



## Course Report 2014

Subject	ESOL
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It 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 and marking instructions for the examination.

# Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

## Component 1: Listening, Reading and Writing question papers

### Section A Listening question paper

The purpose of this section is to allow learners to demonstrate challenge and application in the skill of listening for information. This question paper gives learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding from across the Course:

- ◆ understand detailed language spoken in English
- ◆ identify and explain the overall context, main points and aspects of detail
- ◆ identify and explain clearly expressed opinions or attitudes

This section of the question paper has a combined total mark allocation of 20 marks out of a total of 100 marks. This is 20% of the overall marks for the Course assessment. Listening comprehension is tested by a range of questions including multiple choice, gapfill, true or false, and pick list (eg 'Which two statements of the following five are correct?'). Learners listen to one monologue and one spoken interaction; it thus involves two texts (not three as formerly in Intermediate 2).

### Sections B and C Question paper (reading and writing)

The purpose of these sections of the question paper is to allow learners to demonstrate challenge and application in the skills of reading and writing. This question paper gives learners an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

Reading:

- ◆ understand detailed language written in English
- ◆ identify and explain the overall purpose, main points and aspects of detail
- ◆ identify and explain how vocabulary, language features and text structures are used to convey meaning
- ◆ identify and explain clearly expressed opinions or attitudes

Writing:

- ◆ produce written English using detailed language to convey meaning
- ◆ use structures and vocabulary as appropriate to task
- ◆ use appropriate features of grammar, spelling and punctuation
- ◆ use conventions of style and layout appropriate to task

This question paper for reading and writing has a combined total mark allocation of 50 marks out of a total of 100 marks. This is 50% of the overall marks for the Course assessment.

### Section B, 'Reading'

This section has 25 marks.

The questions for reading assess understanding, application and analysis skills. These 25 marks are awarded for identifying, explaining and showing awareness of features of text, opinions or attitudes and key aspects of detail.

These skills are tested by a range of questions including gapfill, multiple choice, pick list and short answer. Matching will be a possible question type in future years.

### **Section C, 'Writing'**

This section has 25 marks.

- ◆ Learners produce two written texts. They choose one title from the context of everyday life and one from the contexts of either work or study.
- ◆ Each title has some limited support for guidance.
- ◆ The writing question paper is assessed on the marking criteria addressing content and organisation, use of language, accuracy and appropriateness to purpose and audience.
- ◆ These 25 marks will be awarded for using appropriate structures, vocabulary and language features to convey meaning.

### **General**

Each of the sections gives learners an opportunity to demonstrate challenge and application of knowledge and understanding to answer appropriately challenging context-based questions by drawing on and applying knowledge from across the Course.

There are two breaks with Intermediate 2. Firstly, there is no error correction task. Secondly, there are two extended writing tasks rather than one.

The new aspects of assessment in Component 1 were addressed successfully.

## **Component 2: Performance**

This component allows candidates to demonstrate challenge and application in the skills of speaking and listening. Candidates participate in a conversation/discussion in English on a chosen topic from everyday life, work or study contexts. The conversation/discussion can be with one other person or in a small group.

The performance gives candidates the opportunity to demonstrate the following skills and knowledge:

- ◆ communicate orally in English, using detailed language to convey meaning
- ◆ use structures and vocabulary as appropriate to task
- ◆ maintain interaction as appropriate to task
- ◆ show understanding of spoken English through their responses to their partner or members of a small group

A total of 25 marks can be awarded for the speaking element, and total of 5 marks can be awarded for the listening element.

A combined total of 30 marks can be awarded for Component 2, which is 30% of the overall marks for the Course assessment.

There are three new aspects to Component 2 that centres and candidates would not previously have been familiar with:

- ◆ the assessment of listening as part of an interaction, and the 5 marks awarded for this
- ◆ the increase in the range of contexts in which the conversation/discussion can be conducted to include work and study
- ◆ the opportunity to conduct the assessment in a small group as well as with one partner

The Assessment Task was appropriate, and candidates were able to demonstrate their language skills in speaking and listening over the range of performance and within an appropriate time. The task provides candidates with a choice of topics and ample opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of general and specific vocabulary for the topic.

