Course report 2026

Higher Urdu, 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: 111

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 116

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	99	85.3	85.3	84
B	13	11.2	96.6	72
C	2	1.7	98.3	60
D	1	0.9	99.1	48
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 1: Reading

The reading question paper performed as intended. The article discussed education, and teaching and learning styles. The topic was relevant and the questions were fair.

All questions performed as expected. There was a balance of accessible and challenging questions, with some questions offering options for acceptable answers.

The paper was appropriate to the level.

Question paper 1: Directed writing

The question paper performed as intended. Candidates chose from scenario 1 (employability) a work placement in Pakistan, and scenario 2 (society) a holiday to Pakistan with family.

The scenarios were fair, accessible and of equal demand. There was a range of performances, with many candidates choosing scenario 2.

Question paper 2: Listening

The question paper performed as intended. The paper was on the context of culture. Item 1 was a monologue about why it is important to travel and item 2 was a conversation about holidays in Pakistan.

The paper was accessible to all candidates.

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing performed as expected. Candidates produce a piece of discursive writing in Urdu using detailed and complex language in response to the stimulus.

Candidates were well prepared and wrote about a range of topics from all contexts.
Most candidates wrote assignments from society and culture contexts.
Many candidates wrote about the topic of holidays.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates performed well in questions that offered optionality:

- question 1: offered six options for 3 marks: ‘technology has changed the concept of education’; ‘studying in institutions is not only the way of gaining education’; ‘people can learn by sitting at home’ or ‘in their own time’; ‘can learn from environment or experiences’; ‘learning can never stop’; ‘new technology made education easy’
- question 3(a): offered three options for 2 marks: ‘digital activities help to enhance learning’; ‘improve performance’; ‘increase interest in lesson’
- question 3(b) offered three options for 2 marks: ‘pupils will not focus or concentrate’; ‘pupils will get bored’; ‘this can cause disruption’
- question 7 (overall purpose question): many candidates identified that the author was successful in justifying that new technology helps to make learning easy and enjoyable, giving a clear answer, with justification that showed an accurate reading of the text
- question 8 (translation):
  - sense unit 1 (مستقبل ہوتے ہیں ، اُ نکی بہت): most candidates translated this as ‘students are the nation’s future and they have lots of responsibilities’
  - sense unit 4 (لے کر خوداعتمادی میں): most candidates translated this as ‘to increase confidence, they should use their own capabilities’
  - sense unit 5 (ی چالنے کے راستے پر کےلئے ہمیشہ سچائی اور اپنے ملک سے . م): most candidates translated this as ‘to ensure the country and nation are on the path of progression, they should work with the truth, honesty and love your country’

Question paper 1: Directed writing

- there were some excellent pieces of writing
- many candidates gained pegged marks of 12, 16 or 20 across both scenarios
- candidates who performed well:
    - addressed the bullet points in a full and balanced way
    - gave additional information relevant to the scenario
    - demonstrated good content and grammatical accuracy
    - used language resource appropriate to the level
- some candidates adapted learned material effectively to address their chosen scenario

Question paper 2: Listening

- question 1(c): offered optionality, and most candidates identified two points for 3 marks: ‘ask children’s opinion before booking holidays’, ‘prepare necessary things according to the weather’ or ‘they collect information from the internet about what to do there’
- question 2(a): two options for 1 mark: ‘lots of rain because of the monsoon or rainy season’ or ‘frequent power cuts’
- question 2(c)(ii): most candidates identified two points from three: ‘youngsters come in groups of friends’, ‘tourists from other countries come also’, ‘families from other cities come to enjoy the food at weekends’
- question 2(e): offered three options for 2 marks: ‘government should provide entertainment facilities’, ‘new parks where sports facilities are available’, ‘reduce taxes on food items’

Assignment–writing

There were some excellent pieces of writing at this level. Many candidates gained the upper pegged marks of 16 and 20, and most candidates gained 12 pegged marks or higher.

These candidates included:

- relevant content, with some fully addressing the title in a discursive way
- a clear structure, with different viewpoints on the topic and a clear conclusion

- a very good or good degree of grammatical accuracy, where errors did not always detract from the overall impression
- good language resource with sustained use of detailed and complex language, discourse markers and discursive language

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper 1: Reading

Some candidates did not give enough detail in their answers, and they missed out on marks:

