Course Report 2017

Subject	Italian
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 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: Reading and Writing

Reading: 30 marks

The Reading paper consisted of three texts increasing in difficulty and of equal weight (10 marks for each item). The three Reading texts sampled, in turn, the contexts of Learning, Culture and Employability.

The question paper performed in line with expectations, and feedback from the marking team suggested that the question paper was fair in terms of course coverage and level of demand.

Writing: 20 marks

Task: E-mail application for a job, including information specified in six bullet points including two unpredictable bullet points.

The six bullets were appropriate to the task and the context (Employability), and allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening 20 marks

The Listening monologue and dialogue were based on the context of Society, and questions on these were worth 8 marks and 12 marks respectively.

Overall, this paper performed as intended. The marking team found the paper to be fair and appropriately challenging for the level.

Component 3: performance: talking

The centres verified for the Talking component had used the SQA course assessment task for Modern Languages to assess candidates effectively for National 5. The chosen topics for the performance provided candidates with a good opportunity to show a range of structures and tenses to express ideas. The presentation and conversation provided scope for candidates to demonstrate accurate handling of detailed language and of a range of tenses appropriate to the level.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading

Most candidates identified the following information correctly.

Text 1

♦ Question (b): *una persona che soffre dell'ansia* — someone with anxiety/anxious people
♦ Question (c): *per non essere stanco per la fame — ti aiuterà inoltre a concentrarti* — you will not be tired because of hunger and it will help you to concentrate
♦ Question (e): *spegnere la televisione, togliere le cuffie e chiudere i social network* — switch off the TV, take out headphones and close social network

Text 2

♦ Question (a): *le vancanze sono troppo lunghe* — the holidays are too long
♦ Question (b): *fare giardinaggio, vendere biglietti per i monumenti storici o fare commesso in un negozio* — to do gardening, sell tickets for historic monuments or be a shop assistant
♦ Question (d) (i): *fa troppo caldo senza l'aria condizionata* — it's too hot without air-conditioning
♦ Question (d) (ii): *hanno bisogno di riposarsi* — they need to rest

Text 3

♦ Question (b): *a me piace molto essere fisicamente attivo e poi è sempre intressante organizzare attività per bambini* — I really like to be physically active and it is always interesting to organise activities for children

Writing

Many candidates were able to show that they had prepared appropriately for this task by writing sentences with good content, accuracy and language resource, in particular with the first four bullets, which would have been practised during the course. In addition, most candidates attempted both unpredictable bullet points.

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening

Item 2:

♦ Question (a): *non ho altri fratelli o sorelle* — I don't have other brothers or sisters

- Question (c): *se ho problemi con un professore, o se non ho buoni voti a scuola* — if I have problems with a teacher, or if I do not get good grades at school
- Question (d) (ii): *la quantità di sigarette che mio padre fuma* — the number of cigarettes my dad smokes

Component 3: performance – talking

Candidates responded effectively to a supportive interlocutor. Generally speaking, conversations were of an interactive nature, allowing candidates to demonstrate their ability to sustain a conversation.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading:

Some candidates had difficulty in identifying the precise detail in the following:

Text 1

- Question (a): *prendi cura di te stesso* — take care of yourself — *stesso* being mistranslated as stress

Text 2

- Question (e): *i professori mi danno cose da leggere e ho anche il tempo per scegliere libri che mi piacciono* — teachers give me things to read and I also have time to choose books that I like

Text 3

- Question (a): *è stata mia mamma a dirmi che esistevo questo progetto. Ho deciso di partecipare per curiosità personale* — my mum told me the project existed, I decided to participate out of personal curiosity
- Question (e): *mi ha aiutato a crescere a livello personale e mi ha permesso di vedere come funziona il mondo del lavoro* — it helped me to grow on a personal level and allowed me to see how the world of work functions
- Question (f): *Fa' una domanda al centro sportive per un'esperienza lavorativa* — apply to/ask a sports centre for work experience

Writing

Some candidates had difficulty in addressing the two unpredictable bullet points competently as a result of being unable to manipulate verbs and use the bilingual dictionary appropriately. There were also some errors in basic vocabulary such as numbers in learned materials, for example *diecisei* being written in several scripts instead of *sedici*.

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening

Some candidates had difficulty in identifying the precise detail in the following:

Item 1

♦ Question (b) (ii): *i figli voglioni essere membri di Facebook a dodici-tredici anni, ma i genitori considerano i figli troppi giovani a dodici o tredici anni* — children want to join Facebook at 12/13 years old, but parents consider them to be too young at 12 or 13
♦ Question (c): *quando non hanno abbastanza spazio perché devono condividere la stessa camera* — when they do not have enough space because they have to share the same room
♦ Question (d): *sono gelosi perché il fratello ha un regalo di compleanno più grande. Altri pensano che la sorella riceva tutte le attenzioni dei genitori* — they are jealous because the brother has a bigger birthday present. Others think that the sister receives all of the parents' attention

Item 2

♦ Question (b) (i): *è sempre paziente* — he is always patient
♦ Question (f): *non sopporta lo sport. Preferisce leggere riviste, e mentre legge consuma scatole intere di cioccolatini* — she cannot stand sport. She prefers to read magazines, and while she reads she eats whole boxes of chocolates
♦ Question (g): *una caramella non fa male come una sigaretta* — a sweet is not as bad as a cigarette

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading

Centres should continue to encourage candidates to attempt all questions in the paper. Candidates can lose marks for poor expression if the markers cannot understand the English. As such, centres should reiterate the importance of checking over answers to ensure that the answers make sense in English. Candidates should also pay attention to false friends such as *stesso* being translated as stress.

Writing

Centres should encourage all candidates to attempt each of the six bullet points to access the full range of marks available. When using material for the first four bullet points, candidates should check spelling carefully and ensure basic information such as age and numbers is accurate.

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening

The Listening paper is generally more demanding than the Reading as candidates do not have access to a dictionary and they do not have access to the source information once the recording has been played. Centres might consider emphasising strategies to overcome this, such as note taking in the foreign language or phonetic equivalents to allow candidates to 'review' the information.

When the context is familiar to candidates, eg social media and family arguments, candidates should be advised to listen very carefully and ensure they answer the questions with what is actually said on the recording rather than answering with their own experiences.

Cognates are used frequently in the Listening paper, and centres should continue to prepare their candidates to understand these in unfamiliar contexts and expressions.

Component 3: performance: Talking

Of the sample verified, the approaches to assessment used by centres were all accepted. In assessing the Talking, assessors had made effective use of the marking instructions to support marks awarded to each candidate. Centres had also provided a simple but clear pro forma for each candidate giving commentaries on each performance and a record of the marks awarded for each section. The pro forma also provided evidence of internal verification. This document is very helpful during the verification process.

The evidence presented was well organised and was very helpful during the verification process. Of the sample verified, the assessment judgements made by assessors were in line with national standard.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	332

Number of resulted entries in 2017	241

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	70.5%	70.5%	170	70
B	13.3%	83.8%	32	60
C	10.4%	94.2%	25	50
D	2.5%	96.7%	6	45
No award	3.3%	-	8	-

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.