

Course report 2026

Advanced Higher Italian, 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.

Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 26

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 36

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	22	61.1	61.1	140
B	9	25.0	86.1	120
C	3	8.3	94.4	100
D	1	2.8	97.2	80
No award	1	2.8	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 1: Reading and Translation

The reading and translation paper performed as intended. It had an appropriate level of demand, and candidates engaged well with the text.

Question paper 2: Listening and Discursive Writing

The listening and discursive writing paper performed as intended. The listening items had an appropriate level of demand.

In the discursive writing paper, candidates choose one of four essay titles. The most popular title was on the advantages and disadvantages of working from home.

Portfolio

The portfolio performed as expected.

No candidates selected the language in work option.

Performance–talking

The performance–talking performed as expected. Candidates used personal choice in their areas of discussion. Many candidates chose social media, immigration and the impact of artificial intelligence as topics for discussion.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper: Reading and Translation

In the comprehension questions:

- question 3(a): many candidates identified ‘simplifies the selection of candidates where there are many applications for a job’ (*semplificando la selezione dei candidati nei casi dove ci sono molte domande per un Lavoro*) and ‘file, archive candidates’ CVs to have a databank that’s always updated, accessible at any time’ (*Può anche archiviare i CV dei candidati per creare una banca dati sempre aggiornata e accessibile in qualsiasi momento*)
- question 3(b): many candidates identified:
 - ‘using AI it is possible to identify skills, abilities (linked to character) of the candidates by analysing their behaviour during interviews’ (*l’IA diventa possibile identificare le abilità legate al carattere dei candidati analizzando il loro comportamento durante i colloqui*)
 - ‘the candidates’ experience improves because they can take advantage of a virtual assistant when they go online on the company’s web page dedicated to vacant, open positions’ (*l’esperienza dei candidati si migliora quando vanno online perché hanno la possibilità di usufruire di un assistente virtuale sulla pagina dell’azienda dedicata alle posizioni aperte*)
- question 4(a): many candidates gained the mark for ‘a car with no brakes being driven by someone without a driver’s licence’ from *un’auto senza freni guidata da qualcuno senza patente*
- question 4(b): many candidates identified the three answers:
 - ‘his boss can see if he stops somewhere for 5 minutes’ (*il mio capo può vedere se mi fermo da qualche parte per cinque minuti*)
 - ‘he asks him why it’s taken him so long to get to a client’s, customer’s office’ (*mi chiede perché ci metto così tanto tempo per arrivare all’ufficio di un cliente*)

- '(the worst thing is that) bonuses are taken away if a rider doesn't deliver on time' (*la cosa peggiore di tutto questo monitoraggio è che vengono tolti i bonus se un rider non consegna in tempo*)
- question 5(a): this question offered optionality and most candidates gained both marks from:
 - 'it reinforces stereotypes against women' (*IA rafforzano gli stereotipi contro le donne*)
 - 'AI attributes words to women such as house, home, family, children' (*attribuiscendole parole come casa, famiglia e bambini*)
 - 'women are given roles such as waitress or cook' (*le donne vengono assegnate a ruoli come cameriera o cuoca*) or 'men are associated with business, managers, salary and career' (*gli uomini sono associati a parole come affari, dirigenti, stipendio e carriera*)
- in the overall purpose question:
 - some candidates demonstrated good inferential skills by identifying the writer's purpose as to inform the reader of the changes to the working world brought about by artificial intelligence and to persuade the reader of the magnitude of this development
 - some candidates identified the writer's language techniques to highlight both the positive and the negative aspects of AI, such as: *molto potente* (very powerful); 'at the dawn of a potential change' (*all'alba di un cambiamento sostanziale*); *potrebbero esserci violazioni della sicurezza e della privacy delle persone* (there could be violations of people's security and privacy); *invasiva* (invasive), *minaccia la privacy* (threatens privacy), *discriminatoria* (discriminatory)
- in the translation:
 - most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of vocabulary and tenses
 - a few candidates demonstrated exceptional skills at translating and gained full marks

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

In the listening section:

- most candidates identified vocabulary in the context of blended families and relationships:
 - question 1(a): most candidates identified 'a family composed of the new partners and all their children' from *una famiglia formata da nuovi partner e tutti i loro figli*
 - question 1(b)(i): most candidates gained the mark from the number 'half a million' (*mezzo milione*)
 - question 1(b)(ii): most candidates identified 'more than six people' from *più di sei persone*
- most candidates performed well in questions with optionality:
question 2(b)(i): most identified either:
 - he couldn't stand the idea that she had a new partner (*non tollerava l'idea che io avessi un nuovo partner*)
 - he couldn't accept that she and his father, his parents weren't together anymore (*non poteva accettare che io e suo padre non stessimo più insieme*)
- question 2(b)(i): candidates had four options for 3 marks:
 - they ask for advice often on friends, boyfriends (*mi chiedono consigli spesso su amici e fidanzati*)
 - they tell her about problems at school (*mi raccontano i problemi che hanno a scuola*)
 - they talk to her about everything (*mi parlano di tutto*)
 - they (often) want her to go to the shops with them, to buy clothes with them (*vogliono anche che io vada con loro per negozi a comprare vestiti*)
- question 2(c): candidates had five options for 3 marks:
 - it's not going well at all (*non va affatto bene in questo momento*)
 - they don't have much in common (*non abbiamo molti interessi in comune*)
 - it's not easy to find time to chat (*non è facile trovare il tempo di chiacchierare*)
 - he plays football almost every evening (*lui gioca a calcio quasi ogni sera*)
 - when he comes home, Marco is already in bed, asleep (*quando torna sono già a letto*)

In the discursive writing section:

- most candidates structured their written responses in line with guidance, used a range of language to present different viewpoints, and stated a clear conclusion
- many candidates used complex language
- some candidates were strategic in their approach and began sentences with a range of openers and included a different tense in each paragraph
- some candidates included challenging imperfect subjunctive phrases and elevated their writing with Italian idiomatic expressions, proverbs and similes
- many candidates made appropriate use of learned phrases, particularly in opening and concluding paragraphs

Portfolio

- many candidates chose a title with a clear focus, which allowed successful analysis of their chosen texts and areas of study
- candidates gaining the upper pegged marks used quotations from sources, linked them to the title and gave clear explanations of their relevance
- most candidates structured their response coherently, used critical terminology and appropriate register, and avoided using the first person
- some candidates were methodical in their approach: they made a point, used evidence from the text to back it up and then analysed the effect and/or impact, and made conclusions. These responses were coherent and flowed well
- all candidates used a second source in Italian in their portfolio and bibliography

Performance–talking

- most candidates had prepared well and could sustain the conversation for the full 20 minutes
- many conversations with the visiting assessor were engaging and flowed well
- many candidates spoke at length, making effective use of subordinating conjunctions, such as *perché* and *dunque* to lengthen their responses
- many candidates did very well when discussing their portfolio
- most candidates used pre-learned material appropriately
- there were many outstanding performances; some candidates had thoroughly researched their chosen topics and provided up-to-date information and statistics to enhance their responses

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper: Reading and Translation

- in the comprehension questions, some candidates had difficulty understanding words with multiple meanings in Italian:
 - question 1(b): some candidates did not understand *entro il 2055* (before, by 2055) and did not gain the mark
 - question 2(b): some candidates did not understand *l'aspettativa di vita* (life expectancy) and did not gain the mark for 'as a result, life expectancy will increase'
 - question 3(a): some candidates did not understand *domande* as 'demands for work, jobs' and did not gain the mark for 'simplifies the selection of candidates when/in cases where there are many applications, applicants for a job'
 - question 3(b): some candidates translated *colloqui* as 'meetings' and did not gain the mark for 'it is possible to identify skills, abilities (linked to character) of the candidates by analysing their behaviour during interviews'
- in the overall purpose question, many candidates missed out on marks as they did not give enough examples of language features used by the writer to convey the purpose of the text:
 - many had difficulty going beyond giving a summary of the text
 - a few did not give an introductory statement to answer the question, 'What was the author's purpose in writing this text?'
 - some presented a list of stylistic features or quotations without drawing inferences from these in relation to the text
 - many candidates had difficulty with more challenging aspects of language in the sense units (word order, impersonal verb construction, adjective placement)
- in the translation question, some candidates missed out words, and some candidates had difficulty with expression in English, for example:
 - in sense unit 2: *ma gli esperti sembrano tutti concordare sul fatto che*, some candidates missed out the word 'seem' in 'but experts all seem to agree on the fact that'