- questions 4: some did not identify two from: ‘Urdu class went to explore northern areas’; ‘class was taught about the geography or history of the area’; ‘we were shown a documentary film’; ‘on our return we worked on a project’
- question 5(a): some did not provide enough detail from: ‘questions create curiosity’ or ‘they want to learn something new’; ‘develop self-confidence’; ‘questions should be related to classwork’; ‘increase their knowledge’
- question 5(b): some did not identify ‘teachers asked questions’ or ‘increased Urdu skills of talking or understanding’
- question 7 (overall purpose question): many candidates quoted the text or did not give precise examples
- question 8 (translation): some missed out words in English

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Where candidates did not perform well:

- they only partially addressed the bullet points, and could not access the upper pegged marks, for example:
    - in scenario 1, a few candidates did not address ‘where you stayed and what the accommodation was like’
    - in scenario 2, a few missed ‘where you went and what you thought of your accommodation’
- some used pre-learned language and phrases that did not address the bullet points in the chosen scenario

- a very small number had serious inaccuracies where little of the piece of writing made sense and gained no marks
- they had problems with grammatical accuracy
- they missed out bullet points

Question paper 2: Listening

- question 1(a): three options for 1 mark, but some did not identify ‘more people like eating out’, ‘people don’t like cooking’ or ‘they have forgotten the taste of homemade food’
- question 1(b): some candidates did not identify three from the four options: ‘don’t have time to cook (due to the 21st century) busy lifestyle’; ‘different kinds of restaurants and cafes are opening’; ‘they offer such tempting food’ or ‘people find it difficult to choose the food or restaurant’

Assignment–writing

- in the assignment, the writing must be discursive. Some candidates’ pieces of writing had titles and stimuli that should have elicited a discursive response; however, their responses were written from a personal point of view with mostly personal ideas and opinions, and little discussion of different viewpoints
- some pieces of writing lacked an appropriate conclusion. There were some titles or stimuli that required candidates to recount their experience, and this did not provide them with the necessary scope to consider different viewpoints
- if pieces of writing read as a personal response to a topic and have either few or no discursive elements, candidates cannot access the upper pegged marks
- where candidates did not perform well:
    - the content had limited coverage of different arguments and/or viewpoints
    - there was an insufficient level of accuracy for the level
    - some pieces of writing had errors that detracted from the overall quality
    - in terms of language resource, some pieces of writing showed unsuccessful use of language and structures, mostly due to issues with accuracy

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

For the comprehension questions, you should ensure candidates:

- pay close attention to the number of marks for each question and provide as much detail as they can
- know that if a question says, ‘state any one thing’, there is more than one possible correct answer
- know that the comprehension questions have key words to help them find the correct answer in the text
- leave time to check their answers
- are aware that marks are not transferrable across questions

For the overall purpose question, you should ensure candidates:

- know they should answer the question (assertion), going beyond a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ statement. They should follow this with a justification that shows an accurate reading of the text, using examples or reasons with reference to the text
- are aware that quotes in Urdu without an explanation of their relevance, do not gain marks

For the translation, you should ensure candidates:

- practise the skill of translation as often as possible
- complete the translation question after the comprehension questions
- re-read their translation in English to check it makes sense
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- if typing responses, use double spaces between lines

Question paper 1: Directed writing

You should ensure candidates:

- check they have answered all the bullet points, or parts of bullet points
- give detail for each bullet point in a balanced way
- write in a structured way, including paragraphs and punctuation
- use detailed and complex language, and do not repeat the same structures and ideas
- include additional information, where appropriate
- develop a robust knowledge of aspects of grammar appropriate to the level
- refer to the productive grammar grid in our Higher Modern Languages Course Specification as a guide to the type of language use expected at Higher level
- set aside time in the exam to read over their writing, using the dictionary appropriately
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- if typing responses, use double spaces between lines

Question paper 2: Listening

You should ensure candidates:

- regularly practise listening skills and note-taking
- use the time before the recording starts to read the questions
- try to identify or highlight key words in each question
- include as much detail as possible in their answers, and use the time at the end of the assessment to check over their answers
- practise basic vocabulary on a regular basis. This includes vocabulary covered before starting the Higher course, for example days of the week, time, numbers, months of the year, food, shopping, travel, holidays, weather and family
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- if typing responses, use double spaces between lines

Assignment–writing

You should ensure candidates:

- read the general marking principles and detailed marking instructions in our Higher Modern Languages Course Specification to understand that at this level, they should present different arguments or viewpoints and draw a conclusion
- refer to examples of discursive writing on our Understanding Standards website to better understand the style of writing required in the assignment–writing
- have a choice of stimuli at the start of the drafting process to help them write discursively about a topic
- use the time spent between the first draft and final version to improve accuracy in all aspects of grammar and spelling
- write the stimulus and any associated questions in English in the answer booklet
- avoid including any draft work in the answer booklet
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- if typing responses, use double spaces between lines