



Course report 2022

Subject	Gaelic (Learners)
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 appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	135
------------------------------------	-----

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	80
B	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	[c]	Number of candidates	20	Minimum mark required	65
C	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	[c]	Number of candidates	25	Minimum mark required	50
D	Percentage	[c]	Cumulative percentage	[c]	Number of candidates	25	Minimum mark required	35
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

The course assessment components performed less well than expected. Given the disruption of the last few years, it was clear from candidates' responses that the lack of face-to-face learning and teaching opportunities had impacted their skills across all three elements of the external assessment, and the grade boundary was adjusted accordingly.

There was a range of candidate performances in all components, and it was evident that there was a lack of assessment practice across the elements. In 2022, there was an increase in the number of candidates, which is encouraging. A small percentage achieved no award which would suggest these candidates were presented at the wrong level.

Question paper 1: Reading

The three reading texts were based on the contexts of society (pocket money), culture (a new TV programme) and employability (role in a media company). There was a supported question in each text. There was optionality in questions 1(c), 2(d) and 2(e).

Text 1 and 2 were about topics that most candidates could relate to as they are relevant topics in the lives of many candidates. Text 3 was an employability context. This context is covered extensively in centres as it forms the basis of the writing component of the course.

Question paper 1: Writing

The writing question paper mostly performed as expected. The advert was for a job as a Gaelic development officer. The unpredictable bullet points asked candidates to discuss their experience of working with young people and the after-school clubs they could be involved in. These have both appeared in previous question papers.

Candidates who achieved high marks coped well with both unpredictable bullet points and had a high degree of accuracy and variety of language in the set bullet points.

Question paper 2: Listening

The listening question paper was based on the context on learning. Candidates cover this context routinely in centres, therefore the listening texts contained language that was accessible and found in previous question papers at this level.

The monologue was about a personal experience of going to school in Finland. The conversation was a report about the education system in South Korea. There were two supported questions. There was optionality in questions 1(c), 1(d), 1(f) and 2(d). A 3-mark question, 2(f)(i), with no options, was included for the first time at this level.

The paper performed below expectations. Feedback from the marking team indicated that the paper was appropriately demanding with some questions accessible to most candidates, while others were more challenging. There was also good signposting towards the correct answers throughout. However, the pandemic has had a big impact on this component and, as traditionally the weaker element of the three externally assessed components, a lack of consistent exposure to spoken language was evident from candidates' responses.

Assignment–writing

The requirement to complete the assignment–writing was removed for session 2021–22.

Performance–talking

The performance–talking performed as expected. At National 5, candidates carry out a spoken presentation and take part in a conversation directly afterwards. Candidates performed well in this task, as is usually the case.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas the candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates performed well in the following:

- ◆ question 1(c): any two from a possible six answers required
- ◆ questions 2(b)(i) and (ii): time related answers
- ◆ question 2(c): supported question
- ◆ question 2(e): any one from a possible two answers required

Question paper 1: Writing

Most candidates coped well with the bullet points about personal information and school.

The unpredictable bullet point about after-school activities was tackled well by the majority of candidates as they talked about hobbies and interests. There were several extremely good answers that used language more consistent with Higher level.

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates performed well in the following:

- ◆ question 1(a): supported question
- ◆ question 1(b): activity related question
- ◆ question 1(f): any one from a possible two answers required
- ◆ question 2(c): one word answer
- ◆ question 2(d): any two from a possible three answers required
- ◆ question 2(f)(ii): supported question

Performance–talking

Candidates had selected topics which gave them the opportunity to demonstrate a good range of language resource as appropriate to the level.

Areas the candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates found the following areas challenging:

- ◆ 1(a): don't have a 'lot/much' free time
- ◆ 2(a): *deireadh-sheachdain* proved challenging for some candidates
- ◆ 2(d): there were a few instances of poor dictionary use and difficulties writing the answer in correct English. The word *ùr* (new) was also missed

- ◆ 3(a): *an-uiridh* (last year) was missed by some candidates. The meaning of *ceum* (degree) was also missed by some candidates
- ◆ 3(d)(i): be a journalist on/in front of the camera/TV — candidates missed the two elements of this answer
- ◆ there was evidence to suggest that some candidates struggled with timing

Question paper 1: Writing

Candidates found the following areas challenging:

- ◆ there were some candidates that provided unnecessary information describing their home area
- ◆ there was a higher number of candidates coping less well with the predictable bullet point about work experience, with a particular lack of verbs in the past tense
- ◆ there was evidence to suggest that some candidates struggled with timing

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates found the following areas challenging:

- ◆ 1(d): some candidates missed the qualifiers in these options and also the negative *cha* at the start of three of the potential answers
- ◆ 1(e): there was a good lead into this question, which asked how many languages children can learn in schools (*sgoiltean*) and at special clubs (*clubaichean*). The answer was 'about 50 languages'. Candidates who did get the number 50 missed the 'about'. Most candidates focused on the next line of text, which said what languages the speaker personally spoke and used that number
- ◆ 2(a): candidates missed the *deug* in the answer *còig bliadhna deug air ais*. Some candidates confused the number with the age of the speaker, saying when they were 15 years old rather than 15 years ago
- ◆ 2(f): many candidates missed the negative aspect of these answers

Performance—talking

In some performances, errors in pronunciation and intonation detracted from the overall accuracy of the performance.

Some candidates found the conversation more demanding as it is less predictable and involves a series of questions.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Teacher and lecturers should ensure that candidates are presented appropriately. Internally assessed National 5 unit assessments are worth more points than a National 4 award.

Teachers and lecturers should consider this for candidates that are working at National 5 level but may not be capable of performing well in the final externally assessed components.

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ practice reading the key words in the questions as signposts for where the answers are in the passages
- ◆ are familiar with qualifiers, for example in this year's question paper the following appeared and were required for answers: *glè, caran, cho, mòran, a h-uile, uabhasach, tòrr*
- ◆ practise their dictionary skills so that they can use this resource to their advantage. For example when looking up a word remove any *h* as the second letter. If there are several options of meanings, then candidates should choose the one that best fits the context of the reading passage
- ◆ read texts to practise their skills on a wide range of grammatical structures and vocabulary appropriate to the level
- ◆ learn common context vocabulary and grammatical structures as this will save time in the exam. Vocabulary, for example time and directional words can appear in any context
- ◆ practise the reading question paper in conjunction with the writing question paper to replicate the timed conditions of the final course assessment
- ◆ are advised to practise their skills by working their way through the past papers available on [SQA's website](#)

Question paper 1: Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ prepare and practise thoroughly for the predictable bullet points as these do not change from year to year. Candidates **must** use these bullet points as an opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their skills and they should avoid using overly simple sentences
- ◆ leave a gap between their answers to each bullet point to make it clear that they have addressed each element
- ◆ are reminded that all the information provided must be relevant for a job application, for example it is not necessary to provide a description of their home area
- ◆ are strongly encouraged to show a range of structures, tenses, regular and irregular verbs and verb structures where appropriate. Awareness of prepositional pronouns and idiom suitable to the level is also desirable
- ◆ are aware, with regards to the unpredictable bullet points, that they may encounter a bullet point they have not seen in a previous question paper. Remind them that it may be

possible for them to adapt a sentence structure used in the predictable bullet points to tackle the unpredictable bullet points

- ◆ practise the writing question paper in conjunction with reading question paper to replicate the timed conditions of the final course assessment
- ◆ do the writing component first in the exam, followed by the reading

Question paper 2: Listening

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ practice reading the key words in the questions as signposts for what type of answers they will hear in the passages
- ◆ familiarise themselves with common vocabulary and grammar from across the four contexts
- ◆ have regular opportunities to develop their listening skills
- ◆ maximise their exposure to Gaelic by making a concerted effort to hear Gaelic being spoken in their centres, media, and community (if applicable) as this will help to further contextualise common language that could arise in a question paper
- ◆ practise their skills by working their way through the past papers on [SQA's website](#)

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ continue to be guided in their choice of topics for the performance–talking
- ◆ develop their knowledge of grammar and rules of the language, and to use a variety of persons and tenses in the performance, as appropriate
- ◆ use detailed language in the performance–talking
- ◆ have strategies in the conversation section of the performance, for asking for questions to be repeated, or language structures and set phrases to use when they have not understood and are seeking clarification

Teachers and lecturers can refer to the productive grammar grid in the appendix of the National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification, and to Understanding Standards exemplars of National 5 performances available on SQA's secure website.

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](#).