



Course Report 2017

Subject	Gàidhlig
Level	Advanced Higher

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 and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. 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 documents and marking instructions.

Section 1: Comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: question paper 1 – Sgrùdadh

The question paper performed in line with expectations, and feedback from marking suggested that the question paper was fair in terms of overall level of demand and suitability of texts. All questions functioned as hoped with individual questions functioning appropriately to differentiate candidates.

Component 2: question paper 2 – Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh

The question paper fully performed in line with expectations. Feedback from marking suggested that the question paper was fair in terms of overall level of demand and content, and provided plenty scope for candidates to select two suitable questions to demonstrate their ability.

Component 3: performance – Bruidhinn

Visiting assessors carried out the performance assessment and again all commented on the ability of candidates to conduct effective and, in some cases, wide-ranging conversations with them on a number of different topics including the focus of their specialist study.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1 – Sgrùdadh

Most candidates performed quite well in answering the questions based on the prose passage and the poem. There were one or two particularly insightful responses to some of the questions in the poetry section, particularly in response to question 7.

Component 2: question paper 2– Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh

In the literature section, a number of candidates wrote lengthy responses on their chosen texts and used evidence effectively to back up points in their essays. A personal angle was very important in responses to questions 1, 2 and 3, and there were some effective answers to these where this was evident.

In writing, candidates again wrote in a variety of different ways based on the titles offered in the question paper. Nearly all made a good attempt to focus on the chosen topic. There were a number of particularly engaging personal reflective pieces focusing on 'cothrom smaoineachaidh' which were enjoyable to read.

Component 3: performance – Bruidhinn

Again, most candidates performed well in this component and visiting assessors again commented on the preparedness of candidates and commended their conversation skills and highlighted the enjoyment they gained from conversing with them.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1 – Sgrùdadh

Some candidates again found paraphrasing and demonstrating understanding in their own words challenging for some of the questions based on the prose section. Question 4 caused problems for some in being able to express ideas clearly.

In both the prose and poetry sections some candidates could have made more reference to particular techniques, and could have been more detailed in their analysis.

Component 2: question paper 2 – Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh

Some candidates found being able to write at sufficient length and in sufficient, 'comprehensive' detail and depth about their chosen texts demanding. Some responses to literature lacked detailed analysis or reference to critical techniques, and did not focus sufficiently clearly on what the question required — they were more general and 'multi-purpose' in form.

In writing, some found it difficult to write on their topic in depth. Some pieces would have benefitted from a better structure and connection with the task chosen.

Component 3: performance – Bruidhinn

A small number of candidates were a little vague in their discussion of literature covered in their courses and were unable to discuss these pieces or their research topic in any great depth.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper 1 – Sgrùdadh

Candidates should be aware of what questions are asking, the number of marks awarded for questions, and the need for the appropriate number of points and/or examples. They should also give sufficient focused explanation, analysis and examples in their answers — though at the same time avoiding long, time-consuming mini-essay type answers.

Candidates need sufficient practice in analysing texts throughout their courses and should ensure they have a thorough knowledge of the different techniques used by writers.

Candidates should ensure they are familiar with the different features of style and techniques in writing, particularly in putting forward arguments and how these are identified and explained. They should also ensure they keep abreast of items of news and issues as they progress through their courses to add to their understanding of topics such as those in this part of the exam.

Component 2: question paper 2 – Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh

At this level, candidates need to ensure a depth of analysis and evaluation in their responses to texts, and to be able to back these up with sufficient textual evidence. There should be a synthesis of these different elements along with their own personal response. Responses should be original and demonstrate their own personal evaluation of the text rather than the points from notes.

Candidates should be aware of the need for a progression in critical essay skills from other levels. A good knowledge of critical terminology should also be evident in responses.

Teachers, lecturers and assessors should ensure the suitability of texts in terms of demand and scope for candidates to construct good quality answers, and ensure that they experience a broad range of different texts throughout the year.

In writing, there is a continued need for a focus on accuracy in spelling and grammar, coupled with continued practice in a wide range of different writing tasks throughout the year.

Essays of a discursive nature would benefit from a short plan to organise the structure. Candidates should be aware that, at this level, a simple list of events relating an experience or narrative will be unlikely to result in high marks.

Component 3: performance – Bruidhinn

Candidates should ensure a thorough knowledge of particularly the research topic and literature covered within the course, and should be able to converse with the visiting assessor on these in sufficient depth. They should make use of technical vocabulary when discussing literature and be able to respond to questions based around these features connected with their texts.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	31
------------------------------------	----

Number of resulted entries in 2017	28
------------------------------------	----

Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	50.0%	50.0%	14	70
B	10.7%	60.7%	3	60
C	35.7%	96.4%	10	50
D	3.6%	100.0%	1	45
No award	0.0%	-	0	0

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.