



Course report 2025

National 5 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.

For information about the performance–talking, which is internally assessed, please refer to the 2024–25 Qualification Verification Summary Report on the [subject page](#) of our website.

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: 184

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 163

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	82	50.3	50.3	83
B	28	17.2	67.5	70
C	32	19.6	87.1	58
D	14	8.6	95.7	45
No award	7	4.3	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

The 2025 National 5 Gaelic (Learners) course assessments performed as expected and were fair and accessible to all candidates. Feedback from centres was positive about the level and challenge of the assessment. The assessment sampled language from all contexts, and the content was relevant. Most candidates coped well with the level and were able to complete assessments in the allocated time.

There was a range of candidate performances in most elements, but it was clear that most candidates were well prepared for the assessment. The result in listening was lower than anticipated and we considered this when setting grade boundaries. This year had a similar number of candidates to 2024. A small number of candidates achieved no award.

Question paper 1: Reading

The reading question paper performed as expected and was accessible to all candidates, providing the level of demand required at National 5. There was a range of performances, and some candidates were able to gain full marks. The marking instructions allowed candidates to offer a range of answers to demonstrate their understanding from a range of contexts.

There were three supported questions, which performed as expected: question 1(b) a complete the sentence question, 2(b) a gap fill and question, and 3(b) a tick box question. There was optionality in questions 1(c) and 2(c).

Text 1, exam preparation, was a topic that most candidates could relate to. Text 2, on the context of employability, is covered extensively in centres as it forms the basis of the writing question paper. Text 3, Scotland's food scene, was not regionally specific and discussed food throughout the country to make it more accessible to candidates.

There were less 'no responses' than in 2024 and most candidates attempted to answer all questions. More candidates achieved over 15 marks than in previous years.

Question paper 1: Writing

The writing paper, which is always on the context of employability, performed as expected. Candidates had to reply to a job advert for a receptionist at a hotel.

As part of the assessment, candidates should address the six bullet points relating to information in the job advert: four predictable bullet points and two unpredictable bullet points. The unpredictable bullet points asked candidates to discuss their knowledge of other languages and their team working skills.

Both unpredictable bullet points were relevant to the job advert and accessible for candidates.

Question paper 2: Listening

The listening paper was based on the context of society. Both listening texts sampled vocabulary from all contexts. The language was accessible and often found in previous papers at this level.

The monologue was a person discussing their life as a farmer and the conversation discussed what life is like working on a farm. There was the supported question 1(c) and optionality in questions 1(d), (e) and 2(g). These questions performed as expected.

This question paper was more challenging for some candidates, but there was good signposting to the answers, and the paper was of an appropriate level of demand.

Many questions were accessible to most candidates and others were more challenging. The vocabulary was appropriate to the level.

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing performed as expected. Most candidates produced very good pieces of work from the three contexts of society, learning and culture and achieved 16 or 20 marks.

This aspect of the course allows for personalisation and choice. Candidates chose a range of topics appropriate to the level, for example school, technology, family, healthy living, free time, holidays and hometown.

The assignment allowed candidates to write in depth, and they were able to provide opinions and give reasons.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: Reading

Most candidates performed well in the reading question paper. Candidates engaged well with the texts and performance was consistent over all three sections, indicating that they had managed their time well and had a good grasp of exam technique.

Candidates performed well in the following questions.

Text 1 (learning)

- question 1(a): optionality, 'finish homework' or 'more homework' were both accepted as answers. Some candidates put 'do homework' but as the verb 'do' was in the question it could not be accepted as an answer. Most candidates identified the second answer
- question 1(c): optionality, any two from three. Most candidates did well
- question 1(e): most candidates achieved 2 or 3 marks

Text 2 (employability)

- question 2(a): most candidates coped well with the compound prepositions
- question 2(b): candidates handled times better than last year, with most gaining the marks
- question 2(d): most candidates gained both marks. There were various translations of *luchd-obrach*, which were accepted

Text 3 (society)

- question 3(b): supported question, tick the correct answers. Most candidates ticked the two correct answers
- question 3(c): candidates performed well due to effective signposting at the end of paragraph 3 with the words *Tha taighean-bidh spaideil ann* (there are fancy restaurants in) coming before the answer in the text
- question 3(f): most candidates coped well with the second point

Question paper 1: Writing

Most candidates coped well with the predictable bullet points, displaying a good range of vocabulary, grammatical structures and tenses. Most candidates were well prepared for the task and had good time management and exam technique.

