



Course Report 2014

Subject	Gaelic (Learners)
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: Question Paper

Listening

The Listening task is as follows:

- ◆ 25 minutes duration
- ◆ 20 marks in total
- ◆ 8 marks for the Monologue
- ◆ 12 marks for the Dialogue
- ◆ Average mark: 12.33

Reading and Writing

- ◆ Reading is worth 30 marks
- ◆ Writing is worth 20 marks
- ◆ Average mark for Reading and Writing is 33.08
- ◆ Average mark for Writing alone is 13.99

Component 2: Performance — Talking

The Marking Instructions for the presentation and conversation, including the natural element, were used appropriately in the main and some centres provided commentaries on candidate performances. Some centres used the Modern Languages Performance 'Assessment Record' document to record commentaries about the sections of each of their candidates' performances.

In terms of the recommended duration of the talking performance, centres are advised to refer to the 'Modern Languages Performance: Talking General Assessment Information' document. Further guidance on the use of Pegged Marks will be provided.

All centres provided audio recordings of the performances as appropriate to the task.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Component 1

Listening

Generally speaking, candidates are to be commended for their overall performance. Other than the Specimen Question Paper, there are limited opportunities for candidates to develop their exam technique in the new National 5 format. Previous past papers for Standard Grade and Intermediate 2 do not assist with National 5 exam preparation.

Many candidates attempted to give the appropriate level of detail.

Reading and Writing

Again, candidates are to be commended for their overall performance. This is a completely new format and method of marking for Gaelic Learners and there is a limited bank of practice exercises. The majority of candidates attempted to provide the increased level of detail required at this level.

Generally speaking, candidates did not perform as well in Text 3 of the Reading section. This could perhaps be attributed to time constraints, as the paper now comprises a Reading and Writing section. Further opportunities to practise exam technique under timed conditions may address this issue.

Centres are to be commended in preparing the candidates for the Writing assessment. Many pieces were authentic. Many responses were opened and closed appropriately. Some candidates were able to demonstrate accuracy and detail in addressing the two unpredictable bullet points. Many candidates were able to use memorised material correctly when addressing the predictable bullet points.

Component 2

Candidate performance was varied in the Internally Assessed Course Component of Talking, with some centres requiring further support with developing their approaches to assessment and judgement of performance. In some instances the marking instructions did not accord with the assessment standard. In contrast, some centres' marking instructions, in stipulating the number of details required, precluded the candidates from achieving the assessment standard.

Section 3: Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1

Listening

The multiple choice questions 1(g) and 2(c) were answered correctly by the vast majority of candidates. Note that 1(g) was the overall purpose question, which is new to Gaelic (Learners) National 5.

Other questions where candidates generally performed very well:

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|----------------|---|
| Question 1(a): | Paper shop/newsagents |
| Question 1(d): | £7 per hour |
| Question 2(d): | Fluent in German or working with computers |
| Question 2(f): | Any 2 from: will be good at it; will work least hard; wants to learn. (The vast majority got at least one mark. Perhaps, more practice of this new style of questioning where more detail is required will address this.) |
| Question 2(g): | After school every day |

Reading

Question 1(b):	Short stories
Question 1(d):	Creative in class and teacher is nice and supportive (A significant number achieved the maximum two marks for this question).
Question 1(f):	Multiple choice
Question 2(a):	Friday at 7.30 pm
Question 2(b):	Raise money/poor (people) abroad (challenging question)
Question 2(c):	Posters in the area/advert in paper
Question 2(f):	Overall purpose — multiple choice
Question 3(e):	Multiple choice
Question 3(h):	Lots to do

Writing

Centres are to be commended in preparing the candidates for this assessment. Many pieces were authentic. Many responses were opened and closed appropriately. Some candidates were able to demonstrate accuracy and detail in addressing the two unpredictable bullet points. Many candidates were able to use memorised material correctly when addressing the predictable bullet points.

Component 2

A range of performances was submitted for verification.

Presentation section

In most cases, candidates performed more confidently in this section of the talking performance, with many well-structured and fluent performances. Generally, this section of the talking performance provided an opportunity for candidates to show control of the language.

Conversation section

In general, candidates performed well in the conversation section and were able to sustain an interaction based on the same or related topic in relation to the presentation context. Where interlocutors used a wide variety of questions in the conversation section, this often helped candidates to avoid recycling the same language and structures from their presentations into their conversations.