The task was most effective where centres had made use of the speaking and listening tasks from National 5 Unit Assessment Support Packs (UASPs) which provided a topic brief with an effective level of challenge for National 5 candidates.

The marking instructions for both listening and speaking were effective in enabling markers to differentiate the different levels of performance and award marks within an appropriate band.

The three new aspects of the assessment were addressed successfully.

## **Section 2: Comments on candidate performance**

### **Component 1: Listening, Reading and Writing question paper**

#### **Section A Listening question paper**

This was generally done well. Questions on Recording 2 were generally found to be less demanding than those on Recording 1.

#### **Section B Reading question paper**

This was generally done well. Questions on text 2 were generally found to be less demanding than those on text 1.

#### **Section C Writing question paper**

This was generally done well. There were no major differences between responses to the three different tasks, although responses to ESOL in Context task were slightly better than those to the ESOL for Everyday Life task.

## **Component 2: Performance**

Candidates generally performed very well where they clearly understood the task and requirements, and demonstrated their speaking and listening skills to the extent of their language competence.

## **Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well**

### **Component 1: Listening, Reading and Writing question paper**

#### **Section A Listening question paper**

Most candidates were able to respond accurately to:

- ◆ Gapfill questions
- ◆ Multiple choice questions
- ◆ Pick list questions

#### **Section B Reading question paper**

Most candidates were able to respond accurately to:

- ◆ Short answer questions eg text 1 questions 2 and 3; text 2 questions 7, 9 and 10.
- ◆ Vocabulary questions eg text 1 question 11; text questions 9 and 10.
- ◆ Multiple choice questions in text 2 eg questions 5, 12 and 13.

#### **Section C Writing question paper**

##### **Part 1: Everyday Life Task**

Most candidates were able to respond accurately and relevantly with sufficient supporting detail.

##### **Part 2: ESOL in Context: Work or Study**

In each task, many candidates wrote expansive, thoughtful and well-structured answers with good supporting detail and a good range of grammar and vocabulary. Most also paid close attention to the bulleted prompts in the question.

## **Component 2: Performance**

The majority of candidates demonstrated that they had made good use of preparation time and felt confident with the process being recorded. This enabled them to perform well, demonstrating good skills in:

Speaking:

- ◆ organisation, development and communication of ideas and opinions
- ◆ ability to initiate, maintain and support development of the interaction
- ◆ contributing relevantly throughout the interaction
- ◆ demonstrating a range of general and specialised vocabulary appropriate to the topic

Listening:

- ◆ Listening attentively to their partner and responding with a level of spontaneity which supported the conversation.

Overall, candidates who performed well contributed in an interesting and thoughtful way and demonstrated an enthusiasm for the topic and a genuine interest in what their partner(s) had to say.

## **Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: Listening, Reading and Writing question paper**

#### **Section A Listening question paper**

Recording 1 Questions 2 and 6: Many candidates found these multiple choice questions — with four possibilities — more demanding.

Recording 1 Question 4: Some candidates had difficulty completing this series of four gapfills within the maximum of three words and/or with good enough spelling for an unambiguous answer.

Recording 2 caused no particular difficulties.

#### **Section B Reading question paper**

##### **Text 1**

Some candidates seem to have had difficulty with vocabulary in this text.

##### **Text 2**

Question 6 relied on simple numerical comparisons between different rates of plagiarism at different universities. Many candidates found this slightly more demanding.

Questions 9 and 10 asked candidates to give 'a word' as an answer; Question 11 asked for 'a phrase'. Some candidates did not follow these instructions, giving a phrase in answer to 9 or 10, or a single word in answer to 11.

#### **Section C Writing question paper**

##### **Part 1: Everyday Life**

Some candidates gave competent responses which achieved the task (in some cases minimally) but did not show off all the grammatical and lexical range that they might have done, judging from the responses to Part 2. They were therefore marked at a 5/6/7 when perhaps capable of 8/9/10.

