Course Support Notes

SQA

Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course Support Notes

Contents

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the Course and its Units. They should be read in conjunction with the Higher Gaelic (Learners) *Course Specification*, the Higher Gaelic (Learners) *Course Assessment Specification* and the Unit Specifications for the Units in the Course.

General guidance on the Course

Aims

The main purpose of the Course is to develop the skills of listening and talking, reading and writing in order to understand and use Gaelic.

The Course offers learners opportunities to develop and extend a wide range of skills. In particular, the Course aims to enable learners to develop the ability to:

♦ listen and talk, read and write in Gaelic
♦ understand and use Gaelic
♦ develop the language skills of translation
♦ apply knowledge and understanding of Gaelic
♦ apply knowledge of Gaelic literature

The Course contributes towards the development of literacy skills by providing learners with opportunities to listen, talk, read and write in Gaelic, and to reflect on how this relates to English.

Progression into this Course

Entry to this Course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

♦ National 5 Gaelic (Learners) Course or relevant component Units
♦ prior learning

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Course

This section provides further advice and guidance about skills, knowledge and understanding that could be included in the Course.

Note: teachers and lecturers should refer to the Higher Gaelic *Course Assessment Specification* for mandatory information about the skills, knowledge and understanding to be covered in this Course.

The Course enables learners to communicate, be critical thinkers, develop cultural awareness and be creative. The following summarises the skills, knowledge and understanding from the mandatory content of the Course:

♦ reading, listening, talking and writing skills in Gaelic in the contexts of society, learning, employability, and culture
♦ knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language required to understand and use Gaelic
♦ knowledge and understanding required to apply the language skills of translation
♦ applying grammatical knowledge and understanding

♦ knowledge and understanding required to evaluate detailed and complex written Gaelic literary texts

Course assessment evidence will be generated in the following contexts: society, learning, employability and culture. Suggested topics and topic development are contained in the 'Contexts, topics and topic development' Table (Appendix 3).

Progression from this Course

Completion of this Course or any of its component Units may provide progression to:

♦ Advanced Higher Gaelic or any relevant component Units
♦ Modern Languages (Higher) in another language
♦ further study or training
♦ employment

Hierarchies

Hierarchy is the term used to describe Courses and Units which form a structured sequence involving two or more SCQF levels.

It is important that any content in a Course and/or Unit at one particular SCQF level is not repeated if a learner progresses to the next level of the hierarchy. The skills and knowledge should be able to be applied to new content and contexts to enrich the learning experience. This is for centres to manage.

The Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course forms a hierarchy with the Gaelic (Learners) Course (National 4) and the Gaelic (Learners) Course (National 5). The Courses at National 4, National 5 and Higher follow a similar structure in terms of Outcomes and Assessment Standards but differ in the degree of difficulty and complexity from one level to the next. This structure aims to facilitate bi-level teaching and enables learners to gain recognition for their best achievement. Learners may achieve and be certificated for Courses or Units at the level above or below.

Evidence should satisfy the Assessment Standards at the appropriate level. Further information on how this hierarchy can be managed is given in the 'Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment' section below.

National 3	National 4	National 5	Higher
Understanding Language	Understanding Language	Understanding Language	Understanding Language
Using Language	Using Language	Using Language	Using Language
	Added value — assignment	Course assessment	Course assessment

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The purpose of this section is to provide general advice and guidance on approaches to gathering assessment evidence within the Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course.

The Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course will be delivered in a variety of settings, for example school, college or lifelong learning contexts. The advice and guidance in this section covers these sectors and practitioners will use their professional judgement in designing and delivering the Course so that it is appropriate, relevant and motivating for individual learners.

Learning about Scotland and Scottish culture will enrich the learners' learning experience and help them to develop the skills for learning, life and work they will need to prepare them for taking their place in a diverse, inclusive and participative Scotland and beyond. Where there are opportunities to contextualise approaches to learning and teaching to Scottish contexts, teachers and lecturers should consider this.

Evidence for assessment will be generated in the following contexts; society, learning, employability and culture. Centres will choose a variety of topics which are engaging and meaningful for learners. It is particularly important that topics are delivered at an appropriate level and that learners are encouraged to engage with topics in different ways at different levels. Suggested topics and topic development are contained in the Context Table (Appendix 2).

The Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course offers many opportunities for personalisation and choice. Some examples include:

♦ learners choose contexts and topics for the Units
♦ learners are 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 create their own learning targets/plans for their language learning
♦ providing differentiated materials and approaches
♦ practitioners select the most appropriate assessment methods, taking into account individual needs of learners

During the course of their language learning, learners should be given the opportunity to:

♦ enhance their communication skills through the consistent development of the skills of listening, talking, pronunciation, reading and writing
♦ develop a knowledge of the structure of the foreign language and how it relates to their own
♦ raise their awareness of other cultures and international citizenship
♦ develop generic skills such as working with others, research skills, skills in presenting information and IT skills

Where resources permit, centres should use technology as much as possible to support learning, teaching and assessment. For the Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course, this could include:

♦ Compiling and maintaining e-portfolios
♦ Web-based research, for example, as part of Understanding Language Unit
♦ Interactive language tasks such as cloze passages in electronic format
♦ Listening and responding to and/or creating podcasts
♦ Games-based learning
♦ Using chat rooms for discussion
♦ Using virtual learning environments
♦ Video conferencing
♦ Use of language-based websites to develop learners' vocabulary
♦ Use of websites to record the spoken language to create an interactive question/answer learning experience.
♦ Submission of assessed work through VLE/e-mail
♦ E-twinning, for example, e-mailing pen pals

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.

