Course report 2026

Higher German, 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 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 carried out limited verification for performance–talking this year, so we won't publish a verification summary. You can find summaries from previous years on our website.

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: 600

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 514

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	283	55.1	55.1	83
B	115	22.4	77.4	70
C	54	10.5	87.9	58
D	37	7.2	95.1	45
No award	25	4.9	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

The 2026 Higher German course assessment performed as intended, and offered flexibility, personalisation, and elements of choice. The question papers provided an appropriate level of challenge and differentiation.

There was a decrease in the number of entries for Higher German this session.

Question paper 1: Reading

The question paper was an article about solo travelling and was accessible and relevant to candidates' experiences and interests. Questions that had a range of acceptable answers, allowed candidates more flexibility and choice in their responses.

The translation, which featured complex and detailed language and a focus on grammar and the accurate use of English, performed as expected.

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Candidates had a choice of two scenarios: scenario 1 (employability) on completing a work experience placement in a German-speaking country, and scenario 2 (society) on staying with an exchange partner and their family in a German-speaking country.

Both scenarios and their six bullet points allowed candidates an element of personalisation, giving them more control over their writing and allow them to add information and creative flair.

More candidates chose to answer scenario 2 than scenario 1.

Question paper 2: Listening

The question paper consisted of a monologue and a conversation. The monologue was about outdoor learning, and the conversation was on the topic of an open-air museum in the Black Forest.

The paper, in its structure and content, allows progression from the National 5 course assessment and course topics, resulting in some good responses.

Assignment–writing

In the assignment–writing, candidates produce a piece of discursive writing using detailed and complex language from one of the following contexts: society, learning, employability, culture.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: Reading

Most candidates answered the comprehension questions well:

- question 3: offered optionality, and most candidates identified two from: ‘they are (already) pensioners and have more time’ (*manche von ihnen sind schon Rentner und haben einfach mehr Zeit*), ‘they enjoy their new freedom’ *(sie genießen ihre neu gewonnene Freiheit*), ‘their children are grown up and no longer live at home’ (*die eigenen Kinder sind erwachsen und wohnen nicht mehr zu Hause*)
- question 5(a): offered two options for 1 mark, with most candidates writing either ‘she has (recently) separated from her partner’ (*ich habe mich kürzlich von meinem Partner getrennt*) or ‘to experience the world-famous Fringe Festival’ (*das weltberühmte Fringe Festival zu erleben*)
- question 5(b): most candidates identified ‘she can (easily) travel’ or ‘begin the journey home’ (*wenn ich ein Problem hätte, könnte ich einfach die Heimreise antreten*)
- question 7: offered seven options for 3 marks, and most candidates identified ‘book a group trip with a travel agent’ (*eine Gruppenreise mit einem Reisebüro buchen*); ‘tell friends and family when and where you are going (before you go)’ (*man sollte der Familie und den Freunden vor dem Urlaub sagen, wann und wohin man fährt*); ‘regularly keep in contact’ (*regelmäßig in Kontakt bleiben*); ‘use common sense (if you go out at night)’ (*wenn man abends ausgehen will, sollte man gesunden Menschenverstand benutzen*); ‘travel with a registered taxi’ (*mit einem registrierten Taxi fahren*); ‘share your location on your phone’ (*man kann seinen Standort auf dem Handy teilen*); ‘upload’ or ‘post (short) videos and photos (to social media)’ (*auf soziale Medien kann man auch kurze Videos und Fotos hochladen*)
- question 8 (the overall purpose question): some candidates gave good responses, and identified many positive and/or negative aspects of solo travel

- question 9 (translation): candidates with a good understanding of differing word order in German and English achieved the higher marks
    - sense unit 1 (*außerdem kann man auch neue Leute kennen lernen*): some candidates translated '*außerdem*' as 'besides', 'furthermore', 'in addition', 'anyway' or 'aside from that', and translated '*man*' as 'you' or 'one'
    - sense unit 3 (*ob man alleine oder in einer kleinen Gruppe reist*): most candidates translated '*ob*' as 'whether', 'no matter if', or 'if', and coped well with 'travelling alone or in a small group'

