Course report 2022

Subject	German
Level	Advanced Higher

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 appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	110

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	[c]	Number of candidates	65	Minimum mark required	136
B	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	[c]	Number of candidates	25	Minimum mark required	116
C	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	[c]	Number of candidates	10	Minimum mark required	96
D	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	[c]	Number of candidates	5	Minimum mark required	76
No award	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	[c]	Minimum mark required	N/A

All figures are rounded to the nearest five. Figures between one and four inclusive have been suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosure of personal information. All percentage figures for a course have been suppressed where values between one and four inclusive have been suppressed. Cells containing suppressed figures are marked up with the shorthand [c].

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

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 page of SQA's website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper: Reading and Translation

The question paper performed as expected. The paper was fair in terms of course coverage and overall level of demand. The topic of media coverage both in this country and in Germany was current and relevant to the lives of the candidates.

The translation proved to be challenging to some candidates, with the reduced learning and teaching time over the last two years contributing to this. This was taken into account when setting the grade boundaries.

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

The question paper performed in line with expectations. The marking team agreed that the paper was fair in terms of course coverage and level of demand. The topic was current and one that candidates could identify with as part of their own lives, and within the learning and teaching at this level.

Portfolio

The level of candidate performance in this component was very positive, especially given the absence of the Portfolio and its subsequent reinstatement. There were no examples of language in work portfolios.

Performance–talking

The reduction in time this year appeared to have no detrimental effect on candidates, and not having to discuss their portfolio may have benefitted some. The performance–talking performed as expected.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper: Reading and Translation

Candidates found the text accessible and attempted the questions well. Only a very small number of candidates did not attempt all questions. Some candidates did not pay enough attention to line references and looked for the answers in wrong areas of the text.

Slight improvements in translation work noted up until 2019 were not seen this year. The translation was an area where some candidates faced challenges.

There were two main areas candidates found demanding:

♦ precision in understanding German, for example singular and/or plural
♦ lack of precision in their own language, rendering the translations inaccurate

A small number of candidates still choose to tackle the overall purpose question and/or translation question before attempting all the other questions. This strategy is often disadvantageous to candidates.

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

The listening topic was one which was familiar to candidates, perhaps so familiar that some attempted to give answers from their own knowledge rather than from listening to the content of the text.

In discursive writing, question 3 (society) was the most popular choice, but performance across all four contexts was similar.

The marking team noted a significant decline in the presentation of candidates' work and handwriting skills.

Portfolio

It was very encouraging to note the increasing number of more modern literary texts selected. However, there is always a place for the more traditional and well used pieces of literature.

Irrespective of the text chosen, the majority of candidates displayed their knowledge of, and engagement with the chosen text.

It was encouraging to find all portfolios contained a bibliography.

Performance–talking

Most candidates were well-prepared and gave confident performances. They were able to talk about the topics noted in the STL (Subject Topic List).

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper: Reading and Translation

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ adhere to all line references given: these help and guide candidates through the text

♦ give as precise answers as possible

♦ tackle the questions in the given order and not attempt questions 7 and 8 before completing questions 1–6. If the candidate works through the questions, that should provide a deeper understanding of the text and a stronger foundation for answering the overall purpose question and completing the translation

♦ avoid rewriting large parts of the text, or merely translating large parts of the text as a response to question 7. There is nothing to be gained by rewriting numerous lines from the text as a quotation. The inclusion of a short phrase or single word to demonstrate a point being made is acceptable and valid

♦ see translation practice as an exercise in accuracy and precision throughout the year

♦ always remember the basic premise: the text makes sense in the original language and it must also do so in their translation

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ pay particular attention to any numbers, dates, times and years, and listen out for any comparatives or superlatives, as these are likely to be assessed

♦ are aware of the importance of relevance and accuracy in their discursive writing

♦ practise planning essays and, under pressure of time, concentrate on the grammatical accuracy of the language

♦ practise and develop these skills throughout the year

Portfolio

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ are aware that the title is crucial, and that they each have support to ensure they are committed to delivering the best portfolio possible

♦ discuss with them the literature text selected for study, and ensure that the text chosen is not an immediate barrier. Teachers and lecturers will need to look carefully at the literature text each candidate selects

♦ are fully aware there is no need to translate any quotes they include in their essays. Translated quotes might lead markers to think the text has been read in translation only

♦ complete a flyleaf accurately, with all requested information and a bibliography, as outlined in SQA guidelines

♦ follow SQA guidelines to have the best opportunity to produce their best piece of work

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ prepare for the visiting assessor throughout the session

♦ have preferred areas for discussion and be able to cover all areas of the STL form

♦ are aware they cannot look at the performance–talking as an exercise in reciting learned material. The visiting assessor will interrupt at an appropriate moment and seek to have a meaningful conversation

Appendix 1: 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 including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in very different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

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 2022. 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 revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 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 2022 Awarding — Methodology Report.