Course Report 2016

Subject	German
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

The 2016 National 5 German external examination performed broadly as expected. Feedback received by centres was positive and it was felt to be fair and accessible to candidates. The majority of candidates coped well with the level and were able to complete the exam within the allocated time. A one mark reduction was made to the intended grade boundaries to take into account the context of the listening component.

In 2016, there was a drop in the number of candidates presented for National 5 German. However, the overall ability of the cohort appeared much stronger than last year.

The examination consisted of three components:

♦ Component 1 question Paper 1: Reading and Writing
♦ Component 2 question Paper 2: Listening
♦ Component 3 performance: talking

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

The Reading component was composed of three texts worth 10 marks on the contexts of Society, Learning and Employability. There were three supported questions worth a total of 4 marks, and the overall purpose question in Question 3. The texts were relevant and interesting which engaged the candidates, given the quality of responses. The Reading paper performed as expected, and was accessible to candidates while providing the demand and rigour required at National 5. This led to a range of performances.

Overall, candidates performed well in the Reading element of the paper. There was a full range of performances and some candidates were able to attain full marks in the paper.

Item 1 was an online article explaining what citizens in Munich can do to help protect the environment. Item 2 was an online article about pupils in Munich cooking at school. Item 3 was an article about Manfred Schulz starting his own business.

Candidates generally performed well throughout. Some candidates did not provide enough detail from the text to access some of the marks. The marking scheme allowed candidates to offer a range of answers to demonstrate their understanding.

Question 1 seemed well done, but it is worth noting that some candidates were guessing and it was clear that they had not, in fact, looked at the text in great detail. Candidates found Question 3 the most challenging. Most candidates coped well with the Overall Purpose Question.

Particular difficulties were the recognition of comparative adjectives (*besser, preiswerter*) and separable verbs (*sieht…aus*). A small number of candidates also found composite nouns (*Luftverschmutzung*) difficult.

A few candidates did not choose the correct meaning from the dictionary which distorted their answer, eg question 1(e), 2(b), 3(b)(ii), which, in turn, did not provide the correct answer to the question.

There were some 'No Responses' but not an excessive amount, and most candidates made an attempt to answer all questions.

The vast majority of candidates passed this element or were close to a pass.

Writing

The Writing component asked candidates to reply to a job advert for a waiter or waitress at a restaurant in Germany. The job application required candidates to respond to six bullet points, four of which were predictable and the final two bullet points were unpredictable

Overall, candidates performed as expected in the Writing element of the paper. There was a full range of performances and a good number of candidates were able to achieve a 16 or 20.

Most candidates coped well with the first four bullet points. It was clear that centres had prepared candidates well for the Writing. Most candidates attempted all six bullet points, but many encountered difficulties in the final two unpredictable bullet points, particularly with formulating questions.

Some candidates coped less well with the unpredictable bullet points, particularly number 6. Some candidates had excellent responses, some had excellent responses in bullet points 1–4, and it deteriorated significantly in bullet points 5 and 6 — indicating that writing spontaneously seemed to be challenging. Lots of candidates kept the final two bullet points simple, which worked overall.

Component 2 question Paper 2: Listening

The Listening paper consisted of two parts: a monologue worth 8 marks and a dialogue worth 12 marks. There were two supported questions worth four marks and an overall purpose question in Item 1. The context of the Listening paper was holidays from the Culture context. The level of demand of this paper was more demanding than last year's paper which was perceived to be less challenging than might have been expected. The paper performed as expected and provided a range of performances.

Candidates performed as expected in the Listening element of the paper. The Listening component was the part of the exam where there was the greatest spread of marks. There was a range of performances, and the Marking Instructions were sufficiently adapted to ensure that candidates could provide a range of answers. There were a range of topics in the context of the paper, which sampled from a wide range of vocabulary.

Some candidates struggled with composite nouns (*Strandhaus, Ferienwohnung, Südfrankreich…*). Most seemed to cope well with the listening overall, others almost got the correct answer but failed to provide sufficient detail for the point. Item 1 was generally well attempted; some candidates found Item 2 more challenging, which is why it was decided that

the Grade Boundary would be reduced by a mark to allow for the perceived difficulty of the context.

Question 2(g) was identified as a problem during standardisation, so the marking scheme was adapted to ensure that some candidates were awarded the mark.

Component 3: performance – Talking

This internally-assessed component consists of two elements: a presentation on a topic of candidates' choice, and a follow-up discussion.

All centres verified this year used the SQA guidelines for the Internally Assessed Component National 5 Performance: Talking

Care must be taken to provide candidates with every opportunity for personalisation and choice.

In the externally verified sample of Performances, the Marking Instructions for the presentation and conversation were, in the vast majority of centres, used appropriately.

