SQA

Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course/Unit Support Notes

Contents

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units.

These support notes cover both the Advanced Higher Course and the Units in it.

The Advanced Higher Course/Unit Support Notes should be read in conjunction with the relevant:

Mandatory Information:
♦ Course Specification
♦ Course Assessment Specification
♦ Unit Specifications

Assessment Support:
♦ Specimen and Exemplar Question Papers and Marking Instructions
♦ Exemplar Question Paper Guidance
♦ Guidance on the use of past paper questions
♦ Coursework Information:
  — General assessment information
  — Coursework Assessment Task*
♦ Unit Assessment Support*

*These documents are for assessors and are confidential. Assessors may access these through the SQA Co-ordinator in their centres.

Related information

Advanced Higher Course Comparison

Further information on the Course/Units for Advanced Higher Gàidhlig
This information begins on page 12, and both teachers and learners may find it helpful.

General guidance on the Course/Units

Aims

The Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course aims to enable learners to:

♦ develop the ability to express and communicate meaning at a high level of sophistication
♦ develop the ability to communicate in writing at a high level of sophistication with respect to audience, context and purpose
♦ deepen awareness of language and how it works, taking account of style, grammar, structure and idiom, and local or regional influences on language
♦ develop the ability to analyse and evaluate texts from different genres
♦ develop awareness of translating from written English to written Gaelic
♦ develop awareness of interpreting from spoken Gaelic to written or spoken English
♦ interact with an individual or group on Gaelic-related issues and engage in individual and group study of topics of a historical or cultural nature
♦ apply higher-order thinking
♦ develop advanced critical literacy
♦ learn independently
♦ plan and research, integrating and applying language skills, for a range of purposes including independent study

Learners will apply knowledge and understanding of complex and sophisticated language in a wide range of contexts and use creative and critical thinking to synthesise ideas and arguments. The Course also develops high levels of analytical thinking and understanding of the impact of language.

The Course enables learners to become more effective communicators and increasingly independent critical thinkers, to develop greater cultural awareness, and to be more confident in their creativity.

Progression

Learners who have achieved this Advanced Higher Course may progress to further study, employment and/or training. Opportunities for progression:

♦ Progression to further/higher education
  — For many learners a key transition point will be to further or higher education, for example to Higher National Certificates (HNCs) / Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) or degree programmes. Examples of further and higher education programmes that learners might progress to are: degree-level subject study of Gaelic and related subject studies such as literature, education and journalism.

- — Further education, including courses in media and journalism.
- — National Certificates.
- — Employment in careers that require high levels of communication and thinking skills.
- — Advanced Higher Courses provide good preparation for learners progressing to further and higher education as learners must be able to work with more independence and less supervision. This eases their transition to further/higher education.
- — Advanced Higher Courses may also allow 'advanced standing' or partial credit towards the first year of study of a degree programme.
- ♦ Advanced Higher Courses are challenging and testing qualifications — learners who have achieved multiple Advanced Higher Courses are regarded as having a proven level of ability that attests to their readiness for higher education in HEIs in other parts of the UK as well as in Scotland.
- ♦ Progression to employment
  - — For many learners, progression will be directly to employment or work-based training programmes. Examples of employment opportunities and training programmes are education, media, journalism, publishing.

This Advanced Higher is part of the Scottish Baccalaureate in Languages. The Scottish Baccalaureates in Expressive Arts, Languages, Science and Social Sciences consist of coherent groups of subjects at Higher and Advanced Higher level. Each award consists of two Advanced Highers, one Higher and an Interdisciplinary Project that adds breadth and value and helps learners to develop generic skills, attitudes and confidence that will help them make the transition into higher education or employment.

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

Teachers and lecturers should refer to the *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The development of subject-specific and generic skills is central to the Course. Learners should be made aware of the skills they are developing and of the transferability of them. It is the transferability that will help learners with further study and enhance their personal effectiveness.