Combination and sequencing of Units
The Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course contains Outcomes which can be delivered and assessed in a variety of ways. The four skills of listening, talking, reading and writing 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.

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. 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.

Combined approaches to assessing listening and talking
This type of combination can:

♦ develop the learners' skills in a realistic communicative situation
♦ reinforce and consolidate listening and talking skills
♦ reduce the burden of assessment
♦ motivate learners by providing meaningful and relevant listening and talking activities

Learners will develop talking skills by contributing within conversations. They will develop listening skills by responding within the same conversations. This approach can reduce the amount of assessment as learners' responses can provide evidence of both listening and talking.

Some suggested learning and teaching contexts are shown below:

Type of interaction	Suggested context for listening and talking
An interview	Imagined job interview
A dialogue	Conversation about holidays
A transaction	The learners play the roles of a visitor to Scotland seeking information at a hotel reception and an employee
Group discussion	Discussion about environmental issues

Learners should be prepared for any combined activity so that they are aware of the purpose of the activity and of their role within the interaction/discussion.

Learners can develop listening skills by:

♦ listening to and understanding what someone is saying to them and responding appropriately
♦ using body language and facial expression to help understanding
♦ focusing on and picking out key information

Learners can develop talking skills by:

♦ making use of vocabulary and language structures gathered from listening and reading activities
♦ being aware of audience and purpose and appropriate register
♦ developing presentation skills
♦ using non-verbal conventions to aid communication

During the conversation or discussion, it is important that the speaker(s) contributes ideas and uses language at a level which allows the listener(s) to satisfy the Assessment Standards.

What a learner says within an interaction can provide evidence of talking and listening. This is because the learner can show he or she has understood the content, language and structure of what has been said within his or her responses. Using a checklist will support teachers and lecturers in assessing which Assessment Standards have been satisfied. An example of a checklist is given below.

1. Understand detailed and complex spoken language by:	Teacher assessment
1.1 identifying overall purpose and main points	The learner's contributions/responses show that he/she has identified the overall purpose and main points
1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of the modern language	The learner's contributions/responses show that he/she has applied knowledge and understanding of Gaelic
2. Use detailed and complex spoken language by:	Teacher assessment
2.1 using relevant ideas and content	The learner's contributions/responses use relevant ideas and content

2.2 applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language	The learner's contributions/responses show that s/he has applied knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex Gaelic
2.3 conveying meaning to a sympathetic listener with accuracy	The learner can convey meaning to a sympathetic listener with accuracy

Combined assessment examples

Sports personality The learner watches/listens to an interview with a well-known sports person, who has visited Scotland for the Commonwealth Games. He or she talks in Gaelic about the importance of fitness and healthy eating in his/her lifestyle. The learner answers questions/takes notes, then uses these as the basis for a pair/group discussion in class in Gaelic on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. **Technology in Gaelic** Learners listen to/watch a dialogue in which two young Gaelic people are discussing the role of technology in their own lives and their opinions of the advantages and drawbacks of social networks/instant messaging/mobile phones. Learners summarise the key points of the discussion and then discuss their own experiences of technology and their views on its impact on society.	**Understanding Language** **Outcome 2** The learner will: **2 Understand detailed and complex spoken language by:** 2.1 identifying overall purpose and main points 2.2 applying knowledge and understanding of the modern language **Using Language** **Outcome 1** The learner will: **1 Use detailed and complex spoken language in conversation by:** 1.1 using relevant ideas and content 1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language 1.3 conveying meaning to a sympathetic listener with accuracy
The above examples can easily be adapted to substitute the talking Outcome for a written Outcome, or be adapted to include a written Outcome.	**Using Language** **Outcome 2** The learner will: **2 Use detailed and complex written language by:** 2.1 using relevant ideas and content 2.2 applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language 2.3 communicating with accuracy

Combined assessment — focus on reading
Learners can develop reading skills by:

♦ drawing on knowledge of English and other languages to assist understanding
♦ making effective use of reference materials such as word glossaries and bilingual dictionaries
♦ applying knowledge and understanding of grammar and language structure to assist comprehension
♦ extracting ideas and structures to use in other skill areas, such as talking and writing

Combined assessment examples

Comparing the experience of school life in a Gaelic speaking part of the country with school life in another country where Gaelic is spoken The learner reads an article in Gaelic on a school website, which describes the advantages and drawbacks of school life in the other country. The learner makes note of these and uses them as a basis for interview questions in Gaelic. Using videoconferencing, the learner discusses the similarities and differences in school in Gaelic with a learner in the other school and expresses his/her opinion on the advantages and drawbacks of his/her own school experience.	**Understanding Language Outcome 1** The learner will: **1 Understand detailed and complex written language by:** 1.1 identifying overall purpose and main points 1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of the modern language **Using Language Outcome 1** The learner will: **1 Use detailed and complex spoken language in conversation by:** 1.1 using relevant ideas and content 1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language 1.3 conveying meaning to a sympathetic listener with accuracy
Comparing the experience of life in the city with life in the country in Gaelic The learner reads an article in Gaelic on a school website, which describes the advantages and drawbacks of living in the city/ country (whichever is appropriate for learner) for young people. The learner makes note of these and uses them as a basis for interview questions in Gaelic. Using videoconferencing, the learner discusses in Gaelic the advantages and drawbacks of his/her own lifestyle and describes where they would like to live in the future.	

