



Course report 2023

Higher Urdu

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022: 92

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 81

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	75	Percentage	92.6	Cumulative percentage	92.6	Minimum mark required	82
B	Number of candidates	5	Percentage	6.2	Cumulative percentage	98.8	Minimum mark required	70
C	Number of candidates	0	Percentage	0	Cumulative percentage	98.8	Minimum mark required	58
D	Number of candidates	0	Percentage	0	Cumulative percentage	98.8	Minimum mark required	46
No award	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	1.2	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

Please note that rounding has not been applied to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of SQA's website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

The paper consisted of an Urdu reading passage from the context of society: living a simple and successful life. The reading passage was relatable for candidates, with an appropriate range of questions for A–C level candidates. Candidates were able to relate to the topic of good habits and life skills and provided good responses.

Overall, the paper was of a good standard. The translation part is normally more challenging for C-type candidates.

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Overall, the paper was accessible for all candidates. Candidates are given two scenarios to choose from and then write 150 to 180 words in Urdu on their chosen scenario.

Candidates were given a choice between culture and employability scenarios; most candidates chose scenario 1 (culture). Some candidates missed one or two bullet points and were unable to achieve full marks.

Question paper 2: Listening

Overall, the paper was accessible for all candidates. Candidates listen to Urdu recordings and then answer questions in English. This year the paper was on the context of learning.

Assignment–writing

The requirement to complete the assignment–writing was removed for session 2022–23.

Performance–talking

The approach to the assessment and the assessment judgement used by centres was valid.

All centres verified used SQA’s guidelines for the internally assessed component of course assessment: Higher Modern Languages performance–talking assessment task. The quality of the performances sampled was generally high. Assessors guided candidates well in the selection of their topics and, in many performances, candidates used a range of structures, vocabulary, and tenses appropriate to the level.

At Higher level, there is no presentation; instead assessors ask some settling in questions, which gives candidates time to relax and perform well.

Most candidates chose a second topic from a different context; however, some candidates chose three or four topics to talk about, which eliminated the difficulty and detail element of the assessment.

Most centres provided proof of internal verifications, which was helpful to verify the performances.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Overall, many candidates performed well.

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates answered questions 1, 4, 5 and 6 well. These questions were about good habits and life skills. It seems that candidates were able to relate to these questions and understood what to write.

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Candidates had prepared well for this paper and performed well.

Question paper 2: Listening

Candidates found this paper relatable and performed well overall.

Performance–talking

Most of the candidates performed very well. Candidates covered two or more topics from two different contexts as required at Higher level. Candidates were able to understand questions and responded accordingly. In some performances, candidates took the initiative to ask questions to assessors, which reflected that they had good understanding of the spoken language.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

A few candidates did not write full answers, for example questions 2, 3, and the translation question were not answered fully by some candidates.

At times, candidate handwriting was difficult to read.

Question paper 1: Directed writing

A-type candidates always write a full and detailed essay, whereas C-type candidates miss bullet points.

Some candidates made spelling and grammar mistakes.

Question paper 2: Listening

Some candidates found the following questions confusing:

- ◆ 2(c): what classroom activities Yousaf developed?
- ◆ 2(e): what did he do to deal with candidates with challenging behaviour?

Some candidates did not provide full responses for the following question:

- ◆ 1(a): what kind of students every teacher has to deal with?

Some candidates found questions 1(d), 2(b) and (c) slightly more challenging than expected.

Performance–talking

A few candidates were not fully prepared: there were several grammar errors and the performances lacked depth and complex language appropriate to the level.

A few candidates repeated themselves for the sake of gaining time.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ know how to write full and complete answers to all questions rather than a few words
- ◆ practise exam technique throughout the course to help them respond effectively to the question papers

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ try to answer all questions
- ◆ frequently practise translating from Urdu to English in class so they can access the full range of marks

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ practise Urdu writing in class: sometimes it was difficult to read Urdu handwriting
- ◆ address all bullets
- ◆ check spelling and grammar

Question paper 2: Listening

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ make notes during the first listen of the recording and then start writing full answers after listening for the second time
- ◆ review all the answers after listening to the recording a third time and adjust answers if required

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ choose two different topics from two different contexts at this level
- ◆ choose a topic where they can use detailed and complex language. However, they should refrain from choosing too many as they cannot discuss more than two topics in depth in the given time

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures was developed to support learners and centres. This included modifications to course assessment, retained from the 2021–22 session. This support was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while recognising a lessening of the impact of disruption to learning and teaching as a result of the pandemic. The revision support that was available for the 2021–22 session was not offered to learners in 2022–23.

In addition, SQA adopted a sensitive approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining

standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams continue to do so in different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019 and 2022.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2023 and the ongoing impact the disruption from the pandemic has had on learners. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and the removal of revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2023 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2023 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).