The skills, knowledge and understanding that will be developed in the Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course are:

- ♦ listening, talking, reading and writing skills, as appropriate to purpose and audience in a wide range of contexts
- ♦ skills in understanding, analysing and evaluating a wide range of complex and sophisticated literary texts, as appropriate to purpose and audience

- ♦ skills in creating and producing a wide range of complex and sophisticated texts
- ♦ translating skills from written English to written Gaelic and from spoken Gaelic to spoken or written English
- ♦ applying higher-order thinking skills
- ♦ applying literary research and investigative skills
- ♦ developing knowledge of Gaelic language, literature and culture

Skills, knowledge and understanding to be included in the Course will be appropriate to the SCQF level of the Course. The SCQF level descriptors give further information on characteristics and expected performance at each SCQF level (www.sqa.org.uk/scqf).

Approaches to learning and teaching

At Advanced Higher, learners will further develop the ability to work independently. Teachers and lecturers should encourage learners to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning. Learners should also be given the opportunity to practise and develop research skills and evaluation and analytical skills. Some of the approaches to teaching and learning suggested for other levels (in particular Higher) may also apply at Advanced Higher level.

Teachers and lecturers should encourage learners to use an enquiring, critical and problem-solving approach to their learning. Learners should also be given the opportunity to practise and develop research and investigation skills and higher-order evaluation and analytical skills. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) can make a significant contribution to the development of these higher-order skills as research and investigation activities become more sophisticated.

Learners should engage in a variety of learning activities as appropriate to the subject, for example:

- researching information for their subject rather than receiving information from their teacher or lecturer
- using active and open-ended learning activities such as research and presentation tasks
- making use of the internet to gather information and draw conclusions about specific issues
- engaging in wide-ranging independent reading
- recording in a systematic way the results of research and independent investigation from different sources
- presenting findings/conclusions of research and investigation activities in a presentation
- participating in group work with peers and using collaborative learning opportunities to develop team working
- participating in informed debate and discussion with peers where they can demonstrate skills in constructing and sustaining lines of argument to provide challenge and enjoyment, breadth, and depth to learning
- drawing conclusions from complex information
- using complex and sophisticated written and/or oral communication and presentation skills to present information
- using appropriate technological resources (eg web-based resources)
- using appropriate media resources (eg video clips)
- demonstrating development, improvement and refinement of techniques and practices
- using real-life contexts and experiences familiar and relevant to young people to hone and exemplify skills, knowledge and understanding meaningfully

♦ participating in field trips and visits

Teachers and lecturers should support learners by having regular discussions with them and giving regular feedback. Some learning and teaching activities may be carried out on a group basis and, where this applies, learners could also receive feedback from their peers.

Teachers and lecturers should, where possible, provide opportunities to personalise learning, and enable learners to have choices in approaches to learning and teaching. The flexibility in Advanced Higher Courses and the independence with which learners carry out the work lend themselves to this. Teachers and lecturers should also create opportunities for, and use, inclusive approaches to learning and teaching. This can be achieved by encouraging the use of a variety of learning and teaching strategies which suit the needs of all learners.

Centres are free to sequence the teaching of the Outcomes, Units and/or Course in any order they wish.

Developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

The following skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work should be developed in this Course.

Teacher and lectures should ensure that learners have opportunities to develop these skills as an integral part of their learning experience.

It is important that learners are aware of the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that they are developing in the course, and the activities they are involved in that provide realistic opportunities to practice and/or improve them.

Reading
This may be usefully developed by activities that:

♦ involve fiction and non-fiction texts
♦ use discussion to help learners engage with texts and identify and explore the ideas and themes in texts, and analyse and evaluate the language used

Activities to support learners in identifying and exploring the ideas and themes in texts and in analysing and evaluating the language used include:

♦ asking and answering questions
♦ comparing and contrasting texts, both within and across genres
♦ commenting on language features
♦ summarising, clarifying and predicting
♦ text completion

♦ focusing on the audience and purpose of texts

Writing
Learners may be encouraged to plan their writing by:

♦ creating diagrammatic responses
♦ peer discussion where they consider the genre, audience and purpose for their writing

Learners' writing will benefit from:

♦ discussing structure and layout
♦ building up sentences, by linking
♦ planning paragraphs
♦ use of topic and concluding sentences
♦ developing vocabulary
♦ developing technical skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling
♦ using plans for writing
♦ creating Gaelic versions of texts related to their Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture
♦ comparing and contrasting texts that have already been translated

Listening and talking
Wherever appropriate, learners should be encouraged to use language skills in real language situations. In such situations, particularly those drawn from life and work, activities can involve:

♦ asking and answering questions
♦ listening for and making comparisons/contrasts
♦ summarising, clarifying and predicting
♦ note-taking
♦ subtitling broadcasts or comparing and contrasting broadcasts which have already been subtitled
♦ summarising speeches

Personal learning
The Course, and in particular the *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit, will provide extensive opportunities for learners to undertake individually-led work including researching/investigating, producing written work, reflecting on what they have learned, revising etc.