There was some inconsistency in approach and in marking with regard to the sustaining the performance element. Some centres were too severe in awarding marks.

Many centres provided commentaries on candidate performances with specific reference to aspects of the pegged mark commentaries provided in the Marking Instructions, eg comment on fluency, accuracy, range of vocabulary etc.

Many 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 General Assessment Information.*

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading
Item 1 – Context Society: Overall, candidates coped well with the majority of questions in this first text, providing sufficient detail to attain most of the marks.

♦ Question 1(a) was well done with most candidates getting the composite noun in the plural.
♦ Question 1(b) was relatively well attempted with most candidates getting the either element required for the mark. Some candidates provided lots of detail.

- In Question 1(c), most candidates got at least 1 mark, with more than half of candidates achieving full marks
- Questions 1(f)(i) and 1(f)(ii) were particularly well done.

Item 2 – Context Learning: Overall, candidates coped with the majority of questions in the second text. Each question was worth two marks and more than 70% of candidates were able to achieve at least one mark in each question.

- Each question was worth two marks and more than 70% of candidates were able to achieve at least one mark in each question.
- In Questions 2(d) and 2(e), most candidates were able to pick out relevant details from the text.

Item 3 – Context Employability: This question proved the most challenging for candidates. The majority of candidates provided sufficient detail to achieve most of the marks.

- Question 3(b)(i) was well done and most candidates recognised the composite noun.
- Question 3(f) was the supported Overall Purpose Question, which 88% of candidates got correct.

Writing

Virtually all candidates attempted the first four predictable bullet points, displaying a good range of vocabulary, grammatical structures and tenses. The majority of candidates seemed well prepared and confident in their writing.

Component 2 question Paper 2: Listening

Item 1: Monologue
- Question 1(e), most candidates were able to provide adequate detail to gain at least one of the marks.
- Question 1(f) was the supported Overall Purpose Question and the vast majority of candidates chose the correct response.

Item 2: Dialogue
- Question 2(b): Most candidates provided sufficient detail to get at least one mark.
- Question 2(c): the vast majority of candidates wrote the correct answer.
- Question 2(d): Most candidates were able to identify the cognates 'Hektik' and 'Stress'.
- Question 2(e): The majority of candidates were able to identify the bad weather.

Component 3: performance – Talking

Generally speaking, candidates did well in the talking performance.

For the candidates sampled during external verification all performances scored 6 and above for the presentation and the vast majority scored 9 and above in the conversation section.

For the sustaining the conversation element, all candidates verified were awarded either 3 or 5 marks.

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.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading Question 1

♦ Question 1(a): Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail or guessed the meaning of *Rohstoffen*. Answers included 'paper' or 'material' on its own.
♦ Question 1(b): Some candidates did not convey the meaning and detail required for this question to gain the mark.
♦ Question 1(c): Most candidates achieved at least one mark in this question, however there seemed to be some confusion that the fruit was contaminated by the air pollution.
♦ Question 1(d): The separable verb *sieht…aus* caused some candidates difficulty and was often translated as 'is'. There was also some misreading of *preiswerter*. The comparative was important here to gain the mark and many candidates wrote 'worth the price'.
♦ Question 1(e): There was evidence of some dictionary misuse here. Some translations of *Kleider* included 'coat hangers' and 'dresses'. To gain the mark, it was important that candidates had understood 'clothes'. There were also some mistranslations of *austauschen* and *teilen*, including 'divide' and 'cut up'.
♦ Question 1(f)(i): A number of candidates did not attempt this question.
♦ Question 1(f)(ii): Marks were missed for not providing the plural form of the noun.

Reading Question 2

♦ Question 2(a): Some candidates did not convey the meaning of *kaum* and it was clear that some candidates had read *keine* as *kleine*. Some candidates did not provide specific enough detail for *wenig schmackhaft*, where the idea of tasteless or not tasty was required. Some candidates provided answers such as 'not good' or 'horrible'.

♦ Question 2(b): Most candidates were able to identify that pupils cooked for themselves, but missed the idea that a different class is responsible for lunch every two weeks. Some candidates missed the idea of rotation.
♦ Question 2(c): Some candidates transposed the marks for this question, while others did not provide sufficient details to gain the marks. Some candidates did not include the *mit frischen Zutaten*.
♦ Question 2(d): 'Work together' and 'how much food costs' were the most common answers. Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail or guessed.
♦ Question 2(e): The Marking Instructions were not insisting on the comparative adjectives for the marks here. Some candidates misread *die Schüler können eine zweite Portion kostenlos bekommen* as the pupils could get two portions for free.