The unpredictable bullet point about team working skills was handled well by most candidates.

There were several very good candidate responses that used language more consistent with Higher level. Many candidates achieved 12 marks or above with an increase in those gaining full marks. There was a fall in the number of candidates achieving 0 or 4 marks.

Question paper 2: Listening

Item 1 (monologue)

- question 1(c), supported question, tick two correct statements from five. Most candidates gained the marks
- question 1(d): optionality, most candidates chose the second answer. The negative was done well
- question 1(f): candidates performed well due to effective signposting with the phrase *is toigh leam* (I like) and *anns an t-samhradh* (in the summer) spoken before the answer

Item 2 (conversation)

- question 2(a): most candidates gained the marks
- question 2(b): most candidates were able to identify the day of the week
- question 2(c)(ii): most candidates identified the feeling correctly even with the lenition caused by the modifier
- question 2(d): most candidates gained the marks

Assignment–writing

Most candidates performed well in the assignment–writing. There was a range of interesting topics, and most candidates were able to write in depth about their chosen topic. There were a range of performances, and most candidates did very well. Most candidates chose an appropriate title and chose the correct context box.

Most assignments were well structured using a range of verbs and verb forms, time phrases and connectives. Most candidates were able to use conjunctions to help structure their texts and gave opinions as well as justifying them. There was an appropriate range of language and grammatical structures. Candidates mostly used detailed language and a wide range of structures. The correct use of a wide range of regular and irregular verbs and tenses was mostly evident, with a good degree of grammatical accuracy. Most candidates were able to write to and beyond the word count.

Some candidates had a topic, such as holidays, which provided more personalisation and choice.

It was clear that the work submitted was conducted under the conditions set out in the Nation 5 Modern Languages course specification.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: Reading

Some candidates did not provide enough detail from the text to access all the marks.

Text 1 (learning)

- question 1(b): there were some cases of dictionary error, with some candidates mixing up *fois* (relax or rest) and *fios* (information). Some candidates guessed and put 'sleep'
- question 1(c): optionality, any two from three. A few candidates missed 'of the work' in the second answer
- question 1(d): most candidates achieved the first mark but the translation of 'highlighting words' was inconsistent. The literal 'put colours on words' was accepted

Text 2 (employability)

- question 2(a): some candidates swapped the meanings. A few candidates put 'hall' instead of 'town hall' in the second answer
- question 2(b): some candidates mistranslated 'quarter to' and 'quarter past' in the first answer
- question 2(c): optionality, any two of three. Most candidates coped well with the first option. Some candidates struggled with looking up the definition of the hyphenated word *phuist-dealain* (emails) in the dictionary. Some candidates misread and mistranslated *luchd-tadhail* (visitors) as *luchd-turais* (tourists)
- question 2(d): a few candidates put 'people are nice', which was not accurate enough to gain the mark
- question 2(e): most candidates coped well with the first point, but a few candidates missed the qualifier *gach* (every). There was some misreading and mistranslation in the second point. Some candidates were inaccurate in their translation of *air* (on) and wrote it as 'in'. There was some dictionary misreading of *togalach* (building), which is a noun, with some candidates translating it as the verb 'to build'

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(a): some candidates misread where the answer was. Some used the context and wrote 'different food' (*biadh diofraichte*). This was attached to the verb *fheuchainn* (try) rather than the key word in the question 'see' (*phaicinn*)
- question 3(b): a few candidates ticked only one box and did not gain all the marks
- question 3(d): this was a well signposted question, but some candidates missed 'islands' and did not gain the mark
- question 3(e): some candidates misread the number and put '2' rather than '12'
- question 3(f): a few candidates misread *mòran* (many or a lot of) as *mòr* (big) and did not gain a mark for the first point
- question 3(g): some candidates misread *gu leòr* (enough) giving a variety of answers, including using the homophone *leabhar* (book) 'research in a book'

