



Course report 2024

Advanced Higher Gàidhlig

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.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2024 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 20

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 31

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	13	Percentage	41.9	Cumulative percentage	41.9	Minimum mark required	80
B	Number of candidates	14	Percentage	45.2	Cumulative percentage	87.1	Minimum mark required	68
C	Number of candidates	3	Percentage	9.7	Cumulative percentage	96.8	Minimum mark required	57
D	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	3.2	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	45
No award	Number of candidates	0	Percentage	0	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

We have not applied rounding 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 statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical criticism)

Candidates engaged well with the two texts provided. The featured poem in the poetry section was about a nurse returning on a tour to where she worked in Harris, and the prose passage focused on food and veganism.

Feedback indicated that the question paper was fair in terms of overall level of challenge and demand, and the texts were suitably accessible and enabled differentiation between candidates.

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and writing)

As in previous years, the paper provided a range of questions for candidates to respond to their chosen literature texts. All candidates answered questions on prose and poetry, with one or two examining more than one text as part of the options for these genres. A number of the usual well-tried texts were prevalent, such as Briseadh na Cloiche, Cisteachan-Laighe, Srath Nabhair, Màiri Iain Mhurch' Chaluim and An Roghainn, all of which worked well and provided good material for able candidates to construct good essays.

The writing paper offered several different titles as prompts and these were employed in a number of different ways: mainly personal reflective writing and discursive, along with one or two imaginative responses. Most of the titles were chosen.

Question paper: Eadar-theangachadh (Translating)

The translation element is where candidates provide a translation from English to idiomatic Gàidhlig of a piece of prose, while maintaining the original passage's tone and purpose. This year's piece was a press release about the HebCelt festival in Lewis and its celebration of 25 years. All candidates engaged well with this component and subject matter.

Còmhradh (Performance–talking)

Visiting assessors conducted live in-person assessments where, as in previous years, candidates conversed on a range of different topics, including their coursework, research they had done and their future plans. This session, conversations returned to being 20 minutes in length.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical criticism)

Overall, most candidates coped well with the different aspects of the component. There was a fair understanding of the poetry by some and a good level of understanding of the prose. As in previous years, the questions in both papers were quite directed and signposted, which seemed to encourage a good level of engagement. Most candidates attempted all questions.

Some candidates effectively used evidence and focused on particular techniques to create effective answers in the poetry section. The prose section also saw some particularly good answers for questions 11 and 12.

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and writing)

In the literature section, answers that focused on poetry were the most popular again this year. Some essays were detailed and of good length, and combined focused quotation with detailed analysis and evaluation. Some candidates were very polished in their expression and coverage of their chosen texts in answering their selected question, and showed a good command of critical language and good Gàidhlig.

In writing, the titles ‘S e dùthaich mhì-fhallain dha-rìribh a th’ ann an Alba’ and ‘Beò ann an àm eile’ were popular and generated a number of different essay styles and interesting and engaging pieces. A few responses showed real depth of thought coupled with effective expression of ideas, with some candidates creating a real sense of style in their writing.

Question paper: Eadar-theangachadh (Translating)

There was a spread in the performance of candidates with, again, a small number of very well translated pieces that kept to the original tenor, idea and meaning in the original text, and demonstrated a good standard of accuracy.

Còmhradh (Performance–talking)

Visiting assessors commented on the willingness of all candidates to engage in conversation and how they carried out the assessments confidently. Many candidates were well prepared and able to discuss the texts they had covered. Discussions were always wide-ranging and covered a number of different and interesting topics. Those who were knowledgeable about their texts and any research done were able to benefit from this by demonstrating knowledge of a wide range of complex language and structures.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical criticism)

Some candidates seemed to struggle with some of the possible ideas in the poem. In general, answers showed a lack of depth, with a lack of analysis and reference to particular techniques. This was also true for the prose passage.

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and writing)

In the literature section, a few candidates' essays would have benefitted from more detailed analysis of selected quotations and techniques, and could have focused more closely on the demands of the question set.

In writing, some candidates could have improved the accuracy of their grammar, particularly verb forms and spelling.

Question paper: Eadar-theangachadh (Translating)

There were several weak responses in this component. In particular, inaccuracies in some more straightforward points of grammar, and weaknesses with vocabulary or expression led to marks being lost in sense units.

Còmhradh (Performance–talking)

All candidates made a good effort with this component, as they were prepared to talk about texts studied, and be aware of their accuracy and expression. They were also able to provide extended responses and maintain the conversation.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical criticism)

Candidates should ensure a good knowledge of different linguistic techniques and aspects of style when looking at both prose and poetry. They should be able to reference techniques and identify and illustrate by example how they impact the text and, where appropriate, illustrate their effectiveness. Candidates should also ensure they give sufficiently detailed explanations of how meaning has been interpreted, and that they are specific in doing so rather than giving a broad, general comment.

Candidates should continue to ensure they manage their time appropriately so they do not lose marks. Some may wish to consider how bullet points can help their answering technique. They should also be aware of the number of marks for each question and how this translates to the number of response points required.

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and writing)

Candidates should continue to have the opportunity to study a range of literature that is appropriate to their level of study and allows them to generate suitably comprehensive and detailed responses to their chosen question. Candidates should avoid short pieces of straightforward poetry that are more suited to National 5.

Candidates should practise developing a stylish approach to critical essay writing that is well linked to texts and the question, and that has some depth of analysis and genuine personal evaluation.

In writing, there should be some development of style, and attention to accuracy of spelling and grammar, along with creating engagement with the reader. Long-term continued practice of developing writing skills and accuracy, along with the use of language, structures and complexity, is beneficial here, and has a knock-on effect for other components of the assessment.

Candidates should also be mindful of their handwriting as there was a definite deterioration in the legibility of some answers.

Question paper: Eadar-theangachadh (Translating)

Accuracy and attention to spelling and grammatical rules, coupled with awareness of the register of the extract, are crucial for this paper. A wide knowledge of vocabulary and idioms gained from exposure to different texts further adds to candidates' ability here.

Còmhradh (Performance–talking)

Candidates should ensure they have a good knowledge of the literature and other aspects of the work that they have covered in the course. They should also be able to highlight themes and techniques inherent in texts and illustrate their own opinions about them.

As in previous years, the best conversations came from candidates who had a good knowledge of the texts they studied and other general subject matters that might come up during conversations. Candidates who are uncertain about these areas find it more difficult to demonstrate some of the higher mark descriptions of performance.

There is no expectation for any speech to be delivered as part of the conversation. The emphasis is on conversation on a range of matters.

The subject/topic list (STL) form submitted before the assessment period is very useful for helping candidates and assessors to shape the discussion. The more detail and accuracy that can be contained in this, the better.

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.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

During the pandemic, we modified National Qualifications course assessments, for example we removed elements of coursework. We kept these modifications in place until the 2022–23 session. The education community agreed that retaining the modifications for longer than this could have a detrimental impact on learning and progression to the next stage of education, employment or training. After discussions with candidates, teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and others, we returned to full course assessment for the 2023–24 session.

SQA's approach to awarding was announced in [March 2024](#) and explained that any impact on candidates completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, would be considered in our grading decisions and incorporated into our well-established

grading processes. This provides fairness and safeguards for candidates and helps to provide assurances across the wider education community as we return to established awarding.

Our approach to awarding is broadly aligned to other nations of the UK that have returned to normal grading arrangements.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [National Qualifications 2024 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).