The above examples can easily be adapted to substitute the talking Outcome for a written Outcome or be adapted to include a written Outcome.	**Using Language** **Outcome 2** The learner will: **2 Use detailed and complex written language by:** 2.1 using relevant ideas and content 2.2 applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language 2.3 communicating with accuracy

Combined assessment — focus on writing
Learners can develop writing skills by:

♦ demonstrating increased accuracy in spelling, application of grammatical knowledge and sentence structure
♦ making appropriate use of reference materials, such as bilingual dictionaries, word glossaries and vocabulary lists
♦ applying vocabulary and language structures gathered from listening and reading activities

Combined assessment examples

Job application process	**Understanding Language** **Outcome 1** The learner will: **1 Understand detailed and complex written language by:** 1.1 identifying overall purpose and main points 1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of the modern language
Learners in a further education college read job advertisements in Gaelic. They then write letters of application for one of the jobs in Gaelic, providing the information which is requested and describing their own skills and interests.	
E-mail in Gaelic The learner's school has a partner school in another country where Gaelic is spoken. The learner reads a number of profiles in Gaelic, in which students describe the type of holiday they enjoy and how important holidays are to them The learner selects one of the profiles and then replies in Gaelic by e-mail, describing his/her ideal holiday and giving his/her opinion on the importance of holidays.	**Using Language** **Outcome 2** The learner will: **2 Use detailed and complex written language by:** 2.1 using relevant ideas and content 2.2 understanding of detailed and complex language 2.3 communicating with accuracy

The above examples can easily be adapted to substitute the writing Outcome for a talking Outcome, or be adapted to include a talking Outcome.	**Using Language** **Outcome 1** The learner will: **1 Use detailed and complex spoken language in conversation by:** 1.1 using relevant ideas and content 1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language 1.3 conveying meaning to a sympathetic listener with accuracy

Combined assessment — focus on talking
Talking contexts can be formal or informal and can include:

♦ talking about individual experience or to give information
♦ dialogue with peers or with a teacher/tutor
♦ transactional contexts such as obtaining goods, information or services
♦ podcasts
♦ mock interviews and role plays
♦ group discussions
♦ web chats/conferencing
♦ internet voice calls

Learners may need support in talking, especially where learners lack confidence, and consideration should be given when assessing talking to group dynamics, for example choice of subject for discussion, room layout, group size, gender and age of the learner. Allowing personalisation and choice in terms of topic, context and audience will support learners.

Learners can develop talking skills by:

♦ engaging in conversation
♦ making use of vocabulary and language structures gathered from listening and reading activities
♦ focusing on pronunciation
♦ being aware of audience and purpose
♦ developing talking skills by developing presentation skills
♦ using non-verbal conventions to aid communication

Integrated assessment — examples

Context — society
Topic — emigration/Gaelic links with Canada
♦ Learners could read a piece of literature about emigration (a significant theme in Gaelic literature). This could be the stimulus to find out more about the Highland Clearances and the strong links with Nova Scotia, eg Gaelic education, traditional music (Celtic Connections music festival).
♦ Pupils could read Gaelic information on Canadian websites and summarise their findings in written or oral form.

Context — society
Topic — the news
♦ The Gaelic news is available online. There are short summaries of news articles. Pupils may read and listen to these articles. They could then write their own news article/summary and present it orally.
♦ The language used in these news articles tends to be complex and therefore can provide learners with opportunities to learn new language structures, expressions and vocabulary.

Context — society
Topic — the news
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Context — culture
Topic — reviewing a Gaelic radio/TV programme
♦ Pupils can watch/listen to a Gaelic programme. They could then write about what the programme was about. They could talk about their opinions of the programme.
♦ Many Gaelic radio and TV programmes are available online.

Context — learning
Topic — Gaelic medium education
♦ Pupils could research Gaelic medium education. Statistics/information are available in bilingual format, eg Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comunn na Gàidhlig websites.
♦ Pupils could read information and summarise their findings in written form. They could also present their findings orally.

It is important to ensure that learners' responses satisfy all the Assessment Standards for both skills if the piece of evidence is to be used to evidence both skills.

Preparation for Course assessment

Each Course has additional time which 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.

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

In preparation, learners should be given opportunities to practise activities similar to what is expected in the external Course assessment. For example, centres could develop similar writing activities, that is, titles from the contexts of society, learning, employability and culture with six bullet points. Listening activities similar to those in the Course assessment should also be developed and practised. This additional time should also be used to prepare for the talking practical activity. Learners should develop their awareness of Gaelic culture and their ability to respond to Gaelic literature by reading and analysing a variety of texts.

