

Course report 2026

Higher Gàidhlig, SCQF level 6

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 paper and coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they didn't 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: 148

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 135

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	52	38.5	38.5	84
B	43	31.9	70.4	72
C	32	23.7	94.1	60
D	8	5.9	100	48
No award	0	0	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: Leughadh (Reading)

The passage was a short story that centred around two brothers.

It was evident in candidates' responses that they fully engaged with the passage.

The text allowed the usual range of questions which differentiated between candidates and were suitably challenging and fair.

Question paper 2: Litreachas (Literature)

Questions provided plenty of scope for candidates to write about the literature they studied. Most responses were based on prose and poetry, from traditional texts that have been the mainstay of courses through the years. These include *Cisteachan Laighe*, *An Eala Bhàn*, *An Roghainn*, *Mairi Iain Mhurch' Chaluim*, *An Coigreach*, *Ann am Bosnia*, *An Taghadh* and *Bùrn*. There were also one or two less common texts, such as the newer text of *Playa de la Suerta*. Poetry was the most popular choice, very closely followed by prose.

Question paper 3: Èisteachd (Listening)

The topic of the listening passage was traditions associated with Halloween. Most candidates engaged well with the passage and the range of questions, and there was a good spread of marks. One or two centres commented that the track was faster than normal and more challenging to listen to, however marking saw no evidence that this had affected performance. A few centres commented on candidates' enjoyment of the topic. Markers found the paper fair and accessible, however there was evidence of some candidates finding this component more challenging.

Obair shònraichte—sgrìobhadh (Assignment—writing)

The topics presented for the assignment ranged from discursive pieces on artificial intelligence (AI), social media, shopping online, exams, environmental issues and mental health, to personal reflective pieces that covered topics such as hobbies and interests, significant events in candidates' lives, family, and topics important to

individual candidates. There were also factual pieces about places or people, along with creative pieces in the form of short stories.

Còmhradh (performance—talking)

The performance—talking component performed as expected. A sample was not taken this year.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)

Many candidates answered the range of questions very well. Many did well in question 1, which focused on the prison image at the beginning of the story. Question 2, the summary question, was also done well. Many candidates successfully answered questions 5 and 6, which focused on imagery, sentence structure and word choice.

Question paper 2: Litreachas (Literature)

Many candidates produced essays that shaped their knowledge towards the demands of the question. A few wrote quite lengthy, comprehensive responses to the question chosen and clearly demonstrated their knowledge of their chosen texts. Many candidates gave quotations in their responses and analysed these quite effectively.

Question paper 3: Èisteachd (Listening)

In the listening paper, questions 1, 4, 6 and the style question 8 saw many candidates provide good answers. A few candidates performed very well.

Obair shònraichte—sgrìobhadh (Assignment—writing)

Markers commented on the overall quality of most responses and the range of different responses that candidates offered. Some candidates showed real flair in their writing skills. Some personal responses showed close engagement with the task chosen and conveyed thoughts and feelings and the candidate's personality. Discursive pieces were often effectively structured and illustrated the candidate's voice and experience, along with effective use of discursive techniques such as questioning and specific word choice to engage the reader. There were also some well-written imaginative pieces. Some of the subjects were particularly interesting and thoughtful in their style and construction.

Còmhradh (performance—talking)

Candidate performance was strong.

Areas where candidates didn't perform well

Question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)

Most candidates worked through most of the questions. Some candidates found time management challenging, and did not answer all the questions in the paper.

Some candidates did not express ideas clearly when explaining how examples of word choice or imagery worked or when explaining ideas and feelings. Their language skills were, in a few cases, making it difficult to go beyond basic points, or they repeated the stem of the question without completing any analysis of the quotation or example used.

Some candidates found question 5 more challenging, along with questions 6, 7 and 10.

A few candidates found the final few questions more problematic.

A few candidates quoted from outwith the parameters set for specific questions.

Some candidates lost marks because they did not give sufficient examples in questions that matched the number of marks offered.

Question paper 2: Litreachas (Literature)

Many candidates crafted essays that addressed the demands of the chosen question. However, a few struggled to do this effectively or spent too long on summaries of plot or content of a text. Some did not connect fully with the question or techniques and how the text was constructed.

Some candidates found it demanding to express a personal response, show how points and evidence worked together, and include evaluation of techniques and/or ideas. It was also clear that some candidates were selecting material from their text that was not the most important or relevant in answering the question chosen. Most candidates chose texts that worked well in producing an essay at Higher level. Some

essays were challenging for markers due to handwriting that was difficult to read. Some candidates' essays had long introductions and/or long conclusions at the expense of sufficient material focused towards the question.

Question paper 3: Èisteachd (Listening)

Some candidates found parts of the passage and some questions challenging, despite markers agreeing that there was little overly-challenging vocabulary in questions or the passage and there was clear signposting of questions. Many found questions 2(a) and 2(b) more challenging, despite them being based around months and seasons.

Obair shònraichte—sgrìobhadh (Assignment—writing)

A few candidates could have checked pieces more effectively, both for accuracy with spelling and grammar and for sentence construction.

Some candidates submitted factual pieces that needed more context and would have benefitted from a more personal dimension. There were a few queries as to authenticity. Some discursive essays on topics that have been often used previously were mechanical and lacking in a clear line of thought.

A few of the creative essays lacked a satisfactory storyline. This was often evident in their ending, or a storyline that required rereading.

Some candidates did not include their list of sources for discursive essays, despite using statistics and source material in their assignment piece.

