Course report 2026

German Advanced Higher, SCQF level 7

We've written this report for teachers and lecturers. We recommend you read this with the published course assessment documents and marking instructions.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the question papers and coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they did not perform well
- has advice you might find useful when preparing candidates for assessment

We collect and prepare the statistics in course reports before we complete the appeals process.

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Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 105

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 107

Distribution of course awards (including minimum mark to achieve each grade)

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	60	56.1	56.1	140
B	23	21.5	77.6	120
C	14	13.1	90.7	100
D	9	8.4	99.1	80
No award	1	0.9	100	Not applicable

We've not applied rounding to these statistics.

In this report:

- 'Most' means greater than or equal to 70%.
- 'Many' means 50% to 69%.
- 'Some' means 25% to 49%.
- 'Few' or 'a few' means less than 25%.

You can find statistical reports on our website.

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's 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 make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Senior Qualifications Scotland staff normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors use 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.

- We can adjust the grade boundaries downwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- We can adjust the grade boundaries upwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- If levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries.

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.

How the course assessment performed

Question paper: Reading and Translation

The reading and translation paper performed as intended. The paper was fair in terms of course coverage and level of demand. The topic of the text, artificial intelligence and its impact on our daily lives, is topical and accessible to candidates. The translation offered appropriate challenge to candidates, with some sense units allowing candidates to show their understanding of linguistic nuance and flair in English.

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

The listening and discursive writing paper performed as intended. The paper was fair in terms of course coverage and level of demand. The topics for item 1 (the music industry in Germany) and item 2 (cinema) were relatable to most candidates.

All four essay questions were attempted, with most candidates choosing the essay title: *Digitales Lernen zu Hause ist besser als das Lernen in der Schule* (learning online at home is better than learning in school), on the context of learning.

Portfolio

The portfolio performed as expected.

Performance–talking

The performance–talking performed as expected, allowing many candidates to show excellent preparation across a variety of high-level topics, using sophisticated language.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper: Reading and Translation

- many candidates attempted most comprehension questions and most gave enough detail to show a good understanding of the text
- question 1(a): most candidates identified ‘it is one of the most important developments’ (*einer der wichtigsten Entwicklungen*)
- question 1(b), offered optionality: most candidates identified two answers from ‘to imitate human learning’ (*menschliches Lernen zu imitieren*), ‘to overcome challenges quickly’ (*Herausforderungen schnell zu überwinden*) or ‘to make difficult decisions’ (*schwierige Entscheidungen zu treffen*)
- question 2: most candidates identified ‘it could overcome global challenges (or climate change), world hunger and poverty’ (*globale Herausforderungen wie Klimawandel, Welthunger und Armut bewältigen*) and gained both marks
- question 3(b): most candidates identified ‘to concentrate on more creative and strategic tasks’ (*sich auf kreativere und strategischere Aufgaben zu konzentrieren*)
- question 5, offered optionality, and most candidates chose three answers from the possible seven: ‘it can create personalised learning experiences’ (*sie kann Lernerfahrungen individualisiert gestalten*); ‘it can improve academic results’ (*akademische Ergebnisse verbessern*); ‘it can reduce teacher workload’ (*die Arbeitsbelastung der Lehrkräfte verringern*); ‘it can adapt to the learning style and pace of pupils’ (*können sich auf den Lernstil und das Lerntempo der einzelnen Schüler einstellen*); ‘it can provide personalised feedback and resources’ (*personalisiertes Feedback und Ressourcen bereitstellen*); ‘it can increase engagement’ (*dies kann das Engagement erhöhen*); ‘it can improve the learning experience’ (*die Lernerfahrung verbessern*)
- question 9, overall purpose question: many candidates used excellent inferencing skills, asking themselves, ‘So what?’, ‘What is implied by this line from the text in a wider context?’ Many understood the overall purpose which was to discuss the impact of AI on society, highlighting both the potential benefits and challenges associated with this technology