Question paper 1: Writing

- some candidates wrote a formal introduction or discussed their hometown, which is not required, and some struggled to do this well
- some candidates did not provide a range of tenses or different verb forms
- some candidates are labelling their paragraphs and adding word count, which is not required
- in the first four bullet points, despite the predictability, some candidates were not well prepared
- bullet point 1 (personal details) and bullet point 2 (school and college or education experience until now):
 - some candidates could only cope with the language in the first two bullet points
 - some candidates listed their subjects without further expansion
 - some candidates wrote about what they want to do in the future with their education; however, it was school and college experience up until now that was required

- bullet point 3 (skills and interests)
 - a few candidates wrote about free-time activities with no mention of skills or qualities
- bullet point 4 (work experience)
 - some candidates chose to write in the present tense, which limited the range of tenses in the piece overall
- bullet point 5 (experience of other languages) and bullet point 6 (team working skills)
 - the accuracy of the bullet points deteriorated significantly in the last two bullet points and some candidates were unable to form basic sentences
 - many encountered difficulties in the final two unpredictable bullet points, particularly bullet point 6, indicating that they found writing spontaneously challenging
 - some candidates wrote about their Gaelic language skills rather than other languages
 - dictionary errors were higher in the unpredictable bullet points with issues arising in identifying the differences between nouns, verbs and adjectives, for example *obair tobar* (work well), *tha mi seòrsa* (I am kind), *tha e cho duais* (it is so rewarding) and *cana obair* (can work)

Question paper 2: Listening

Item 1 (monologue)

- question 1(a): there was a range of answers. Incorrect answers included Col, Tobermory, Ayrshire, Shetland, Edinburgh, Stirling, Skye, Lismore, Harris, Wales, Italy and 'in the kitchen'
- question 1(b): most candidates were able to identify 'polite' or 'well-behaved', but some missed the qualifier. Few candidates were able to correctly identify the superlative in the second point
- question 1(c): a few candidates chose other answers based on further information in the passage about what jobs are done in the afternoon rather than the morning
- question 1(e): answers were inconsistent with some candidates missing 'colours'. Some candidates mistranslated *blàth* (warm) as 'hot'
- question 1(f): a few candidates wrote about why the speaker doesn't enjoy work in the winter, which was the next sentence

Item 2 (conversation)

- question 2(b): a few candidates missed the qualifier *a h-uile* (every) and did not gain the mark
- question 2(c)(i): most candidates were able to identify 'French' but did not put the second language, which was required to gain the mark. Those who did put a second language were unable to identify 'Italian'
- question 2(d): a few candidates mistranslated the compound preposition as 'behind' rather than 'in front of'
- question 2(e): although most of the words in these answers were English, most candidates did not gain the marks due to a lack of detail
- question 2(f)(i): some candidates were unable to identify this answer although the words were accessible
- question 2(f)(ii): only a few candidates were able to identify these feelings
- question 2(g): optionality, any two from four. Some candidates struggled to identify the qualifier *cus* (too many) in the first point and the comparative in the second point. The third point lacked detail despite the accessible vocabulary and only a few candidates chose the fourth point as an answer

Assignment-writing

- some candidates did not provide a title or tick a context
- some candidates handwriting was difficult to read
- some typed assignments had auto-correct English turned on and had a lack of accents
- many candidates used good content and accuracy but did not use the language resource required across all three bullets, and could not access the full range of marks