In preparation for listening assessment, learners should have the opportunity to practise:

♦ responding in English to questions in English
♦ listening to the views/intentions expressed or the events recounted
♦ making notes in English under given headings
♦ taking notes in Gaelic while listening
♦ working out different types of questions

In preparation for reading assessment, learners should have the opportunity to practise:

♦ responding in English to questions in English
♦ reading the views/intentions expressed or the events recounted
♦ making notes in English under given headings
♦ understanding what is required of different types of questions
♦ annotating literary texts to facilitate their understanding and analysis of texts under controlled and timed conditions
♦ responding in English to questions in English

In preparation for writing assessment, learners should have the opportunity to practise:

♦ researching and revising/learning topic-specific vocabulary
♦ using information, ideas, approaches and language to develop writing skills in Gaelic
♦ developing ideas from talking activities
♦ responding to an unseen task
♦ understanding and fully addressing stimulus and the six bullet points

In preparation for talking assessment, learners should have the opportunity to practise:

♦ using spoken language in a natural, spontaneous conversation
♦ listening to other people talking and responding appropriately
♦ using coping mechanisms to maintain interaction

In preparation for literature assessment, learners should have the opportunity to practise:

♦ reading examples of different genres of literature, eg poetry, short story, novel, drama, etc
♦ understanding writers' themes, aims and messages
♦ understanding different literary techniques used to convey themes and messages, eg similes, metaphors, imagery, etc
♦ developing their personal responses to literary texts in order to demonstrate engagement
♦ supporting their responses with evidence from texts
♦ annotating literary texts to facilitate their understanding and analysis of texts under controlled and timed conditions
♦ understanding what is required of different types of questions

Society, learning, employability and culture are the contexts within the Course assessment. Therefore, these are contexts that should be fully explored and developed in the delivery of the Units and the Course.

Translation — developing translation skills
Learners at this level will develop the ability to translate from Gaelic into English. They will benefit from activities which develop their ability to understand and process what they read, for example:

♦ reading for the main information and ideas
♦ identifying the meaning of new words and expressions
♦ identifying the style and tone of the writing
♦ identifying cultural references

It is important for learners to develop independent researching skills, including the use of dictionaries and glossaries to look up meanings of new words.

When processing new language, learners could be encouraged to:

♦ identify the ideas and how they are linked in the text
♦ choose the 'best' words and expressions to represent the meaning in English
♦ convey the meaning of the original by rephrasing without changing the sense

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

Learners are expected to develop broad generic skills as an integral part of their learning experience. The *Course Specification* lists the skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work that learners should develop through this Course. These are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and must be built into the Course where there are appropriate opportunities. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the Course.

The Course contributes towards the development of literacy skills by providing learners with opportunities to listen and talk, read and write in Gaelic, and to reflect on how this relates to English.

4   Employability, enterprise and citizenship
4.6   Citizenship

5   Thinking skills
5.3   Applying

The table below provides some suggested opportunities of how these skills can be further developed within the Course.

Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work	Approaches for learning and teaching
4.6 Citizenship Citizenship includes having concern for the environment and for others; being aware of rights and responsibilities; being aware of the democratic society; being outward looking towards society; being able to recognise one's personal role in this context; and being aware of global issues, understanding one's responsibilities within these, and acting responsibly.	Learners will learn about the culture, customs, practices and beliefs in other Gaelic speaking communities and areas with a link to Gaelic culture. The contexts of society, learning, employability, or culture within the Course will develop learners' understanding of citizenship and minority language issues in another country as well as encouraging understanding of their own culture and community.
5.3 Applying Applying is the ability to use existing information to solve a problem in a different context, and to plan, organise and complete a task.	Wherever possible, learners should be given the opportunity to apply the skills, knowledge and understanding they have developed to new topics and contexts. Learners will use what they know already, for example when they use a familiar structure for writing but use different content. Learners will also develop the ability to plan, organise and complete tasks when they undertake language activities, for example designing a web page in Gaelic.

Equality and inclusion

Inclusive approaches in the Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course include:

♦ ensuring that texts are inclusive, unbiased and gender/age-appropriate
♦ overcoming potential barriers to learning by providing alternative teaching and learning resources and approaches and by making alternative assessment arrangements for learners
♦ being aware of cultural considerations, for example in group discussion
♦ responding to the needs of individual learners by using support strategies
♦ differentiating resources and approaches, eg by adapting texts

It is strongly recommended that teachers/lecturers involve learners in the identification of assessment opportunities and build in opportunities for feedback on progress. This will ensure that learners are clear about what is expected of them. Assessment methods should offer all learners an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement. This should be reflected in the language used, the use of different assessment presentation methods and the use of appropriate and unbiased illustrative materials which reflect an inclusive view.

It is recognised that centres have their own duties under equality and other legislation and policy initiatives. The guidance given in these *Course 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.