Question paper 1: Directed writing

- most candidates addressed all bullet points and used pre-learned material to complete the task
- most candidates showed knowledge of the perfect and imperfect tenses, as well as of German word-order and sentence structure
- a few candidates went beyond the demands of the bullet points adding information and flair to their responses
- candidates with a good knowledge of German word-order and tenses gained the higher marks
- candidates with good exam and time management skills completed the paper

Question paper 2: Listening

- candidates with a good knowledge of vocabulary performed well
- question 1(c): offered optionality, and most candidates identified two from the five options: 'concentrate better' (*können sich besser konzentrieren*)'; 'don't have to sit for hours (on chairs)' (*weil sie nicht stundenlang auf einem Stuhl sitzen müssen*); '(can) move around' or 'exercise' (*sie können sich bewegen*); '(can) enjoy the fresh air' (*die frische Luft genießen*); 'learn (a lot) about nature and the environment' (*gleichzeitig lernen sie viel über die Natur und die Umwelt*)
- question 1(e): offered optionality, and most candidates identified either 'group work' (*in einer Gruppe zusammenzuarbeiten*) or 'make new friends' (*neue Freundschaften zu schließen*)
- question 2(a): offered optionality, and most candidates identifyied either 'they didn't spend the day in school' (*sie haben den Tag nicht in der Schule verbracht*)

or ‘they learnt (a lot) about traditional life (in the Black Forest)’ *(und haben viel über das traditionelle Leben im Schwarzwald gelernt*)

- question 2(c)(i): offered three options for 1 mark, and most candidates identified ‘(only) from March to November’ (*nur von März bis November*), or ‘(usually) Tuesday to Sunday’ (*normalerweise von Dienstag bis Sonntag*) or ‘(from) 9:00 to 18:00’ (*von 9:00 bis 18:00 Uhr*)
- question 2(d): offered five choices for 2 marks, and most candidates identified: ‘a tour (of the museum)’ (*Museumstour*); ‘saw the different historic(al) buildings and houses’ (*verschiedene historische Gebäude und Häuser gesehen*); ‘(at a workshop, they could) bake bread’ (*in einem Workshop Brot backen*); ‘(at a workshop, they could) make cheese’ (*oder Käse produzieren*); ‘learned how people used to live and work’ (*die Kinder haben auch gelernt, wie die Menschen früher im Schwarzwald gelebt und gearbeitet haben*)

Assignment–writing

- most candidates performed well in the assignment–writing
- candidates with a good understanding of discursive or persuasive writing gained the higher marks
- many candidates structured their writing to provide different viewpoints and to draw conclusions
- many candidates used detailed and complex language and a range of tenses and structures
- most candidates’ assignments showed a good level of accuracy, with clear evidence of structure and the use of discursive and organisational language

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper 1: Reading

- question 1: many candidates did not give the detail ‘alone in the next 6 months’ and did not gain the mark (*jeder vierte Reisende plant, in den nächsten sechs Monaten alleine Ferien zu machen*)
- question 3: many candidates did not understand *einfach* in ‘*haben einfach mehr Zeit*’ (they simply have more time), and did not gain the mark
- question 4: some candidates did not give the verb ‘looking for’, ‘searching’, ‘longing for’, ‘seeking’ or ‘wanting’ (*sehnen*)
- question 5(a): some candidates wrote ‘divorced’ or ‘dumped’ for *getrennt* (separated or split up from)
- question 6(b): some candidates wrote their answer in the past tense instead of the present tense for *über das Wetter oder wohin man fährt* (talk or ask about the weather and where people are going)
- question 8, the overall purpose question:
    - there were a few ‘no responses’
    - many candidates did not give justification or analysis
    - some candidates repeated previous answers
    - most candidates gained 1 mark
- question 9, the translation:
    - sense unit 1 (*außerdem kann man auch neue Leute kennen lernen*): a few candidates did not translate *man* (you or one) and did not gain the mark
    - sense unit 4 (*daher ist es wirklich einfach, neue Kontakte zu knüpfen*): many candidates did not translate *daher* (due to this, this is why, therefore), and some missed out *wirklich* (really); some mistranslated *einfach*, which in this case, meant ‘easy’ or ‘simple’

Question paper 1: Directed writing

- some candidates did not use a range of tenses
- a few candidates demonstrated an over-reliance on pre-learned material, producing a response without addressing the bullet points:
    - in bullet point 1 in both scenarios a few candidates addressed only one part of the bullet point, instead of both
- where candidates relied on pre-learned material, they did not access the higher marks
- some candidates did not complete their pieces of writing, for example they did not address three bullet points or more

