



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Gaidhlig
Level(s)	Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

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 question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Intermediate 1

There were only six candidates this year. The number of candidates in 2011 had been 16, and in 2010 14. The candidates were presented by three centres this year. There had been four presenting centres in 2011 and two presenting centres in 2010.

The distribution of candidates by stage in recent years is as follows:

Year	Entries	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
2010	14	0	12	2	0	0
2011	16	2	9	5	0	0
2012	6	0	0	4	2	0

The performance of candidates was good, and no specific issues were identified with regard to the question papers.

Five candidates achieved Grade A, Band 2, and one candidate achieved no award, Band 8.

Intermediate 2

There were 26 candidates this year. The number of candidates in 2011 was 27 and in 2010 29. The number of candidates by stage in recent years is as follows:

Year	Entries	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
2010	29	0	0	18	11	0
2011	27	0	0	18	7	2
2012	26	0	1	18	7	0

The candidates were presented by 10 centres this year. In 2011, there were eight presenting centres, and there were 10 in 2010.

The performance of candidates was good. The distribution of grades was as follows:

Grade A Band 1 — 7 candidates
Grade A Band 2 — 12 candidates
Grade B Band 3 — 5 candidates
Grade B Band 4 — 1 candidate
Grade C Band 5 — 1 candidate

This shows that the candidates were well prepared for the examinations and that the examinations were appropriate. No specific areas of difficulty were identified.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Candidates performed well in all aspects of the assessments, at both Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2.

Intermediate 1

Listening: Candidates found the Listening passages accessible. There were evidently no issues with regard to the clarity of the CDs. Candidates coped well with the questions, which are either multiple choice or short answer responses.

Reading: Candidates related well to the Reading passage and coped well with all the questions. They were able to identify specific information in the text and also to give personal interpretation of aspects of the passage as necessary.

Writing: The content of the Writing responses was generally good, although one or two candidates' handwriting was quite difficult to read.

Intermediate 2

Listening: Candidates coped well with both Listening passages, although the passages were different in style: passage 1 was a monologue; passage 2 was a discussion. The questions posed no specific problems for candidates.

Reading: Candidates were able to show good understanding of the passage, and they were able to give detailed responses to most of the questions. Some candidates failed to give sufficient information for question 5, the only question allocated 3 marks.

Writing: Candidates did not perform as well in Writing as they did in the other two elements. A number of responses lacked imagination and did not show sufficient fluency and accuracy.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Candidates did not find any specific areas of the assessments demanding at either Intermediate 1 or Intermediate 2. However, the Writing responses at both levels were poorer than the performance in Listening and Reading.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

The candidates presented this year were well prepared for the assessments. It is clear that centres have a good understanding of how to prepare candidates for the examinations.

Centres should pay more attention to the preparation of candidates for writing.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 1

Number of resulted entries in 2011	16
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	6
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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	83.3%	83.3%	5	70
B	0.0%	83.3%	0	60
C	0.0%	83.3%	0	50
D	0.0%	83.3%	0	45
No award	16.7%	100.0%	1	-

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2011	29
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	27
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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	70.4%	70.4%	19	84
B	22.2%	92.6%	6	72
C	7.4%	100.0%	2	60
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	54
No award	0.0%	100.0%	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.