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 Specifications
♦ Design Principles for National Courses
♦ *Guide to Assessment* (June 2008)
♦ Overview of Qualification Reports
♦ Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas
♦ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
♦ *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*

Appendix 2: Context development

The table below outlines suggested development of the four contexts:

Society	Family and friends	Becoming an adult/ new family structure/ marriage/partnership/ gang culture/bullying/social influences and pressures
	Lifestyle	Teenage problems, eg smoking, drugs, alcohol
	Media	Impact of the digital age
	Global languages	Minority languages and their importance/association with culture
	Citizenship	Global citizenship/democracy/politics/power
Learning	Learning in context	Understanding self as a learner, eg learning styles/importance of language learning
	Education	Advantages/disadvantages of higher or further education, choosing a university/college, lifelong learning
Employability	Jobs	Getting a summer job, planning for future jobs/higher education, gap year, career path, equality in the workplace
Employability	Work and CVs	Preparing for a job interview/importance of language in global contexts, job opportunities

Culture	Planning a trip	Taking a gap year Working abroad (mobility) Travel
	Other countries	Living in a multicultural society/stereotypes/ prejudice and racism
	Celebrating a special event	Social influences on/importance of traditions, customs and beliefs in another country
	Film and television	Studying the media of another country

Administrative information

Published: April 2012 (version 1.0)

Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to Course Support Notes

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

Unit Support Notes — Understanding Language (Higher)

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Gaelic (Learners): Understanding Language* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

♦ the *Gaelic (Learners): Understanding Language Unit Specification*
♦ the *Gaelic (Learners): Higher Course Specification*
♦ the *Gaelic (Learners): Higher Course Assessment Specification*
♦ the *Gaelic (Learners): Higher Course Support Notes*
♦ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop and extend reading and listening skills in Gaelic, and to develop their knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language in the contexts of society, learning, employability, and culture. Learners also develop skills in understanding detailed and complex Gaelic literary texts.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

1   Understand detailed and complex written language
2   Understand detailed and complex spoken language
3   Understand Gaelic literary texts in English

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

♦   National 5 Gaelic (Learners) Course or relevant component Units

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Gaelic (Learners) *Course Support Notes.*

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

Completion of this Unit may provide progression to:

♦   Gaelic (Learners): (Advanced Higher) Course
♦   Modern Languages (Higher) Course in another modern language
♦   further study or training
♦   employment

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The purpose of this section is to provide general advice and guidance on approaches to gathering assessment evidence within the *Gaelic (Learners): Understanding Language* (Higher) Unit.

Assessment approaches should aim to help learners to progress through the Unit 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 Unit to observe learners providing evidence which satisfies a Unit, completely or partially. This is naturally occurring evidence.

Some examples of naturally occurring evidence are contained in the table below:

Assessment Standards — listening	Approaches to assessment	Gathering evidence
2.1 identifying overall purpose and main points 2.2 applying knowledge and understanding of Gaelic	Learners could be asked to: ♦ compare two spoken passages by asking what information is different/the same ♦ listen to a text and answer questions ♦ produce a summary of a text they have heard, orally or in writing ♦ respond in an interaction, transaction, conversation or discussion	Learners' oral or written responses in the form of: ♦ oral answers to questions ♦ written answers to questions ♦ written or oral comparison which picks out key language and ideas ♦ written or oral summaries of key ideas ♦ oral responses Oral evidence could be recorded in a variety of ways, eg film, digital voice recorder or similar device, transcription or by using an observation checklist
Assessment Standards — reading	**Approaches to assessment**	**Gathering evidence**
1.1 identifying overall purpose and main points 1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of Gaelic	Learners could be asked to: ♦ compare two sources by asking what information is different/the same ♦ read a text and answer questions ♦ produce a summary of a text, orally or in writing	Learners' oral or written responses in the form of: ♦ oral answers to questions ♦ written answers to questions ♦ written or oral comparison which pick out key language and ideas ♦ written or oral summaries of key ideas

	♦ highlight specific language or ideas in a text	Oral evidence could be recorded in a variety of ways, eg filmed, transcribed or recorded using an observation checklist	

Listening skills
Learners can develop listening skills by:

♦ developing further an awareness of the importance of pronunciation
♦ developing further their own pronunciation of individual sounds, words and phrases and having the ability to link the spoken word to the written word
♦ having a greater awareness of register and intonation patterns, for example recognising the difference between a statement and a question
♦ recognising the expression of emotions through language, such as humour, happiness, enthusiasm, sadness, anger, annoyance
♦ listening to and understanding what someone is saying to them and responding appropriately using the correct register
♦ recognising body language and facial expression to help understanding
♦ focusing on and picking out key information
♦ recognising useful vocabulary and ideas which can be developed and used in other contexts, for example by note-taking
♦ listening for enjoyment, for example giving a reaction to a television programme or podcast

Listening activities and contexts
Learners can develop their listening skills in the context of interaction or discussion which should be realistic and meaningful by:

♦ listening to and understanding what someone is saying in Gaelic
♦ responding appropriately in Gaelic
♦ understanding how non-verbal conventions such as body language and facial expression can help to work out meaning
♦ focusing on and picking out key language, information and ideas

Both listening contexts occur in the Unit assessment and learners should therefore prepare for both contexts in the delivery of the Unit.