Question paper 2: Listening

Monologue

- question 1(a): some candidates did not give the full answer, and relied on their knowledge of the topic, rather than detail from the text
- question 1(d): some candidates did not understand *Herbst* (autumn). Some candidates did not give enough detail, such as 'bad' in *Im Herbst und Winter kann das Wetter oft schlecht sein* (in autumn and winter the weather can often be bad), or 'warm' in *wenn es regnet, sind sie lieber im warmen Klassenzimmer*' (if it is raining they prefer to sit in warm classrooms)

Conversation

- question 2(b): many candidates did not know the numbers and/or did not include the quantifiers *rund* or *mehr als* in *jedes Jahr kommen rund 220.000 Besucher und seit der Eröffnung haben mehr als 16 Millionen Touristen das Museum besucht* ('around 220,000 visitors' and 'more than 16 million')
- question 2(e)(i): many candidates did not understand *füttern* (to feed) in *die Kinder durften sogar diese Tiere füttern* (the children were allowed to feed the animals)
- question 2(e)(ii): some candidates were not specific enough, and did not state 'directly' or 'straight from' in *direkt aus dem Supermarkt*, or 'and' in Milch und Eier (milk and eggs) and in *Kühen und Hühnern* (cows and chickens)

- question and 2(f): many candidates missed the verb ‘started’ or ‘began to’ in *während unseres Besuchs begann es plötzlich stark zu regnen* (during our visit it suddenly began to rain), and ‘some’ in *einige Kinder* (some children)

Assignment–writing

- although most topics chosen allowed candidates to address the task fully, some of the choice of topics were more suited to Advanced Higher
- some candidates used directed writing style in their assignment, which did not allow them to address the task
- some candidates did not provide a structure, write in paragraphs, use discursive language, and/or provide an appropriate conclusion
- some candidates had difficulty with the use of word order in German, particularly inverted word order
- some candidates did not use capital letters when writing German nouns
- there was inconsistency in how candidates presented the stimulus:
    - most provided the full stimulus in English
    - some provided an abbreviated version
    - some only gave the title of their piece of writing
    - a few gave no indication of a stimulus or title

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

You should ensure candidates:

- regularly practise timed assessments to develop exam skills
- analyse the comprehension questions and the reading passage to help them distinguish between relevant and redundant vocabulary
- approach the reading task holistically, which helps answer the overall purpose question
- use transferrable literacy skills from National 5 and Higher English to help analyse the passage. These skills are especially relevant for candidates wishing to study Advanced Higher German, where the reading passages require more analysis
- develop their literacy and dictionary skills

Question paper 1: Directed writing

You should ensure candidates:

- give a balanced response to each bullet point
- know that for the first bullet point, they must address two pieces of information
- read the scenarios and bullet points carefully and ensure they give all the required information
- know to use a variety of tenses and structures to achieve the higher pegged marks
- refer to the marking instructions and the productive grammar grid in the Higher Modern Languages Course Specification so they are fully prepared for what is required at Higher level
- know they must address each bullet point
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- if typing responses, use double spaces between lines

Question paper 2: Listening

You should ensure candidates:

- can give answers to reflect what they have heard, rather than inferring the meaning
- develop vocabulary knowledge with a focus on lexicology and semantic use of words in sentences
- are aware of the similarities between English and German with special consideration of the Scots language. Candidates with an awareness of the interconnected nature of language and the roots of the Scots language are likely to become more successful listeners and learners of German
- do regular repetition and practice of vocabulary related to the monologue and conversation tasks
- access authentic material to develop listening comprehension
- check their responses to ensure they make sense and answer the question

Assignment–writing

You should ensure candidates:

- refer to the marking instructions for the assignment–writing, and know that they must use these separately from the marking instructions for directed writing
- structure their writing
- provide different arguments or viewpoints
- provide a title that prompts a discursive essay
- refer to examples of discursive writing on our Understanding Standards web page to better understand the style of writing required for the assignment–writing
- have a choice of stimuli at the start of the drafting process to help them write discursively about a topic
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- if typing responses, use double spaces between lines