Applying
Learners should be encouraged to apply the above skills to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of language and literature.

Strategies might include:

- the application of such literary terms as genre, form, structure, stance, tone, mood, voice, persona to a wide variety of texts
- practice in exploring the relationships between text and context using appropriate literary theory

Analysing and evaluating

Learners should be encouraged to make the skills of analysing and evaluating part of their everyday repertoire.

Activities might include:

- tutorial type discussion on the effectiveness of different types of writing
- comparative exercises on the development of their own writing
- analysing and evaluating data collected as part of the *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit

Creating

Learners should be encouraged to study the range of strategies used by writers to create meaning, and to aspire to this creativity in their own writing.

Approaches to assessment

There are different approaches to assessment, and teachers and lecturers should use their professional judgement, subject knowledge and experience, as well as their understanding of their learners and their varying needs, to determine the most appropriate ones and, where necessary, to consider workable alternatives.

Unit assessment support packs

Information about Unit assessment is found within the Unit Specifications and Unit assessment support packs.

The purpose of Unit assessment is to ensure that learners have achieved at least the minimum level of competence in the skills, knowledge and understanding required in Advanced Higher Gàidhlig.

Teachers and lecturers preparing assessment methods should be clear about what that evidence will look like.

Flexibility in the method of assessment provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate competence in a variety of ways and so reduce barriers to attainment.

Teachers and lecturers should note that learners' day-to-day work may produce evidence that satisfies assessment requirements of a Unit, or Units, either in full or partially.

Course assessment

Information about Course assessment is found in the Course Assessment Specification, the Specimen Question Paper, the Coursework Information (Task and General).

The purpose of Course assessment is to assess the added value of challenge and application, through the question paper and the Performance (talking). In the question paper learners will apply their skills, knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content. The performance (talking) will assess the challenge of applying skills of talking in Gaelic about issues in general and also about the findings of the learner's *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit.

Each Course has additional time that may be used at the discretion of the teacher or lecturer to enable learners to prepare for Course assessment. This time may be used near the start of the Course and at various points throughout the Course for consolidation and support. It may also be used for preparation for

Unit assessment, and, towards the end of the Course, for further integration, revision and preparation and/or gathering evidence for Course assessment.

Examples of activities which may help learners prepare for course assessment could include:

♦ selecting topics, gathering and researching information, evaluating and analysing findings, developing and justifying conclusions, presenting the information
♦ reviewing Specimen/Exemplar question papers and/or Coursework documents
♦ practising question paper techniques, revising for the question paper
♦ clarifying requirements of the performance and the amount and nature of the support that can be expected

Authenticity

Teachers/lecturers are responsible for ensuring that evidence presented by learners for Course or Unit assessment is the learner's own work.

There are a number of techniques and strategies for ensuring that learners present work that is their own. Teachers and lecturers should put in place mechanisms to authenticate learner evidence.

For example:

♦ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with learners
♦ short personal interviews
♦ checklists which record activity/progress
♦ learner notes from their independent reading

Group work approaches are acceptable as part of learning and teaching, including preparation for assessment.

For more information, please refer to SQA's *Guide to Assessment*.

Equality and inclusion

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course/Unit Support Notes* is designed to sit alongside these duties but is specific to the delivery and assessment of the Course.

It is important that centres are aware of and understand SQA's assessment arrangements for disabled learners, and those with additional support needs, when making requests for adjustments to published assessment arrangements. Centres will find more guidance on this in the series of publications on Assessment Arrangements on SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

Further Information on Course/Units

Course assessment

Information given in the *Course Specification* and the *Course Assessment Specification* about the assessment of added value is mandatory.

In Advanced Higher Courses, added value involves the assessment of higher-order skills such as high-level and more sophisticated investigation and research skills, critical thinking skills and skills of analysis and synthesis. Learners may be required to analyse and reflect on their assessment activity by commenting on it and/or drawing conclusions with commentary/justification. These skills contribute to the uniqueness of Advanced Higher Courses and to the overall higher level of performance expected at this level.

The Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course assessment will consist of three Components.

Component 1 — question paper 1
This question paper has one section titled 'Practical Criticism', which will have 30 marks.

Marks will be awarded for applying reading skills in understanding, analysis and evaluation to two unseen texts, one fiction and one non-fiction. Assessment will involve answering questions to show the ability to apply critical reading skills and to apply knowledge and understanding of appropriate literary context, forms, genres and culture.

Component 2 — question paper 2
This question paper has two Sections.

Section one, titled 'Literature', will have 20 marks.

Marks will be awarded for applying reading and writing skills of critical analysis and evaluation of literary texts studied as part of the Course. Assessment will involve writing an essay on one aspect of the text(s) studied, from drama, prose or poetry.

Section two, titled 'Writing' will have 20 marks.

Marks will be awarded for applying writing skills and knowledge of the language in producing one essay which can be discursive, informative, creative, reflective, etc.

Component 3 — performance: talking
The purpose of this project is to assess learners' application of their talking and listening skills in their chosen topic for the *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit. This Component will have 30 marks.

For this Advanced Higher Course, the assessment methods for Course assessment are **as in the three Components detailed above.** Learners should be given opportunities to practise these methods and prepare for them.

Examples of activities to include within this preparation time include:

♦ Preparing for the Components of Course assessment, for example:
  — preparing for non-question paper components: selecting topics, gathering and researching information, evaluating and analysing findings, developing and justifying conclusions, presenting the information (as appropriate)
  — practising and refining practical criticism skills
  — practising and refining talking skills
  — practising question paper techniques, revising for the question paper

In relation to preparing for the performance, teachers and lecturers should explain requirements to learners and the amount and nature of the support they can expect. However, at Advanced Higher level it is expected that learners will work with more independence and less support.

Unit assessment

Centres are free to sequence the teaching of the Outcomes, Units and/or Course in any order they wish.

Approaches to producing complex and sophisticated written texts
Learners should:

♦ experience many different genres including fiction and non-fiction, and should be encouraged to read with discernment
♦ develop independent, analytical evaluation skills by discussing the connotations of the words that convey a relationship with the reader/listener
♦ meet professional writers where possible

Approaches to literature
Learners should:

♦ encounter a wide variety of literature and be encouraged to respond individually
♦ explore areas of personal interest and share these with their peers and assessor

- learn about a range of genre features through both critical and imaginative exercises that allow them to analyse, evaluate and demonstrate a grasp of relevant literary forms
- work independently and collaboratively to create learning materials which involve reading and critical analysis of a literary text and enable further extended critical response
- take part in tutorial-type activities to prepare them for further education or employment

Approaches to interpreting and translating
Learners should:

- explore a wide variety of types of written and spoken texts (discursive, functional, informative, persuasive, etc), identifying the significance of audience and purpose and developing the techniques required to maintain the tenor of the original text in the target language
- examine written texts that have already been translated and evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of these translations
- compare spoken Gaelic texts with spoken and/or written versions (eg subtitled media texts), analysing the techniques used and evaluating the effectiveness in the target language

Suggestions for personalisation and choice

The Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course offers many opportunities for personalisation and choice. Some examples include:

- learners choosing contexts and topics for the Units, especially the *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit
- learners given choices in day-to-day delivery of the Course where appropriate, for example choosing to respond orally or in writing
- individual feedback to learners
- learners creating their own learning targets/plans for their language learning
- providing differentiated materials and approaches
- practitioners selecting the most appropriate assessment methods, taking into account individual needs of learners

During their study of Gàidhlig, learners should be given the opportunity to:

- enhance their communication skills through the consistent development of the skills of listening, talking, reading and writing and interpreting and translating from Gaelic to English and English to Gaelic
- develop a knowledge of the structures of Gaelic
- develop generic skills such as working with others, research skills, skills in presenting information and IT skills

Where resources permit, technology can support learning, teaching and assessment. For the Advanced Higher Gàidhlig Course, this could include:

♦ compiling and maintaining e-portfolios
♦ web-based research, for example as part of the *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit
♦ listening and responding to and/or creating podcasts
♦ using online forums for discussion
♦ using virtual learning environments
♦ video conferencing
♦ use of Gaelic online facilities and archives
♦ submission of assessed work through VLE/e-mail
♦ using social media
♦ using media such as television, radio and websites, in Gaelic

Assessment approaches should aim to help learners to progress through the Course at their own pace and to enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways. Teachers and lecturers should explore opportunities in the day-to-day delivery of the Units in the Course to observe learners providing evidence which satisfies, completely or partially, a Unit or Units. This is naturally occurring evidence.

