



## Course Report 2016

Subject	Urdu
Level	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 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

## Summary of the course assessment

Reactions to the examination from centres and practitioners were overwhelmingly positive, and centres and practitioners are to be congratulated on the high standard of candidate performance.

Both the Reading and Listening components were well performed by the candidates, candidates not performing as well in directed writing and follow up writing.

## Component 1 – question paper 1: Reading and Directed Writing

- ◆ Candidates are required to read a paragraph and then answer questions in English. This section is worth 20 marks and includes 2 marks of overall purpose question (Q8 for this paper).
- ◆ The last paragraph of the Urdu reading was underlined and required candidates to translate this paragraph into English.
- ◆ Candidates choose between two scenarios, both worth 10 marks. Most candidates chose scenario 1 society (he/she spent three-months in Pakistan, where he/she stayed, activities, & experiences of life there), with only a few choosing scenario 2 culture (he/she was in Pakistan during a big festival, how they prepared, celebrated, food etc) for their writing piece. Candidates were asked to write 120 to 150 words in Urdu on the chosen scenario.

This assessment of writing in Urdu about their own personal experiences allows candidates to build on the demands of the National 5.

## Component 2 – question paper 2: Listening and Writing

The Listening task is as follows:

- ◆ 20 marks in total
- ◆ 8 marks for the Monologue
- ◆ 12 marks for the Dialogue

This year's listening paper topic was employability.

The Writing task is worth 10 marks (120 to 150 words), and is a follow up from the dialogue. Candidates were asked to write about future plans regarding work, jobs and work experiences.

### **Component 3 – performance: Talking**

The component performed as expected, and is the same talking performance task as in previous years at Higher.

It was noted that most of the assessors are familiar with the aim of the performance task and they encouraged candidates to use topics and contexts which allowed candidates to perform well in most performances and used detailed and complex language. Some performances were way beyond the required difficulty level at Higher. Some poor performances were also seen where the same approach to assessment was used for all the candidates.

Centres marked candidates' performances in line with national standards using the revised detailed marking instructions.

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

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1 – question paper 1: Reading and Directed Writing**

The candidates' overall performance in the reading component was very strong.

Candidates gave details when they wrote their answers. For example:

In question 1(b): 'He started listening to his teachers/in the class carefully. He completed his home/school work to good standard'.

In question 3: 'They were not good in studies/not academic, became successful in/recognised for their skills in cricket/sports'

In question 5: 'Try to speak the language in your daily routine/daily life so that you get to practise it'; 'Watch movies in the foreign language to learn different vocabulary/words'

The directed writing was also completed to a good standard. Most candidates covered all four bullet points. They were well prepared for this writing and wrote a very good essay. Some candidates gave good details about their stay in Pakistan, and wrote about the different activities and differences in life style. Some candidates wrote about celebrating Eid in Pakistan, and how they prepared for the big festival and food items for the day etc.

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 all the bullet points. Many candidates were able to use memorised material correctly when addressing the prepared bullet points.

In Reading some good/detailed answers were given. For example:

Question 1(a): 'If you choose the profession', 'Make the aim for your life to achieve goal', 'set goals to achieve them and you will be successful, 'if you waste this time then you will regret it'

Question 4: 'He discusses his lesson with his friends'. 'He writes important points and posts them on his (bed) room wall'

Question 5: 'Try to speak the language in your daily routine/daily life /so that you get to practise it' 'Watch movies in the foreign language to learn different vocabulary/words'

Question 6(a): 'Practise/exercise what you have learned in class/keep practicing what you have learned'. 'Teach/tutor the subject to others/other students were particularly well answered', 'with most candidates being able to achieve the marks allocated for the questions'.

## **Component 2 – question paper 2: Listening and Writing**

Most candidates performed well in the Listening paper. Many candidates attempted to give the appropriate level of detail.

Some examples of detail example in question 1(c):

'Nayl discovered their hospitality and respect towards each other'

'They sit on the carpet when eat in/for dinner'

'They do not use much spices and salt in their food.'

And also in question 2(f):

'I will know many people'

'He will be well known/famous'

**Listening:** some questions were particularly well answered, with most candidates being able to achieve the marks allocated for the questions. For example:

Question 1(b) 'he provided information of the area, he provided accommodation, so that Nayl would not face difficulties regarding his travelling/stay /requirements.'

Question 1(c) 'Nayl discovered their hospitality and respect towards each other, they sit on the carpet when eat in/for dinner'. 'They do not use much spices and salt in their food'.

Question 2(e) 'He would have to spend a lot of time out of his home in addition, he does not have a political background'.

Question 1(e) was correctly answered by all candidates.

There were couple of areas in listening paper which were demanding for some candidates. For example;

1a: Pleasant/good relations lead to progress/profitable/successful business

2d: He would also like to deal with the violation/against civil rights/citizen/people's rights cases

It was noted by markers that some candidates had developed very good skills to deal with exam questions: during the time given at the beginning of the exam to read through the questions, they had taken the time to underline key words in the questions; and during the listening process, they had also developed the skill of note-taking rather than attempting to write the full answer while listening.

## **Writing**

There was evidence of a good range of vocabulary and structures and some very complex language. Markers highlighted a good degree of accuracy and fluency in the both parts of writing.