Evidence of listening
Evidence of listening can be in oral, written or digital form. Suggested examples of listening assessments are shown below:

Skill	Assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Listening	Written responses	Learner listens to a podcast and writes answers to questions about the podcast	Learner writes answers in English
Listening	Oral responses	Learner listens to a podcast and gives oral answers to questions about the podcast	Learner gives answers in English

Skills	Integrated assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Listening and talking	Oral contributions and responses	Learner participates in an internet voice call with a partner school, contributing and responding within the conversation	Learner uses the modern language throughout
Listening and writing	Oral responses and written response	Learner contributes and responds in a role play job interview. The learner then writes a self-evaluation of his/her performance in Gaelic	Learner uses the modern language throughout

It is important to ensure that learners' responses satisfy all the Assessment Standards for both skills if the piece of evidence is to be used to evidence both skills.

Reading skills

Learners can develop their reading skills using one source, such as a piece of journalism, or a number of sources can be used, for example, two or three different texts on one topic such as tourism or by reading a range of literary texts.

Learners can develop reading skills by:

♦ developing the ability to prepare for reading, for example discussing the topic of the passage or predicting what language/ideas a passage may contain
♦ reading for specific information and to identify the main ideas of a text
♦ drawing on knowledge of English and other languages to assist understanding
♦ making effective use of reference materials such as word glossaries and bilingual dictionaries
♦ applying knowledge and understanding of grammar and language structure to assist comprehension, such the effect of tenses on the document
♦ being aware of the purpose and style of the reading passage:
  — for information
  — work-related
  — for enjoyment
♦ reading a variety of types and styles of texts, such as informational texts, fiction, brochures, instructions, leaflets
♦ giving a personal reaction to a piece of writing
♦ extracting ideas and structures to recycle in other skill areas, such as talking and writing

Reading activities

Examples of reading activities could include:

♦ comparing two sources by asking what information is different/the same
♦ reading a text and answering questions
♦ producing a summary of a text, orally or in writing
♦ using pre-reading activities such as discussing the topic of the passage or predicting what language/ideas a passage may contain
♦ highlighting specific language or ideas in a passage
♦ cloze procedure activities

Evidence of reading

Evidence of reading can be in oral, written or digital form. Suggested examples of reading assessments are shown below:

Skill	Assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Reading	Written responses	Learner reads an article from an online newspaper and writes answers to questions about the article	Learners write answers in English
Reading	Oral responses	Learner reads an article from an online newspaper and gives oral answers to questions about the article	Learners give answers in English

Skills	Integrated assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Reading and talking	Oral contributions and responses	Learner reads a tourist website then discusses this information with a peer before writing a summary of the website information	Learner uses Gaelic throughout
Reading and writing	Written response	Learner reads a letter from someone living in another country where Gaelic is spoken. The learner then writes a reply, ensuring he/she responds to questions in the letter	Learner uses Gaelic throughout

It is important to ensure that learners' responses satisfy all the Assessment Standards for both skills if the piece of evidence is to be used to evidence both skills.

Combined assessment of reading and listening — suggested examples
Learners read an article in Gaelic about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They then prepare a presentation about the measures they take to maintain their own fitness, using previously agreed criteria. The learners listen to the other members of their group and summarise the viewpoints around the previously agreed criteria.

Learners read an account of a debate in which various young people describe in Gaelic their attitude to environmental issues and what they do personally to look after their local area. The learners summarise the views of the participants. Learners then listen to two speakers who have contrasting views on the impact that individuals can have on their environment. Learners report the contrasting viewpoints.

Evaluation of literary texts

Learners' evidence of the understanding of Gaelic literary texts for Outcome 3 can also provide evidence for Outcome 1. Examples of this type of integrated evidence are given below.

Care should be taken to ensure that Assessment Standards for both Outcomes are covered.

Skill	Assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Literary appreciation/ evaluation	Written responses	Learner reads a short story in Gaelic and answers questions/ writes an extended piece of writing about the text	Learners answer in English
Literary appreciation/ evaluation	Oral responses	Class discussion where learners answer specific questions about theme, literary techniques, etc	Learners respond orally in English

Learners' evidence of the understanding of Gaelic literary texts for Outcome 3 can also provide evidence for the *Using Language* Unit. Examples of this type of integrated evidence are given below.

Care should be taken to ensure that Assessment Standards for both Outcomes are covered.

Skills	Integrated assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Literary appreciation/ evaluation and talking	Oral responses in follow-up activity	Theme/issues raised in a Gaelic poem provide stimulus for a talking exercise	Learners respond in Gaelic in follow-up talk exercise, generating evidence for *Using Language* Outcome 1
Literary appreciation/ evaluation, reading and writing	Written responses following the reading of a Gaelic short story	Theme raised in a Gaelic short story provides stimulus for writing activity	Learners write in Gaelic, generating evidence for *Using Language* Outcome 2.
Literary appreciation/ evaluation, reading and listening	Oral/written responses	Learners read and listen to a musical arrangement of a Gaelic poem and answer questions on rhythm, rhyme, tone, etc	Learners respond to questions in English, generating evidence for *Understanding Language* Outcome 2

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes.*

Equality and inclusion

Inclusive approaches in *Gaelic (Learners): Understanding Language* (Higher) Unit include:

♦ ensuring that texts are inclusive, unbiased and gender/age-appropriate
♦ overcoming potential barriers to learning by providing alternative teaching and learning resources and approaches and by making alternative assessment arrangements for learners
♦ being aware of cultural considerations, for example in group discussion
♦ responding to the needs of individual learners by using support strategies differentiating resources and approaches, eg by adapting texts

It is strongly recommended that teachers/lecturers involve learners in the identification of assessment opportunities and build in opportunities for feedback on progress. This will ensure that learners are clear about what is expected of them. Assessment methods should offer all learners an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement. This should be reflected in the language used, the use of different assessment presentation methods and the use of appropriate and unbiased illustrative materials which reflect an inclusive view.