Suggestions for the combination and sequencing of Units

The Gàidhlig Advanced Higher Course contains Outcomes that can be delivered and assessed in a variety of ways. The four skills of reading and writing, interpreting and translating should be taught in a combined way and the amount of time spent on each will depend on the needs of the learners and prior skills, knowledge and understanding. In addition to this, the skills of research and analysis developed in the *Specialist Study of Language and/or Culture* Unit could be combined with activities undertaken in the *Writing and Literary Criticism Skills* and the *Interpreting and Translating Skills* Units.

Timing and sequencing of the delivery and assessment of the Units is at the discretion of the centre. The Units should be combined in terms of delivery to ensure all four skills are developed and practised in the most appropriate way, but in terms of assessment, while it may reduce the burden, it is not necessary that the skills be combined. This approach can help to provide more time for learning and teaching, emphasise the transferability and combination of skills and at the same time avoid duplication of assessment.

Possible combined approaches to Unit assessment include:

♦ a writing task based on the learner's Specialist Study
♦ a critical review of an unseen text as a way of assessing both writing

and critical reading at the same time

♦ translating a text into Gaelic as part of the research process for the Specialist Study
♦ interpreting spoken Gaelic into English as part of the research process for the Specialist Study

Note that in all of the examples above, teachers and lecturers need to be clear which outcomes from which unit(s) are being assessed in a combined activity. For instance, it is possible that a learner's writing skills in a combined assessment critical review may well meet the minimum competence required for the writing outcome in terms of style and accuracy, but not the literary criticism outcome in terms of depth or accuracy of analysis and evaluation, or vice versa.

Suggestions for gathering evidence for Unit assessment

Assessments must ensure that the evidence generated demonstrates, at the least, the minimum level of competence for each Unit. Teachers and lecturers preparing assessment methods should be clear about what that evidence will look like.

Sources of evidence likely to be suitable for Advanced Higher Units could include:

♦ meaningful contribution to group work and/or discussions (making use of blogs, question and answer sessions to confirm individual learners have met the required standards)
♦ presentation of information to other groups and/or recorded oral evidence
♦ short written answers to restricted response questions
♦ extended responses to essay-type questions or tasks

Flexibility in the method of assessment provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate attainment in a variety of ways and so reduce barriers to attainment.

The structure of an assessment used by a centre can take a variety of forms, for example:

♦ individual pieces of work could be collected in a portfolio as evidence for Outcomes and Assessment Standards
♦ assessment of each complete Outcome
♦ assessment that combines the Outcomes of one or more Units
♦ assessment that requires more than the minimum competence, which would allow learners to prepare for the Course assessment

Teachers and lecturers should note that learners' day-to-day work may produce evidence which satisfies assessment requirements of a Unit, or Units, either in full or partially. Such naturally-occurring evidence may be used as a contribution towards Unit assessment. However, such naturally occurring evidence must still

be conducted under appropriate conditions, recorded and evidence such as written reports, recording forms, PowerPoint slides, video footage or observational checklists provided.

Assessment approaches should aim to help learners to progress through the Units at their own pace, and to enable them to demonstrate their achievements in a range of ways, including naturally occurring evidence.

Appendix 1: Reference documents

The following reference documents will provide useful information and background.

♦ Assessment Arrangements (for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs) — various publications are available on SQA's website at: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa//14977.html.
♦ Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work
♦ Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment
♦ Course Specification
♦ Design Principles for National Courses
♦ *Guide to Assessment*
♦ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
♦ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* and SCQF level descriptors
♦ *SQA Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*
♦ *Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work: Using the Curriculum Tool*
♦ *Coursework Authenticity: A Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*

Administrative information

Published: May 2015 (version 2.0)

History of changes to Advanced Higher Course/Unit Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
	2.0	Clarifications throughout to ensure consistency and alignment with other Course and assessment documents.	Qualifications Development Manager	May 2015