Còmhraidh (performance—talking)

No sample was taken.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)

Candidates should gain sufficient experience in dealing with a range of different texts, both fiction and non-fiction, and be clear about the different types of questions and how to approach them.

Candidates should carefully read each question to avoid incorrect answers. Under the pressure of time in the examination it can be easy to misinterpret what a particular question requires. There's no need for candidates to repeat the question itself in answering the individual questions and they should be aware of how clear, bulleted answers can be effective.

One or two candidates used evidence from outwith the parameters of particular questions. They should use line references to guide and help them through the paper.

Candidates should ensure handwriting and answers are clear in all question papers. At times the legibility of answers can be a problem for markers.

Candidates should note the number of marks for each question and attempt to give full examples and explanations to fulfil these. Candidates should give clear explanations as to how chosen quotations 'work' and focus on connotation and ideas suggested. They should work on developing the necessary breadth of language skills and vocabulary required to do this effectively. Where appropriate, candidates should mention techniques such as repetition, ellipsis, metaphor or word choice. They should be aware of the requirement to give examples, which is signposted by words such as 'Seall'.

Candidates should give the key part of quotations where necessary for explanations in answers. One or two candidates did not clearly isolate specific words in quotations, dealt with several quotations with one comment or brief analysis, or quoted the first and last words of a quotation without being specific in their following answer. Candidates should deal with each quotation separately, as merging quotations together into one answer often leads to them not achieving full marks.

Candidates should answer questions dealing with 'effectiveness', or those which ask for opinions on ideas, messages or themes, with links to textual evidence. They should answer questions that focus on specific features of the passage with this in mind. Candidates should connect to ideas, images or language earlier in the passage. They should be prepared to write about techniques such as extended metaphor, and understand how endings of passages are effective.

Candidates should practise managing time and balancing language skills against the demand of the paper at Higher level.

Question paper 2: Litreachas (Literature)

In literature essays, candidates should consider their writing style and work towards a well-constructed, polished essay. It is important to give sufficient detailed analysis along with evaluation of effectiveness. The essay should read as an answer to the question chosen, rather than separate individual paragraphs. Considered personal appreciation and evaluation of examples and of the text should also be evident. Candidates should avoid formulaic prepared essays, and shape their essays towards the question. They should avoid wasting time on long introductions, summaries, background information, and long conclusions. It's better to use this time adding to the body of the essay and key points in relation to the question.

In dealing with poetry, candidates should consider the effect of style and shape to poems. They should consider how this has a bearing on the tone, message and effect of the poem, in addition to imagery and other stylistic features.

Candidates should cover the key areas of texts and deal with the text as a whole, not just selecting a particular number of quotations. The quotations selected should be significant in advancing the points they are trying to make in answering the question, rather than being 'random' in nature. Candidates should also cover the crucial aspects of texts, for example the irony and ending of the short story *Burn* is important in showing the ideas within the story as a whole, or the idea of coffins in the poem *Cisteachan Laighe*. Leaving out elements such as these can lead to an imbalance or a lack of depth in essays.

Some candidates use techniques to drive the essay. Where this can be appropriate on a specifically linked question, candidates should be aware of the need in any question to illustrate what the central ideas are within the text.

You and your candidates should be aware of the need for texts used in essays to be of some substance and suitably challenging for Higher level. This allows candidates to provide sufficient depth to their essay.

Question paper 3: Èisteachd (Listening)

Candidates should use the time available to carefully read questions before they start writing, particularly those questions that require supporting evidence. They should also be aware of the number of marks for individual questions and any specific requirements made. Candidates must give clear answers to questions rather than just key words that they have heard. A few candidates wrote down everything that they heard but did not demonstrate understanding of what the question was asking.

Good understanding of straightforward and complex Gàidhlig, revision and development of a solid core vocabulary resource, and practising listening skills help candidates to prepare for this component.

Obair shònraichte—sgrìobhadh (Assignment—writing)

Successful assignments were characterised by an effective connection between the candidate and the piece itself. This connected with the reader. Pieces of writing that showed the candidate's personality were effective. This was true for personal reflective and discursive pieces.

Candidates should be aware of the marking criteria and take cognisance of 'insight', 'persuasive force' and 'personality' where appropriate.

In creative pieces such as short stories, candidates should shape the narrative along with character and setting. They should be aware that they can, for example, create an episode or chapter of a longer story. They should also consider how to make the ideas in the story clear at first reading.

Factual pieces with a personal connection or element are usually more successful. Rather than, for example, relating the history of a particular place, a piece that shows a personal connection to a place or demonstrates interest in a topic, creates the connection with the reader more effectively.

Candidates should use the techniques they learn in other elements of the course, such as sentence structure and imagery, in their own writing.

Candidates should cite any sources they reference within their piece at the end of the assignment.

Candidates should check accuracy in the whole piece, not just part of it. They should be aware of the authenticity of the piece and how pieces exhibit the style, ability and personality of the writer.

Candidates may be tempted to use AI and other tools such as Google Translate when creating assignment pieces and other work. It is important that you and your candidates realise the negative aspects to this, alongside the fraudulent plagiarism of others' work and the risk of qualifications not being awarded. If candidates use these tools, writing can exhibit a style that does not fit with the piece, or use some vocabulary and constructions that look out of place within the context of the rest of a piece. Candidates should be aware of the possible penalties connected with this.

Còmhradh (performance–talking)

You should ensure candidates:

- have knowledge of, and can apply, detailed vocabulary that is specific to their chosen topic in a natural manner
- select topics that allow them to demonstrate fully their broad understanding of, and ability to use, the language