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

Alternative approaches to Unit assessment to take account of the specific needs of learners can be used. However, the centre must be satisfied that the integrity of the assessment is maintained and that the alternative approach to assessment will, in fact, generate the necessary evidence of achievement.

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 on SQA's website: http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html
♦ *Building the Curriculum 4: Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work*
♦ *Building the Curriculum 5: A framework for assessment*
♦ Course Specifications
♦ Design Principles for National Courses
♦ *Guide to Assessment* (June 2008)
♦ Overview of Qualification Reports
♦ *Principles and practice papers for curriculum areas*
♦ *Research Report 4 — Less is More: Good Practice in Reducing Assessment Time*
♦ *Coursework Authenticity — a Guide for Teachers and Lecturers*
♦ *SCQF Handbook: User Guide* (published 2009) and SCQF level descriptors (to be reviewed during 2011 to 2012): www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/4595.html
♦ *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*
♦ SQA Guidelines on e-assessment for Schools
♦ SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education
♦ SQA e-assessment web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/5606.html

Appendix 2: Context development

Society	Family and friends	Becoming an adult/ new family structure/ marriage/partnership/ gang culture/bullying/social influences and pressures
	Lifestyle	Teenage problems eg smoking, drugs, alcohol
	Media	Impact of the digital age
	Global languages	Minority languages and their importance/association with culture
	Citizenship	Global citizenship/democracy/politics/power
Learning	Learning in context	Understanding self as a learner, eg learning styles/importance of language learning
	Education	Advantages/disadvantages of higher or further education, choosing a university/college, lifelong learning
Employability	Jobs	Getting a summer job, planning for future jobs/higher education, gap year, career path, equality in the workplace
	Work and CVs	Preparing for a job interview/importance of language in global contexts, job opportunities
Culture	Planning a trip	Taking a gap year Working abroad (mobility) Travel
	Other countries	Living in a multicultural society/stereotypes/ prejudice and racism
	Celebrating a special event	Social influences on/importance of traditions, customs and beliefs in another country
	Film and television	Studying the media of another country

Administrative information

Published: April 2012 (version 1.0)

Superclass: to be advised

History of changes to Unit Support Notes

Unit details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

Unit Support Notes — Using Language (Higher)

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this document for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

Introduction

These support notes are not mandatory. They provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the *Gaelic (Learners): Using Language* (Higher) Unit. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering this Unit. They should be read in conjunction with:

♦ the Gaelic (Learners): Using Language (Higher) Unit Specification
♦ the Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course Specification
♦ the Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course Assessment Specification
♦ the Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course Support Notes
♦ appropriate assessment support materials

If the *Unit Support Notes* have been developed for a Unit which is not part of a Course, then it is only necessary to read them in conjunction with the *Unit Specification*.

General guidance on the Unit

Aims

The general aim of this Unit is to provide learners with the opportunity to develop talking and writing skills in Gaelic, and to develop their knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language in the contexts of society, learning, employability and culture.

Learners who complete this Unit will be able to:

1   Use detailed and complex spoken language in conversations
2   Use detailed and complex written language

Progression into this Unit

Entry to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills and knowledge required by one or more of the following or by equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

♦   National 5 Gaelic (Learners) Course or relevant component Units

Skills, knowledge and understanding covered in this Unit

Information about skills, knowledge and understanding is given in the Higher Gaelic (Learners) *Course Support Notes*.

If this Unit is being delivered on a free-standing basis, teachers and lecturers are free to select the skills, knowledge, understanding and contexts which are most appropriate for delivery in their centres.

Progression from this Unit

Completion of this Unit may provide progression to:

♦   Advanced Higher Gaelic (Learners) Course or any relevant component Units
♦   Higher Modern Languages in another modern language
♦   further study or training
♦   employment

Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

The purpose of this section is to provide general advice and guidance on approaches to gathering assessment evidence within *Gaelic (Learners): Using Language* (Higher) Unit.

Assessment approaches should aim to help learners to progress through the Unit 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 Unit to observe learners providing evidence which satisfies a Unit, completely or partially. This is naturally occurring evidence.

Some examples of naturally occurring evidence are contained in the table below.

Assessment Standards (Using detailed and complex spoken language)	Approaches to assessment	Gathering evidence
1.1 using relevant ideas and content 1.2 applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language 1.3 conveying meaning to a sympathetic listener with accuracy	Learners could be asked to: ♦ analyse a text s/he has studied ♦ give a presentation ♦ participate in an interview or discussion ♦ participate in a role play ♦ respond orally within or to an interaction, transaction, conversation or discussion ♦ contribute and respond in a group discussion	Learners' oral contributions and/or responses Oral evidence could be recorded in a variety of ways, eg filmed, transcribed or recorded using an observation checklist

Talking skills
Learners can develop their talking skills by talking individually or within an interaction, transaction, conversation or discussion. Learners will be encouraged to communicate clearly and will be given opportunities to practise their talking skills in order to build confidence. Self-evaluation and supportive peer evaluation will support learners in building confidence and identifying areas for improvement.