- question 10, the translation: many candidates displayed an excellent level of idiomatic English, along with a good understanding of the grammatical challenges in each sense unit
    - sense unit 2, *hebt das Potenzial der KI hervor*: many candidates translated this as ‘emphasises’ or ‘stresses’ or ‘highlights the potential of AI’
    - sense unit 5, *Ihre Fähigkeit, Daten in großen Mengen schnell zu analysieren und Muster zu erkenne*n: many candidates translated this as ‘its ability to analyse data in large amounts quickly and recognise patterns’
    - sense unit 6, *kann zu erstaunlichen Lösungen in Bereichen wie Gesundheitswesen, Umweltschutz und Bildung führen*: many translated this as ‘can lead to amazing solutions in areas such as healthcare, environmental protection and education’
    - sense unit 7, *Das schnelle Wachstum der KI in verschiedenen Sektoren stellt jedoch wichtige Fragen*: many candidates translated this as ‘however the rapid growth of AI in different sectors poses important questions’

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

In the listening paper, these questions offered optionality and most candidates identified:

- question 1(a): ‘it had a profit of 1.8 billion euros (last year)’ or ‘(the number of) concerts and music festivals has drastically increased (over the past 5 years)’ (*Allein im letzten Jahr brachte sie einen Gewinn von etwa 1,8 Milliarden Euro*) or ‘many young people in Germany spend their money on digital platforms (such as Spotify, Apple Music and Amazon Music)’ (*Viele Jugendliche in Deutschland geben ihr Geld auf digitalen Plattformen aus, zum Beispiel Spotify, Apple Music und Amazon Music*)
- question 1(b): ‘it is varied’ (*ihre Vielfalt*), or ‘classical music, electronic music, hip-hop and pop are very popular’, (*Klassische Musik, elektronische Musik sowie populäre Genres wie Hip-Hop und Pop sind sehr beliebt*) or ‘there is something for everyone’ (Für jeden Geschmack ist etwas dabei)
- question 1(c): ‘techno music was invented in Berlin (in the 1990s)’ (*Technomusik kommt aus Berlin und wurde dort in den 90er Jahren erfunden*); or ‘the city is home to many renowned, DJs, producers (who are known worldwide)’ (*Die*

Großstadt ist Heimat vieler renommierter DJs und Produzenten, die weltweit bekannt sind), or 'Berlin has one of the liveliest club cultures worldwide', (*Berlin hat eine der lebendigsten Clubkulturen weltweit*) or 'there are over 200 clubs (which offer a broad variety of music)' (*mit über 200 Clubs, die eine breite Auswahl an Musik bieten*)

- question 1(d): '(new) opportunities to export music' (*neue Möglichkeiten, ihre Musik zu exportieren*), or 'supports international popularity of German music' (*das unterstützt die internationale Bekanntheit der deutschen Musik*), or 'strengthens global presence of German artists' (*stärkt die globale Präsenz deutscher Künstler erheblich*)
- question 2(b): 'increase in the cost of living' (*mit den steigenden Kosten für Lebenshaltung*), 'people cannot afford to go to the cinema regularly' (*ist es für viele Menschen schwierig geworden, sich regelmäßig einen Kinobesuch zu leisten*), 'ticket prices (in recent years) have increased (significantly)' (*die Ticketpreise sind in den letzten Jahren deutlich gestiegen*); '(on average) a ticket costs 12 euros' (*im Durchschnitt kostet ein Kinoticket etwa 12 Euro pro Person*), 'food and drink cost more (money)' (*dazu kommen dann noch das Essen und die Getränke, die im Kino viel mehr Geld kosten*), or 'a visit to cinema can quickly become expensive for a family (with children)' (*für eine Familie mit Kindern könnte ein Kinobesuch schnell sehr teuer werden*)
- question 2(c): 'to go on a trip' (*einen Ausflug machen*), 'to go to the museum' (*ins Museum gehen*), 'to cook something tasty together' (*zusammen etwas Leckeres kochen*), or 'to go for a meal in a restaurant' (*für ein gemeinsames Essen in einem Restaurant*)
- question 2(e): 'Netflix constantly updates its offerings (of films and series)' (*dass Netflix sein Angebot ständig mit neuen Filmen und Serien aktualisiert*), 'there is always something new to discover' (*es ist also immer etwas Neues zu entdecken*), 'you can sit on the couch at home or comfortable in pjs (*außerdem kann man zu Hause bequem im Pyjama auf der Couch sitzen*), or 'you can stop the film at any time, when you want to get something to drink (from the kitchen)' (*und den Film jederzeit stoppen, wenn man sich etwas zum Trinken aus der Küche holen will*)

In discursive writing, essays that accessed the upper range of marks:

- used idiomatic language and had a high level of accuracy in grammar and vocabulary choice appropriate to the level
- had a clear structure that enabled the reader to identify the points that would be discussed
- demonstrated a strong conclusion, which summarised the arguments presented in their essay

Portfolio

- where candidates achieved the higher marks they:
    - chose a question that led to critical analysis, for example ‘To what extent is the author and/or director successful in...’ and provided several considered examples to back up their position
    - proofread their submissions and took an analytical and/or critical approach, with reasoned and relevant arguments
    - often used background materials on their focus of study and integrated the findings of these into their essays
- most candidates’ portfolios included a bibliography

Performance–talking

- most candidates were well-prepared and gave confident performances. They talked about the topics noted in the Subject Topic List (STL)
- where candidates accessed the upper range of marks they:
    - completed the STL form fully, and included clear starting points for conversation
    - reacted in a natural way to the visiting assessor’s questions or comments
    - asked for help in German if they were having difficulty understanding
    - used learned material but maintained a natural flow
    - attempted to answer questions fully and did not give short answers
- discussion of their portfolio allowed most candidates opportunities to talk about a topic they had studied in depth during the course

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper: Reading and Translation

- some candidates missed out on marks as they did not include quantifiers, adverbs or grammatical structures such as the comparative or superlative forms, for example:
    - question 1(b): Herausforderungen **schnell** zu überwinden (to overcome challenges quickly)
    - question 3(b): *sich auf kreativere und strategischere Aufgaben zu konzentrieren* (to concentrate on more creative and strategic tasks)
- a few candidates did not attempt all questions
- question 1(a): some candidates did not understand the phrase *einer der wichtigsten Entwicklungen* (one of the most important developments)
- some candidates had difficulty understanding words for the context, and missed out on marks, for example:
    - question 4: *humanistischen Werten* (human values) as 'humanitarian values'
    - question 6: *übermäßige Abhängigkeit von der Technologie im Klassenzimmer* as 'addiction' rather than 'overreliance on technology in the classroom'
- question 9, the overall purpose question:
    - most candidates found the overall purpose question challenging and did not gain the upper marks of 5 or 7
    - many candidates had difficulty going beyond giving a summary of the text
    - a few candidates did not give an introductory statement to answer the question, 'What was the author's purpose in writing this text?'
    - many candidates chose to comment on word choice and language features used by the author to further emphasise what the purpose of the text was; however, candidates did not always do this successfully as there was little evidence of this in the text
- question 10, the translation:
    - sense unit 2: some candidates did not recognise the more complex separable verb *hebt…hervor* (emphasises or stresses or highlights); some translated it as 'raises' or 'lifts', and did not gain the mark

- sense unit 5: some candidates did not correctly translate the possessive adjective '*ihre*', and wrote 'her' or 'their' for 'its' (*ihre Fähigkeit*)
- a few candidates addressed the overall purpose question and/or translation question before attempting all the other questions. This strategy is often disadvantageous to candidates as they do not yet have the full context of the text

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

In the listening paper:

- many candidates had difficulty understanding the large numbers '1.8 billion' in item 1 and 'approximately 91 million' in item 2
- question 1(a): some candidates wrote 'increased in popularity' or 'increased in attendance' instead of 'has drastically increased', and did not gain the mark
- question 2(b): some candidates wrote 'spend more on food and drink' instead of 'food and drink cost more'
- question 2(c): some candidates wrote 'eat tasty food together' instead of 'cook something tasty together'
- question 2(d): some candidates wrote 'lots of films' instead of 'impressive selection of films'
- question 2(e): some candidates wrote 'eat' instead of 'drink' for *wenn man sich etwas zum Trinken aus der Küche holen will*
- question 2(g): some candidates wrote 'impressive viewing experience' instead of 'cinema experience' for *einzigartiges Kinoerlebnis*

In discursive writing:

- many candidates did not have a good understanding of grammatical structures and had difficulty using these in their essay
- there was a lack of accuracy in spelling

Portfolio

- some candidates chose essay titles that did not allow an analytical approach, and instead led to a retelling of the plot, and they could not access the higher marks as a result
- some candidates selected quotations that had some relevance to the title of the essay but led to a plot description and not to analysis
- some candidates included the only additional source to a media portfolio in the form of a screenplay and could not access the higher marks as a result