## **Part 2: ESOL in Context**

**Generally:** some very able candidates who gave detailed, readable and engaged responses (see previous section) to their chosen question were not able to gain the highest marks due to errors in grammar or spelling.

**In the study question:** some able candidates wrote in an informal style and were therefore unable to obtain maximum marks.

## **Component 2: Performance**

Some candidates participated well in the discussion but were not able to gain higher marks because of a limited range of structures and specialised vocabulary.

Some candidates had not fully addressed the bullet points in the assessment brief, and their discussions became repetitive and lacked organisation and cohesion. These candidates appeared not to have made good use of the preparation time and didn't achieve high marks. A few candidates had not taken on board the listening element of the discussion, and persisted throughout in asking questions but not responding to their partners' comments or questions.

## **Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Listening, Reading and Writing question paper**

#### **Section A Listening question paper**

Candidates should be given practice in all of the question types in the 2014 paper. Their practice with multiple choice questions should cover those with both three options and four options.

With regard to gapfills, it should be emphasised that the specified word maximum (often three but occasionally fewer) must be followed or no mark can be given.

Candidates should also be encouraged to check the spelling of answers — minor mis-spellings are accepted, but if the answer (i) looks more like another word than it does the word in the answer key or (ii) is barely comprehensible, then no mark can be given.

#### **Section B Reading question paper**

Candidates should be given practice in all of the question types in the 2014 paper, as well as matching questions, which will appear in future papers (though not with a section all to itself, as was the case with Intermediate 2). They should be advised to read the rubric of each question carefully, giving only one word when required, or a whole phrase when required.

The question type 'Complete each gap with no more than three words from the text' requires candidates to take one, two or three words, unaltered, from the actual text. While it is useful to try to anticipate the grammar required for the answer (e.g. a noun phrase, a verb, etc.),

candidates should be discouraged from either attempting an answer before reading the text or from trying a rough synonym after skimming the text. A mark will only be given for actual words from the text which make sense in the gap, so while there may be variants, these variants will be limited.

### **Section C Writing question paper**

Candidates should be given the chance to discuss the marking criteria used for this paper (available on the SQA website under Marking Instructions for the National 5 Specimen Question Paper) and advised that the highest marks require both good range and accuracy. With reference to the Everyday Life task in particular, candidates should be encouraged to show off the quality of their writing and not merely to do the minimum to complete the task. They should also be reminded of the importance of appropriate style (formal/informal) as required.

### **Component 2: Performance**

In addition to centres using speaking briefs from the UASPs, topics can be chosen by the centre to provide further personalisation and choice. When centres choose to write the brief for candidates for the assessment task, care should be taken to ensure that there is an appropriate level of challenge for National 5. It should allow candidates to fully demonstrate their English language skills, particularly in relation to:

- ◆ organisation, development and communication of ideas/opinions
- ◆ range of general and specialised vocabulary
- ◆ use of detailed structure to communicate

Candidates should be given the opportunity to become familiar with the centre's chosen method of recording the assessment (audio or video) early in the course and given recorded practice of discussions and encouraged to record and discuss their interactions. Regular feedback to candidates on their progress in speaking skills and the areas for them to develop is essential.

Candidates should be trained in the most effective ways to use the allocated preparation time to consider their ideas for each of the bullet points and possible specialised vocabulary. They should apply note-taking skills and at all times be discouraged from writing a lengthy text on the topic as a way of preparing.

Candidates should be made aware of the need to demonstrate a range of structures and specialised vocabulary early in the course and advised that the development of this is essential if they are to be awarded high marks in the speaking. Guidance on how they can do this is an essential part of supporting candidates to achieve good marks in speaking.

Early feedback on formative assessment of listening skills will enable them to achieve high marks in the listening element. Candidates who achieve high marks in the listening respond to and develop points made by their partner(s). They should be made fully aware of the need for sensitivity and advised that it is not appropriate to dominate the conversation.



## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	210
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## Statistical information: Performance of candidates

### Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 100				
A	38.1%	38.1%	80	70
B	27.1%	65.2%	57	60
C	18.6%	83.8%	39	50
D	2.9%	86.7%	6	45
No award	13.3%	-	28	-