Section 4: Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1

Listening

Question 1(b):	Middle of town and beside a hotel. (Many candidates were able to give only one detail. Perhaps more practice of this new style of questioning, where more detail is required, will address this.)
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- Question (e): Holiday magazines
- Question 2(b)(i): A significant amount experienced difficulty with 'Aberdeen'
- Question 2(e): Beautiful colours (The vast majority did not recognise the plural of colour)
- Question 2(h): How many people work there (Many did not recognise 'How many')

Reading

- Question 1(g): Every week
- Question 2(e): Local magazine and over 60s club

Perhaps due to time constraints, candidates generally did not perform as well in Text 3.

- Question 3(a): Cousin's wedding
- Question 3(b): Everything was very easy (in particular, it was 'easy' that was most challenging)
- Question 3(c): No problem / getting from place to place
- Question 3(f): Shopping centres or famous museum

Writing

Many candidates accurately used memorised material but a significant proportion were not able to match that standard in the two unpredictable bullet points. For a significant number of candidates, there was a marked difference in quality between the predictable and unpredictable bullet points.

Component 2

In some less successful performances, candidates' delivery was hesitant and there was other-tongue interference.

Conversation section

To varying degrees, most candidates found the conversation section more difficult than the presentation.

Some candidates had not fully prepared for the type of questions that could be asked in relation to their chosen topic, and therefore found it challenging in places to respond with the detailed language and types of structures expected at National 5. Consequently, some of the language used in responses by some candidates was too limited, and was lacking in the detail and accuracy expected. Also, some candidates' performances offered little flow and, indeed, in a few conversations there was an overreliance on prompting from the interlocutor.

Some candidates were unable to understand questions, and either one-word answers or an irrelevant answer (in relation to the question) meant that candidates performed less successfully in this section (or parts of this section). In some instances candidates were unable to respond to a question and were also unable to ask the interlocutor for repetition or rephrasing of the question. This is one simple technique that candidates should be encouraged to use at National 5 in to sustain and maintain a natural conversation.

In some instances, prolonged conversations meant that candidates' performances became increasingly less accurate and less confident as they struggled to sustain the conversation.

Section 5: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Component 1

Listening

- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to listen to as much Gaelic as possible.
- ◆ Candidates should continue to be encouraged to provide detailed responses.
- ◆ Candidates must revise all common grammatical structures and vocabulary.

Reading

- ◆ Candidates should continue to be encouraged to provide detailed responses in line with the National 5 method of marking.
- ◆ Where possible, candidates should receive opportunity to read authentic Gaelic texts.
- ◆ Candidates must revise all common grammatical structures and vocabulary

Writing

- ◆ Candidates should also be reminded that they must include relevant information in their responses. They should imagine that this is a genuine job application.
- ◆ Centres should spend time preparing candidates for the unpredictable bullet points. Candidates should learn how they may adapt a bank of templates/sentence structures in order to address the unpredictable bullet points.
- ◆ Candidates should be reminded that they must include a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary in order to demonstrate their skills and range. Candidates should avoid repeating grammatical structures if possible.
- ◆ Candidates should be encouraged to write in sentences at all times and avoid listing/using bullet points.

Component 2

To prepare candidates, centres should continue to refer closely to the *National 5 Modern Languages Performance: Talking General Assessment Information* document and the *National 5 Modern Languages Performance: Talking Assessment Task*. Both these documents should be considered in conjunction with the *Productive Grammar Grid for National 5 Modern Languages*.

Centres should continue to guide candidates in relation to the types of structures, phrases, vocabulary and grammar that might be used during the talking performance, and should advise candidates in relation to detailed language. Some candidates performed with greater success and accessed higher pegged marks with contexts that lend themselves more easily to using a greater variety of structures and tenses. Centres should consider this in advance of the assessment event, advising candidates accordingly.

Some centres encouraged candidates to personalise their presentation and/or use a range of contexts or topics for the presentations (from the same centre). It is good practice to encourage this. In a few cases, the context of the conversation section elicited responses from candidates that included the same (or very similar) vocabulary and structures that were used in the presentation.

While centres can use a variety of methods to record candidates' performances, centres are kindly requested to verify the quality of the audio recording before submitting to SQA for external verification.

External verification activities highlighted that in some cases where candidates' presentations were extended in length, this impacted on the candidates' ability to sustain the conversation section using detailed language. Centres are encouraged to advise candidates on the length of their proposed presentation. Conversely, some performances were shorter than the recommended duration, and this meant that in some cases candidates were unable to access the higher pegged marks.

Finally, the interlocutor plays an important role in managing the assessment event to ensure that candidates get the most out of their talking performance. Interlocutors are encouraged to use a wide variety of open-ended questions that will allow the candidate to expand on answers. Interlocutors should also be mindful to remain flexible and to tailor the length of conversation section. For example, interlocutors can support candidates by gauging how the candidate interacts on the day of the assessment event, and can shorten or lengthen the intended duration of the conversation section as appropriate.