Performance–talking

Where candidates did not access the higher marks:

- they did not complete their STL forms with enough detail
- they were not prepared for some of the assessor's questions
- the content of their topics of conversation was not well organised, and they found it hard to maintain the flow of a natural conversation or asked for clarification in English

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper: Reading and Translation

You should ensure candidates:

- adhere to all line references given as these help and guide candidates through the text
- are aware of our question paper numbering conventions, for example 2(a), 2(b)(i), 2(b)(ii), 3(a), 3(a)(i)..., and ensure they put the correct answer beside the correct number and letter combination
- give precise, detailed answers, checking for qualifiers that may be required to gain the mark
- attempt the questions in the given order and do not do the overall purpose question and translation before completing the comprehension questions: answering the questions in order gives a deeper understanding of the text, which helps when attempting the overall purpose question and translation
- for the overall purpose question:
    - infer the meaning of the main parts of the text to produce a response to the overall purpose question, which is analytical and inferential in nature
    - know that the question uses the phrase, ‘with close reference to the points made and the language used’, and they must draw appropriate inferences, meaning they need to draw conclusions beyond what is stated in the text, drawing from their own knowledge of the context of the text
    - avoid rewriting or translating large parts of the text as a response to the overall purpose question. Instead, choose key points and explain what the impact of these points is, beyond the text
    - know there is nothing to gain by rewriting numerous lines from the text as a quotation. The inclusion of a short phrase or single word to demonstrate a point they’re making is acceptable and valid
- incorporate translation practice as an exercise in accuracy and precision throughout the year, with a focus on ensuring the English translation is in good, idiomatic English
- pay close attention to the function of seemingly simple words

- make full use of our Advanced Higher Modern Languages web page, including course reports, marking instructions for Advanced Higher German, and past papers

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

You should ensure candidates:

- pay close attention to any numbers, dates, times and years, and listen out for any qualifiers or other adjectives (*fast, circa, ungefähr, quasi, knapp*) as well as any comparatives or superlatives, as these are likely to be assessed
- listen to sophisticated, authentic language throughout the year, and develop note-taking skills in advance of the exam
- are aware of the importance of relevance and accuracy in their discursive writing
- practise planning essays and, under pressure of time, concentrate on the grammatical accuracy of the language
- practise adapting essays they have written to suit various scenarios, for example 'how could I use an essay I have written on the importance of language learning to respond to the essay title: Online learning is more difficult than traditional lessons?'
- use bank structuring phrases to give a polished response
- practise and develop both skills throughout the year

Portfolio

You should ensure candidates:

- are aware of our current position statement on the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in assessments
- write the same essay title on the flyleaf and their actual essay
- keep the essay title short and to the point, and avoid long complex titles
- are aware that the title is crucial, and they should formulate one that leads to a critical and analytical response
- discuss the literature text or media selected for study to ensure that the text chosen is not an immediate barrier, for example if the film or book has little scope for analysis or is of an inappropriate level
- are not responding to the same question, using the same quotations and bibliography, as other members of the class, and that candidates attempt the task using critical and independent thinking
- know not to translate any quotes they include in their essay. Translated quotes might lead markers to think the text has been read in translation only
- fully reference quotes in their essay
- refer to the guidelines in the Advanced Higher Modern Languages Course Specification to know what they need to do to access the higher marks. For example, candidates who choose to study a film in a literature or media-based portfolio, must include two sources in the modern language. The instructions state that the screenplay of that film does not count as an additional source
- include a last accessed date when referencing PDFs
- avoid including films and books in translation in the bibliography if these are the only sources, as this gives the impression that these were accessed in translation only

Performance–talking

You should ensure candidates:

- practise their conversational German throughout the session to prepare for the visiting assessor
- can adapt pre-learned material to the conversation, while ensuring that it is not a scripted dialogue
- fill in the STL form in a comprehensive way, by identifying topics and sub-topics they would like to discuss. They should not include a list of questions or overly specific sub-topics, but should give enough detail about the main themes they want to discuss
- have a bank of phrases that they can use to elevate their performance–talking to a more sophisticated level, as well as ones that they can use to seek clarification in German

You should:

- share and discuss with candidates, the marking information, including pegged mark descriptors for the portfolio, performance–talking, discursive writing, and the overall purpose question
- use the support materials published on our Understanding Standards website to help prepare candidates for course assessment