) a little challenging.

Question paper: Writing

The standard of responses for the writing question paper were very good, and all markers commented favourably on the responses and how many candidates had answered this question.

Most candidates tried to include a range of detailed vocabulary and structures appropriate to National 5. In terms of content and language resource, many candidates appeared to be comfortable with what is required of the writing question paper. On the other hand, accuracy rather than content, is still the main challenge for some candidates.

A small number of candidates did not write anything for bullet points five and six.

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates performed well in the listening question paper and provided the appropriate level of accuracy in translation required with most candidates accessing the marks. The topic area was accessible for most candidates. Most candidates attempted to answer the questions but some candidates found question 2(b) challenging and could not answer it fully but overall performance was good.

Assignment–writing

Some candidates did not write on a particular topic for their assignments. In terms of the topics addressed, markers noted that some tended to lend themselves to basic language, which did not reflect the level of detailed language required for National 5. For example, the topic of my holidays proved to be, for some candidates, a topic which may not lend itself to

enough variety in language resource, or enough range of reasons/opinions/ideas. In some other assignments, candidates addressing the topic of my school or hobby tended to go off this topic and discuss other areas.

Performance-talking

Some centres presented candidates which were either not ready for the required level or not fully prepared and struggled to perform well. There were several grammar errors and the performances lacked depth and complex language appropriate to the level.

It appeared that some of the candidates repeated themselves for the sake of gaining time and presented the topic where it was not a requirement anymore.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

The advice for both the reading and listening question papers, is that candidates should read questions carefully, respond giving the correct amount of information, and ensure that enough detail is given.

Candidates should be familiar with the approach behind these, for example where detail is required, they need this to access the full range of marks. Candidates practice questions using past papers which can be accessed from SQA's website.

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates should be familiar with and recognise the structures, grammar and detailed language appropriate for this level. It is also important to ensure that candidates know how to make use of their dictionary and to take care when they use words while translating.

Question paper 1: Writing

The overall performance in this part of the course assessment shows that candidates were very well prepared by centres. Candidates should develop ways of addressing the first four bullet points, which allow them to use a range of vocabulary and structures, as well as applying knowledge of verbs, persons of verbs and tenses.

Candidates should be able to provide at least one accurate sentence for each of the two unpredictable bullet points, so centres are strongly encouraged to allow candidates to practice manipulating the language in a wide range of unfamiliar bullet points.

Question paper 2: Listening

In the listening question paper, candidates should be familiar with a range of basic vocabulary from the four broad contexts of society, learning, employability and culture. As well as knowledge of words and phrases, they should also know and understand a range of tenses and verb forms. Attention to detail is also key, and centres should ensure candidates are familiar with the different meanings for certain words.

Assignment–writing

Candidates should aim to have a strong focus on one of the contexts and a topic; they should ensure they include a range of ideas, opinions and reasons.

Candidates should also ensure there is a clear introduction and conclusion to their assignment, which should also include a range of verbs, verb forms and some tenses to show markers their ability to use language resource and variety.

The assignment should be structured in paragraphs and the title should clearly relate to the content of the overall piece of work.

Performance–talking

Candidates are required to choose two different topics from two different themes; one for the presentation and a second topic for the follow-on discussion. It was noted that some centres allowed candidates to discuss the same topic as the one presented, consequently there was hardly any time left to discuss the second topic. Likewise, candidates had to repeat themselves if the same topic was carried on for the follow-on discussion.

Centers are required to submit only one audio file for each candidate.

The marking instructions details acceptable answers and the level of detail required to gain full marks at National 5.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	45

Number of resulted entries in 2019	74

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	86.5%	86.5%	64	86
B	10.8%	97.3%	8	74
C	1.4%	98.6%	1	62
D	1.4%	100.0%	1	50
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

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.