## **Component 3 — Performance: Talking**

The overall quality of most of the candidates' performance was high in the samples verified from the two centres.

### **Presentation section (10 marks)**

Candidates performed very well in the Presentation section of the performance. Based on the centres verified, most candidates were awarded the upper pegged marks (8 or 10). Most of the performances were very well rehearsed and the candidates performed to the best of their ability.

### **Conversation section (15 marks) and sustaining the conversation (5 marks)**

Candidates coped very well and almost all the candidates used detailed and complex language with great grammatical accuracy, variety of verbs and fluency. The majority of the candidates were awarded pegged marks (12 or 15).

With regards to the 'sustaining the conversation' aspect, most candidates sustained the conversation well, and were awarded 5 marks for this aspect.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1 – question paper 1: Reading and Directed Writing**

In the reading paper, Questions 3 and 6(b) proved demanding for candidates and they did not answer this question fully.

The translation paragraph was a little challenging for candidates and some candidates did not translate full sentences and or missed out words. Centres should spend more time to prepare students on translating techniques.

### **Component 2 – question paper 2: Listening and Writing**

In the listening paper candidates found questions 1(a) and 2(d) challenging and did not perform well

For question 1(a), the language was difficult, candidates found some confusion in this question. They did not write full answers.

For question 2(d), candidates could not translate/understand this part dealing with the violation/against civil rights/citizen/people's rights cases. Again candidates did not create full answers.

## **Writing**

Many candidates accurately used memorised material, but a significant proportion were not able to match that standard for some areas of the given bullet points.

## **Component 3 — Performance: Talking**

### **Conversation Section**

The choice of the topic is very important for a good performance. Candidates who chose to speak about 'Myself and my Family,' a rather easy topic for Higher, were noticed as having difficulty with using detailed and complex language. Choosing an inappropriate topic may limit the candidate's ability to use the type of detailed and complex language required at Higher level.

Most of the candidates were awarded 12 or 9 marks for the conversation section. None of the candidate was awarded below 6 marks.

## **Section 3: Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1 – question paper 1: Reading and Directed Writing**

Candidates should be encouraged to write clearly and legibly leaving space between answers.

Centres should continue to encourage candidates to provide detailed responses in line with the Higher marking method.

- ◆ Where possible, candidates should receive the opportunity to read authentic Urdu texts.
- ◆ Candidates must revise all common grammatical structures and vocabulary.
- ◆ Candidates should also be reminded that they must include all relevant information in their responses.
- ◆ Centres should spend time preparing candidates for all bullet points.
- ◆ Candidates should learn how they may adapt a bank of templates/sentence structures in order to address the given 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 or using bullet points.

**Directed Writing paper:** ensure candidates cover all 4 bullet points; some candidates wrote a good essay but then lost marks because they missed addressing one or two of the bullet points.

## **Component 2 – question paper 2: Listening and Writing**

**Listening paper:** candidates should concentrate on questions 1 and 2 for the first hearing of the audio, then try to answer middle questions after the second hearing and then attempt the last questions after the third hearing.

Some students got confused and did not provide an answer to the linked question.

As stated above, Markers noted evidence of highlighting key words (especially question words) during the silent time on the CD, and also evidence of note-taking during the first playing of the Urdu audio. This is to be encouraged.

In 'tick box' answers, although most candidates did tick the correct boxes, it would be worthwhile for practitioners to remind candidates that one mark will be deducted for each box ticked over and above the required number of ticks. This also applies to Reading.

## **Component 3: Performance — Talking**

Overall, centres are familiar with the performance requirement, and the candidates performed well.

Most of the performances were of high quality with excellent pronunciation, good annotation, and variety of verbs and with great fluency. Some average performances with minor grammatical errors and inaccurate verb endings were also noticed, but the number was negligible. Overall the majority of the candidates did well and the performances were delivered with a good range of detailed and complex language and structures expected at Higher.

Most of the performances from centres that were verified demonstrated confident delivery, good flow in the presentation, and a variety of opinions and ideas. Most of the adult candidates who were able to use interjections, ask relevant questions and use idiomatic phrases were able to sustain the conversation well.

Centres are advised to encourage the pupils to select different topics for the performance from the four contexts of learning, employability, culture and society. Students should also be encouraged not to choose the same topic for the performance. Centres are also advised to encourage the candidates not to choose the same topic as was chosen for National 5. This type of topic may limit the candidate's ability to use the type of detailed and complex language required at higher level.

Assessors must make sure that all candidates meet the minimum time limit for the spoken performances, and neither the presentation nor the conversation should be too short or too long, which can restrain the candidates from performing to the best of their ability. Centres are advised to refer to the information regarding the recommended length of the presentation

and the conversation provided in the document *Modern Languages Performance: Talking, General assessment information (Higher)*.

Centres are also advised to submit proof of internal verification along with the candidates' performance evidence. Some sort of written commentary about the candidates' performances would also be appreciated because it will help the verifiers see the judgement of the assessors.

# Grade Boundary and Statistical information

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	50
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	92
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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 -				
A	78.3%	78.3%	72	72
B	6.5%	84.8%	6	61
C	8.7%	93.5%	8	50
D	2.2%	95.7%	2	44
No award	4.3%	-	4	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.