



Course report 2025

Advanced Higher Gaelic (Learners)

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 with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 13

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 12

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	10	83.3	83.3	140
B	1	8.3	91.7	120
C	0	0	91.7	100
D	0	0	91.7	80
No award	1	8.3	100	Not applicable

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 or equal to 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: Reading and Translation

The question paper performed as expected. The context was accessible to all candidates with the subject of the Gaelic language in Aberdeen.

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

The listening section consisted of a monologue on a news report about home education, and a dialogue about home schooling. The topics were relevant to candidates.

In the discursive writing section, candidates chose to write about a variety of topics. This section performed as expected. Most candidates selected scenario 2, but all candidates chose one of the four scenarios, which were accessible to candidates.

Portfolio

The portfolio performed as intended and provided candidates with personalisation and choice.

Candidates chose a range of topics, which they engaged well with.

Performance—talking

The performance performed as intended. The assessment allowed candidates to demonstrate their speaking skills.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper: Reading and Translation

Most candidates gave good responses to the questions, with some candidates giving responses of a high standard. There was occasional evidence of dictionary misuse, but most candidates did well.

In the overall purpose question:

- some candidates found the overall purpose question challenging; however, many performed well, giving a comprehensive overview of the writer's purpose
- candidates who chose an analytical approach achieved the highest marks
- some candidates did not focus on the overall purpose and often repeated information from the text
- those who demonstrated analysis and inference achieved high marks

In the translation question:

- most candidates performed well and achieved high marks
- some candidates answered this question at the beginning of the paper

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

Most candidates performed well in the listening section; however, some found it challenging.

Question 1(c) and question 2(g)(i) and (ii) were challenging for some candidates and they missed out on marks.

There were some very good examples of discursive writing this year. Most candidates chose the context of society questions. All candidates found the topics accessible, as evidenced by the variety of responses and the high standard of

writing. Some candidates used idioms and proverbs very effectively, which enhanced their writing.

Portfolio

Most candidates performed very well in the portfolio. Candidates focused on a wide range of topics in their portfolios this year, which they engaged well with. They achieved higher marks when the title or question led them to present an analytical approach, allowing them to explore two sides of an argument or give different perspectives to the topic under consideration. Candidates who demonstrated evaluation and analysed the topic from different perspectives performed very well.

Some candidates struggled to understand the nature of the task. Some candidates chose topics that were not suitable for the task, and the writing had no relation to the title and little analysis, and they missed out on marks.

Performance–talking

Most candidates performed very well in the discussion. There were some very good examples of candidates using a level of Gaelic that allowed them to sustain detailed discussions with the visiting assessor and demonstrate a high level of accuracy, while using complex and sophisticated language.

Fluency and readily taking the initiative were features of good performances with a number of candidates achieving full marks. Most candidates were enthusiastic and well prepared. These discussions were natural and authentic throughout.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper: Reading and Translation

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- develop dictionary skills, reminding them not to choose the first word that appears in the dictionary without considering the context of the passage and selecting the most appropriate meaning
- study the questions carefully to fully understand what the question is asking
- look at the marks allocated per question to guide them to the level of information required. This also helps them to complete the paper on time: candidates can miss out on a number of marks if they don't complete the paper
- practise techniques for answering the overall purpose question
- seek to draw inferences from the text and not only provide factual information or repeat their answers to the comprehension questions
- always attempt the translation, and know that this is where dictionary skills are very important
- read and review their translation once they complete it to ensure it makes sense and reads well in English
- make full use of the [Advanced Higher Modern Languages web page](#), including course reports, marking instructions for Advanced Higher Gaelic (Learners) and past papers

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- practise listening exercises
- pay particular attention to any numbers and dates, comparatives, or superlatives, singular and plurals, days and months
- continue to develop their grammar and syntax
- aim to write correct sentences, as simple errors weaken the standard of writing
- know the basic points of tenses, cases, plurals and reported speech
- practise using a dictionary during the discursive writing
- refer to the productive grammar grid in the appendix of the course specification to ensure that they have covered all relevant areas of grammar
- allocate time in the exam to proofread their essay after they have finished

Portfolio

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- are aware of the requirements of the portfolio
- are supported to develop and choose an appropriate title or focus that allows them to use a critical and analytical approach to the discursive portfolio
- choose a title that allows them to develop and research the subject matter at an appropriate depth
- think carefully about their introduction and conclusion as these are crucial in framing the essay and informing the reader of their intentions
- carefully proofread the use of English, spelling, typing errors and punctuation as well as accuracy in quotation from literary texts
- address the choice of suitable and compatible sources and check the factual accuracy of their essay
- read the [Advanced Higher Gaelic \(Learners\) course reports](#) as they identify areas for improvement
- write in paragraphs and leave a line between paragraphs

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- take part in regular talking activities in class to develop the natural element of interaction. This helps candidates to be more confident in using spoken Gaelic with the visiting assessor and enable them to deal with questions that go beyond their area of study
- speak Gaelic as often as possible in class throughout the year, as this greatly benefits their listening and talking skills and prepares them for the performance–talking

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

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

For most National Courses, we aim 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, we hold 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 our 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. We 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.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).