Talking contexts will motivate learners if they are meaningful and relevant.

Learners may need support in talking, especially where learners lack confidence, and consideration should be given to group dynamics, for example choice of subject for discussion, room layout, group size, gender and age of the learner. Allowing personalisation and choice in terms of topic, context and audience will support learners.

Learners can develop talking skills by:

♦ developing greater awareness of the pronunciation of individual sounds and words and making themselves understood when reading aloud or when responding to another person in a conversation or role play
♦ making use of complex vocabulary and language structures gathered from listening and reading activities
♦ developing greater awareness of intonation and using appropriate register
♦ developing greater awareness of audience and purpose
♦ developing presentation skills
♦ using body language and facial expression to aid communication
♦ applying knowledge of complex grammar and language structures to talk with accuracy

Evidence of talking

Skill	Assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Talking	Talking about individual experience or to give information Dialogue with peers or with a teacher/tutor Transactional contexts such as obtaining goods, information or services Podcasts Mock interviews and role plays Group discussions Web chats/conferencing Internet voice calls	Learner visits a local restaurant and gives an individual talk about the experience

Role play at a travel agent about booking a day trip to a destination

Role play about signing up at a fitness club

Group discussion about developing/maintaining good health | |
| Skills | Integrated assessment evidence | Illustration | Notes |
| Listening and talking | Oral contributions and responses | Learner participates in a discussion about the impact of the digital age.

Learner participates in a role play set in a hotel as receptionist/customer.

Learner contributes questions and answers and responds to questions/information from the other speaker. | Learner uses the modern language throughout |

Assessment Standards (Use detailed and complex written language by)	Approaches to assessment	Gathering evidence
Outcome 2 2.1 Using relevant ideas and content 2.2 Applying knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex language 2.3 Communicating with accuracy	Learners could be asked to write a variety of types of texts, including: ♦ analysis of a text s/he has studied ♦ informational writing ♦ reflective writing ♦ writing about experiences ♦ summaries ♦ comparisons ♦ descriptions ♦ opinions	Learners' writing in the form of: ♦ written answers to questions ♦ written comparisons ♦ written summaries ♦ discursive writing

Writing skills
Learners should be encouraged to plan their writing, for example by building up knowledge of relevant vocabulary, grammar and expression. In planning and preparing for writing, learners will consider the audience and purpose for their writing.

Learners could use reference materials and should be encouraged to 'recycle' words and phrases, for example by applying and developing these in new contexts.

Learners can develop writing skills by:

♦ developing further awareness that the target audience and the purpose for composing a piece of writing will have an impact on the type of language used
♦ demonstrating greater accuracy in spelling and grammatical awareness
♦ showing an awareness of complex sentence structure
♦ making appropriate use of reference materials, such as bilingual dictionaries, word glossaries and vocabulary lists
♦ applying vocabulary and language structures gathered from listening and reading activities
♦ demonstrating good use of research skills
♦ drafting, editing and self-evaluating their writing

Evidence of writing
Suggested examples of writing assessment evidence are shown below.

Skill	Assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Writing	Learners' writing in print, written or digital form	Learner analyses a text he or she has read and writes about the characters and themes.	

Skills	Integrated assessment evidence	Illustration	Notes
Writing and talking	Oral contributions and responses	Learner participates in an internet voice call with a partner school, contributing and responding within the conversation. The learner then writes a summary of the conversation in Gaelic	Learner uses Gaelic throughout
Listening and writing	Oral responses and written response	Learner contributes and responds in a role play job interview. The learner then writes a self-evaluation of his/her performance in Gaelic	Role play should be recorded for assessment evidence. Learner uses Gaelic throughout

It is important to ensure that learners' responses satisfy all the Assessment Standards for the relevant skills if the piece of evidence is to be used to evidence both skills.

Combined assessment
The *Gaelic (Learners): Using Language* (Higher) Unit contains Outcomes which can be delivered and assessed in a variety of ways. Skills should be taught in an integrated way and the amount of time spent on each will depend on the needs of the learners and prior skills, knowledge and understanding.

Combining assessment of talking and writing
Learners study a short Gaelic play and discuss the characters, themes and plot. They then write an analysis of the literary text.
Learners write about their work experience and describe their activities to each other. They then ask each other questions in Gaelic to elicit feedback and create recommendations for future work experience.
Learners study a film and complete the accompanying study pack. They discuss their opinions of the film's characters, themes and plotlines. Finally, they write a summary of their reaction to the film.

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

Information about developing skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work in this Unit is given in the relevant *Course Support Notes.*

Equality and inclusion

Inclusive approaches in the *Gaelic (Learners): Using Language* (Higher) Unit include:

♦ ensuring that texts are inclusive, unbiased and gender/age-appropriate
♦ overcoming potential barriers to learning by providing alternative teaching and learning resources and approaches and by making alternative assessment arrangements for learners
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♦ responding to the needs of individual learners by using support strategies
♦ differentiating resources and approaches, eg by adapting texts

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