- in sense unit 3: *creerà più occupazioni di quante ne sostituirà*, some candidates had difficulty understanding the word order and placement of the pronoun *ne* within a future tense construction (it will create more jobs than it will replace)
- in sense unit 4: *bisogna chiedersi non tanto se l'intelligenza artificiale sottrarrà lavori*, some candidates had difficulty expressing 'we need to ask ourselves' and missed out on the mark by writing 'we need to tell ourselves'
- in sense unit 5: *ma come cambierà il mondo del lavoro stesso*, some candidates wrote 'the same working world' and missed out on the marks for 'the world of work itself'
- in sense unit 8: some candidates missed out on 2 marks for not using the conditional tense in *dovrebbero lavorare insieme* (people, businesses and institutions should work together)

Question paper: Listening and Discursive Writing

In the listening paper:

- some candidates did not recognise qualifiers and adverbs, for example *più di* (more than) in question 1(b)(ii) and *affatto* (not at all) in question 2(c), and missed out on marks
- in questions 2d(ii) and (e), some candidates did not include the adverbs *a volte* (sometimes) and *poco a poco*, (little by little) and missed out on marks

In the discursive writing paper:

- some candidates' word count exceeded the recommended 250 to 300 words, and their writing became repetitive and inaccurate
- some candidates presented a one-sided argument without a range of viewpoints
- a few candidates used language more appropriate for Higher level, which lacked the complexity of language required at Advanced Higher

Portfolio

- some candidates chose an overly long title and found it difficult to find a focus for their analysis, or some chose a title that did not lend itself well to analysis
- some candidates found it difficult to structure their essay in a coherent way. They made relevant points, backed them up with evidence from sources and explained and evaluated, but lack of organisation within paragraphs detracted from the overall impression
- a few candidates lacked understanding of their chosen text and had factual inaccuracies and spelling errors, for example of characters' names
- a few candidates took a descriptive approach and only summarised the plot of their chosen text

Performance–talking

- a few candidates used language more appropriate for Higher level, which lacked the complexity of language required at Advanced Higher
- some candidates found it difficult to provide enough content in their responses for their selected topics
- a few candidates had difficulty talking about aspects of their portfolio topic and gave brief responses
- a few candidates did not ask the visiting assessor for clarification or to repeat the question when they had difficulty understanding

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper 1: Reading and Translation

You should ensure candidates:

- know that their answers to the comprehension questions must come from the sections of the passage indicated in the line references
- are aware they should give longer answers than those required at Higher level as some questions require two pieces of information to gain 1 mark
- pay careful attention to modifiers, qualifiers, quantifiers, comparatives and superlatives
- develop a list of key language features that they can apply to the overall purpose question

Question paper 2: Listening and Discursive Writing

You should ensure candidates:

- use the number of marks for each question as a guide to the level of detail required in their answers
- pay particular attention to any numbers, dates, times and years, and listen out for any qualifiers or other adjectives 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 well in advance of the exam
- revise common as well as more difficult vocabulary, for example days, months, colours, times, numbers
- check the accuracy of their written work, particularly the conjugation of verbs
- 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 to suit various scenarios, for example 'How could I use an essay I've written on the importance of language learning to respond to the essay title, 'Online learning is more difficult than traditional lessons?'

- provide varied viewpoints in their discursive writing and come to an appropriate conclusion
- always include a different opener, tense, and complex language feature in each paragraph
- use complex language appropriate to Advanced Higher in their discursive writing, for example range of tense, subjunctives, comparative, superlatives, idioms, complex pronouns
- refer to the productive grammar grid in our [Advanced Higher Modern Languages Course Specification](#) to ensure they cover all relevant areas of grammar

Portfolio

You should ensure candidates:

- choose a title that is focused and provides scope for analysis, for example 'To what extent does the writer explore the theme of loss through the main character'
- use a second source (this must be in Italian)
- in the main body of the essay always make a point, give evidence from the text and then analyse the connection to the title and its impact
- are aware of, and adhere to, the recommended word count of 1,200 to 1,500 words, and know if they exceed the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty is applied

Performance–talking

You should ensure candidates:

- revise articles, plurals, adjective endings and tense patterns
- complete their Subject Topic List (STL) forms appropriately and ensure that they are focused and not too long
- practise initiating discussion as well as responding to questions
- develop a list of phrases to use in all discussions, for example openers and interjections
- develop a list of subordinating conjunctions that help extend responses, for example *perché, dunque* (so, why)