Reading Question 3

♦ Question 3(a): Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail.
♦ Question 3(b)(i): Some candidates did not translate the full meaning of *Sonntagsmarkt* or provide addition information for *in der Stadt*.
♦ Question 3(b)(ii): Some candidates missed the idea of *viele Studenten* and were not able to identify the past participle *gekauft*. Some candidates had difficulty expressing that it was the clothes that were seen around town and not Manfred.
♦ Question 3(c): A range of answers were accepted here, but some candidates did not give enough or sufficiently accurate detail, such as used car or he went to Italy for eight weeks.
♦ Question 3(d): Some candidates did not mention sewing to get the mark.
♦ Question 3(e): Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail or guessed the answer. There were a significant number of candidates who did not attempt the question.
♦ Question 3(f): A small number of candidates did not choose the correct response.

Writing

Most candidates attempted bullet points five and six in the writing. The accuracy of the bullet points deteriorated significantly in the last two bullet points, and a considerable number of candidates were unable to form basic questions.

In bullet points 1–4, it was evident that a small number of candidates had not adequately prepared for these, despite the predictability. Some candidates did not provide a range of tenses, and some had particular difficulty in forming the past tense. Other points of difficulty for some candidates were adjective endings, word order and verb agreement.

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening

Item 1: Monologue

♦ Question 1(a): Some candidates were unable to break down the composite nouns *Strandhaus, Ferienwohnung* and *Wohnwagen*.
♦ Question 1(b): There were four possible answers for this question and the most common answer was 'to share the work', but some candidates did not understand the idea of 'together'. The Marking Instructions insisted on the comparative form *billiger* to gain the mark, which some candidates did not understand.

- Question 1(c): Many candidates found this question challenging and either did not understand *Frankreich* as France or did not include '(the) south (of) to gain the mark.
- Question 1(d): Some candidates were unable to identify *Broschüre*, as a brochure or a leaflet. Some candidates guessed and said they found it online or that it was recommended to them. A small number of candidates misread the question and thought it said 'How did they find the accommodation?' which led to them providing an opinion.
- Question 1(e): Some candidates provided insufficient detail to gain the marks for this question: sunbathe/lie in the sun, swim in the sea, go to the shopping centre.
- Question 1(f): This question was the supported Overall Purpose Question. Some candidates did not choose the correct box or chose more than one box.

Item 2: Dialogue

- Question 2(a): A considerable number of candidates were unable to identify the noun *Chefin*. Many candidates guessed and some candidates had written 'chef'.
- Question 2(b): Some candidates misunderstood *kennen lernen* as 'to learn about'.
- Question 2(d): Some candidates found the compass point *Nord* demanding and were not able to identify the North Sea coast or the coast in the North.
- Question 2(g): This question was particularly challenging for candidates as most were unable to identify the time phrase *vor zwei Jahren* as 'two years ago.' The Marking Team decided to modify the Marking Instructions to allow a wider range of answers. It had to be clear that she had already been there. Some candidates wrote 'She lived there with her sister for two years' — this was awarded the mark although it did not accurately reflect the transcript — the 'for two years' was treated as extraneous and ignored.
- Question 2(h): A considerable number of candidates were unable to identify 'shopping' as the answers and guessed a range of answers to do with sightseeing and castles.
- Question 2(i): Some candidates seemed confused here and thought they were coming to Scotland.
- Question 2(j): Question 2(i) impact on this question and some candidates were unable to identify the chore and opted for 'work in a garage'.

Component 3: performance – Talking

Presentation section

In the presentation, a small number of candidates seemed to struggle with the complexity of the language of the topic they had chosen. Centres should provide advice to candidates as to what level of language they should be able to cope with, and should ensure comprehension of their presentation in preparation for delivering it. Topics for this part of the performance should normally be taken from Appendix 3: Context development of the Course and Unit Support Notes, which is available on the Modern Languages homepage of the SQA website.

A few presentations were significantly long or short, which affected the candidates' performances. Centres are advised to refer to the information regarding the recommended length of the presentation and the conversation provided in the *Modern Languages Performance: talking, General assessment information*.

Conversation section

A few conversations were unnecessarily prolonged or significantly short and affected the candidates' performances. Centres are advised to refer to the information regarding the recommended length of the presentation and the conversation provided in the *Modern Languages Performance: talking, General assessment information*.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading

As with the Listening paper, some candidates did not provide sufficient detail to gain the marks on offer. Candidates should be guided by the marks awarded for each question and should provide as much detail as they have understood. It is important to note that it is rare for a single-word answer to be sufficient detail at National 5 level. It may be worth advising candidates to look at what comes before and what comes after to ensure that all the necessary detail is included.

Centres should encourage dictionary skill practice to allow candidates to select the most appropriate translations in the context of the text. It is also important that candidates answer the question being asked. It may be worthwhile reminding candidates that the information comes in a chronological order and the questions include hooks to support the candidate throughout the text.