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- practise reading the key words in the questions as signposts to help find where the answers are in the texts
- read each question carefully and highlight or underline the correct answer in the text
- are aware that questions and answers are in chronological order
- do not write in sentences in the reading paper
- do not include words that are in the question in their answers
- are aware that two words are required for 1 mark at National 5, unless one of the words is very close to English
- read to the end of sentences so they have all the information for an answer
- only answer the question that is being asked
- make a line through errors or answers they are not using rather than blocking out
- are familiar with qualifiers such as *cus*, *glè*, *mòran*, *tòrr*, *barrachd*, *mu*, *a h-uile*, *gach*
- practise dictionary skills so that they can use this resource to their advantage, for example when looking up a word remove any *h* as the second letter. If there are several options of meanings, then candidates should choose the one that best fits the context of the reading passage
- are familiar with how to find hyphenated words in the dictionary
- read texts that test them on a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary appropriate to the level. They should learn common context vocabulary and grammatical structures, such as adjectives, comparatives, plurals and time to save time in the exam
- are aware that vocabulary can appear in any context and is not context specific, for example time and directional words

- practise the reading paper with writing papers to replicate the timed conditions of the exam
- practise past papers on our [website](#) to develop their skills

Question paper 1: Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- prepare and practice thoroughly for the predictable bullet points as these do not change from year to year, so they can use these bullet points as an opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their skills and avoid using overly simple sentences
- leave a gap between their answers to each bullet point to make it clear that they have addressed each element
- know that all the information they provide must be relevant for a job application, for example not to provide a description of their home area
- give concise answers. Some candidates this year wrote either too little or too much about their education experience
- know they do not need to count their words. There is no penalty for length of answers, although lengthy responses may be self-penalising as there is a higher chance of inaccuracies
- turn off English auto-correct if typing answers
- know the difference between accents and apostrophes in their writing
- show a range of structures, tenses, regular and irregular verbs and verb structures where appropriate
- are aware of prepositional pronouns and idiom suitable to the level
- attempt all six bullet points, and complete the work experience bullet point in the past tense to show a range of tenses and verbs in their writing
- for the unpredictable bullet points, are aware they may encounter a bullet point that they have not seen in a previous question paper
- know that it may be possible for them to adapt a sentence structure used in the predictable bullet points to tackle the unpredictable bullet points
- practise a range of unpredictable answers. Teachers and lecturers could look at all the modern languages past papers to see the range of points previously covered

- practise dictionary skills so they understand the difference between nouns and verbs when looking up words for the unpredictable bullet points
- do the writing paper first followed by the reading
- practise the writing paper with reading papers to replicate the timed conditions of the final exam

Question paper 2: Listening

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- read the introduction and questions carefully particularly the question words such as where and when
- practise reading the key words in the questions as signposts for what type of answers they will hear in the passages, and use the silence in the recording to note the types of vocabulary they expect to hear
- familiarise themselves with common vocabulary, for example colours and clothes are often covered in the paper, and grammar from across the four contexts, including adjective modifiers
- are aware that vocabulary can appear in any context and is not context specific
- are aware that two words are required for a mark at National 5
- if they have provided multiple answers to a question, they must indicate which answer they are choosing. If answers are contradictory and no clear preference has been made, they will not gain the mark
- do not write in sentences
- make a line through errors or answers they are not using rather than blocking out
- have regular opportunities to develop their listening skills
- maximise their exposure to Gaelic by listening to Gaelic being spoken in their centres, media and community (if applicable) as this helps understand common language that could be in a question paper
- practise past papers on our [website](#) to develop their skills

Assignment–writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- are aware that the task is on the context of society, learning or culture
- know that the assignment–writing must not be the same as their job application for the writing exam
- include a title and context
- keep to their chosen title or chose a title that reflects their work
- do not include personal details if it is not related to their title
- show the range of their ability and knowledge in the language and avoid repetition of structures, verbs and verb forms
- read the marking instructions to make sure they know what is expected of them in their assignment, particularly the language resource section, which asks for a range of opinions, ideas and reasons
- if typing their assignment, they should pay attention to spacing, accents, apostrophes and English auto-corrections
- have legible handwriting and if not, make alternative arrangements

Teachers and lecturers should:

- follow the advice in the Understanding Standard packs on our secure site and refer to the assignment–writing marking instructions in the [National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification](#) to ensure that the assignments adhere to the guidelines
- use our correction code or the centre’s own when returning the draft to candidates

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](#).