Candidates should be familiar with a range of grammatical structures as outlined in the Grammar Grid for National 5. This should assist them in identifying the relationship between the words in the sentence, including the tense and whether there is more than one verb in the sentence. Comparative adjectives and composite nouns are common features at National 5 level. The tense of the question should give candidates a good idea of the tense they should be using.

Although the extraneous rule no longer applies, candidates should be discouraged from giving additional information that is not related to the text or the question, as this could negate any correction information and they could therefore lose the marks gained for correct information.

Candidates should be encouraged to read each question carefully and highlight/underline key words to help them find the correct answer in the text. They should also be encouraged to write in bullet points containing the relevant information. It may be useful to encourage candidates to read the question and their answer at the end of the paper to ensure that the question has been answered and that what they have written in English makes sense.

Writing

It should be made clear to candidates that no formal introduction or conclusion is required, as many candidates struggled to learn these accurately.

Candidates should be advised that for bullet point three, the information should be relevant to the job. A number of candidates had written about their free time but not mentioned any skills. It is important to remember the context of the paper, ie that it is a job application.

In bullet point four, some candidates chose to write in the present tense, which limited the range of tenses in the piece overall. Candidates should try and showcase a range of tense accurately to achieve the best possible mark.

For the unpredictable bullet points, candidates should have the opportunity to practise a range of these, and it may be worthwhile looking to other languages for ideas.

It is important that candidates attempt all six bullet points to ensure that enough is written, as this can have an impact on their overall mark.

Candidates should check that all bullet points have been covered and use their dictionary to check the accuracy of what they have written. Centres should concentrate on a range of productive grammar skills, including how to form questions. Centres should also make candidates aware of the marking criteria so candidates know what is expected of them in this paper to achieve a good grade

Component 2 question Paper 2: Listening

In the Listening paper, candidates should be guided by the number of marks awarded for each question to ensure that sufficient detail is provided. It is important to note that it is rare for a single-word answer to be sufficient detail at National 5 level, eg a country on its own would not be sufficient detail. In relation to the 2016 paper, candidates should revisit some basic vocabulary — such as countries, numbers, weather expressions, question words — to ensure that sufficient detail is provided.

Candidates should be discouraged from providing a range of alternative answers using the slash or oblique line (/), as some candidates lost marks if it was not clear what their answer was or if the two answers contradicted each other.

Candidates should read the questions carefully; highlighting key words which can help them structure the text. Centres should also encourage candidates to write in bullet points and to score out any notes with a single line. Some candidates took extensive notes and this practice should be encouraged through continued practice in class. Notes should be confined to the side of the paper. Some candidates drew a line down the middle of the paper which made it more difficult for Markers to find the correct answers.

Candidates hear both the monologue and the dialogue three times, and should be encouraged to use the third time to check the accuracy of what they have written.

Component 3: performance – Talking

Interlocutors should ask questions in the conversation that follow on naturally from the presentation topic chosen by candidates as recommended in the National 5 Modern Languages performance: talking assessment task document. Making a natural link between the topic chosen by the candidate for the presentation and the beginning of the conversation is good practice. Interlocutors should ensure they do not start the conversation with a question unrelated to the presentation as this does not aid the natural flow of the performance.

Referring to other topics in the course of the conversation allows for personalisation and choice. Interlocutors should move on naturally to other topics, allowing the candidates to demonstrate a variety of language. Interlocutors should ensure they do not ask questions that lead to candidates repeating parts of their presentation in their answers. Interlocutors should therefore try to avoid asking questions about items that candidates have already addressed in the presentation.

Centres should ensure they are not overly prescriptive in preparing candidates for the conversation. Conversations should be as spontaneous as possible for the level assessed. It is recommended that centres ask a range of questions adapted to the responses of each candidate, rather than asking the same questions to the whole cohort. A wider variety of questions in the conversation can help candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected (in line with Appendix 1 of the Modern Languages performance: talking, General assessment information which is available from SQA's website).

Updated versions of the National 5 Marking Information Grid will be published in September 2016. The standards will remain the same, but each pegged mark descriptor will provide additional detail for assessors. The sustaining the conversation element will see the addition of 'pegged mark 1'. Centres should take note of the new detailed advice in the updated version of the National 5 Marking Information Grid for the awarding of 5, 3, 1 and 0 for the sustaining the conversation element of the Performance.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	2188

Number of resulted entries in 2016	2025

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	53.0%	53.0%	1074	69
B	19.2%	72.2%	389	59
C	13.6%	85.9%	276	49
D	5.4%	91.3%	110	44
No award	8.7%	-	176	-

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.