Course report 2026

National 5 Chinese Languages, SCQF level 5

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.

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.

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Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 426

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 510

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	394	77.3	77.3	84
B	43	8.4	85.7	72
C	34	6.7	92.4	60
D	28	5.5	97.8	48
No award	11	2.2	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 question papers covered a range of topics across all contexts and were of an appropriate level of demand and challenge for the level.

Question paper 1: Reading

This question paper performed as intended. The paper included three texts of approximately 150 to 200 Chinese characters, followed by questions in English. The three texts covered the contexts of society (employability), learning (school) and culture (travel).

The assessment received positive feedback from candidates, teachers and lecturers. The content and level of demand were appropriate to the level. The questions were accessible and well-signposted to help candidates locate the answers in the text.

Question paper 1: Writing

This question paper performed as intended. The unpredictable bullet points were relevant to the job advert and straightforward for candidates to address.

Question paper 2: Listening

This question paper performed as intended and was on the context of society. Candidates listened to item 1, a monologue where Luo Bin talks about her life in China, and item 2, where Luo Bin talks to Dylan about parks in China. After each item, candidates answer questions in English.

The topic and range of vocabulary used across the two items were suitable for National 5. There was a sufficient level of challenge and demand in terms of the content and questioning.

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing performed as expected.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: Reading

Most candidates performed well in the reading question paper. There were few no responses to questions. There was a range of marks, with a few candidates gaining full marks and many accessing the high mark ranges.

- many candidates identified accurate information
- most candidates engaged effectively with the texts
- many candidates gained full marks by carefully reading the questions and understanding key sections of each text

Text 1 (society)

- most candidates performed well in this text about becoming a nurse
- question 1(b): most candidates included the age 25 岁 and ‘year olds’ in their answers and gained the mark
- question 1(d): many candidates completed the sentence with 'patience' (adjective) instead of 'patient’ (noun)

Text 2 (learning)

- question 2(b)(i): most candidates identified the details ‘am’ or ‘in the morning’
- question 2(f): offered optionality, and most candidates answered with either ‘education’ or the complete quote ‘one child, one teacher, one book and one pen’ and gained the mark

Text 3 (culture)

- most candidates showed good text handling skills in these questions
- question 3(a): many candidates answered with ‘spring’ and ‘one week’ and gained both marks
- question 3(d)(iii): many candidates incorporated descriptive adjectives into their answers, for example using ‘traditional furniture’ instead of ‘furniture’

Question paper 1: Writing

- most candidates addressed the four predictable bullet points in a balanced manner, using detailed vocabulary and grammatical structures, a range of expressions, structures, and accuracy
- most candidates addressed the two unpredictable bullet points and responded appropriately to the command words
- candidates who prepared well provided more detailed language and used a variety of grammatical structures for bullet points 1 to 4
- most candidates included a range of vocabulary and structures appropriate to the level
- in terms of content and language resources, many candidates coped well with the demands of the writing task
- there were few pre-learned responses
- candidates displayed a high level of accuracy when spelling frequently used words and in their use of measure words
- many candidates used information in the job advert to direct their applications to 高馆长
- many candidates incorporated the prompts in their answers, and adapted learned phrases to suit the job application
- candidates who incorporated details from the job advert into their responses enhanced their writing by moving beyond basic phrases

Question paper 2: Listening

There was a range of marks in this paper, with a few candidates gaining full marks.

- question 2(b)(i): most candidates identified ‘next to’ or ‘beside the hotel’ and gained the mark

Assignment–writing

- most candidates prepared well for the assignment–writing
- many candidates demonstrated detailed language and accuracy expected at this level

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper 1: Reading

Text 1 (society)

- question 1(b): some candidates wrote ‘25’ or ‘25 years’ instead of ‘25 year olds’ and did not gain the mark
- question 1(d): some candidates wrote ‘patient’ instead of ‘patience’ and did not gain the mark
- question 1(e): some candidates wrote ‘manners’ instead of ‘have a positive manner’ and did not gain the mark

Text 2 (learning)

- question 2(b)(ii): some candidates wrote ‘opportunities’ instead of ‘the opportunity to learn’ and did not gain the mark
- question 2(d): some candidates wrote ‘rural’ or ‘farm’ instead of ‘the countryside’, ‘rural areas’ or ‘village’ and did not gain the mark

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(a): some candidates wrote ‘a year’ instead of ‘one week’ and did not gain the mark
- question 3(b): some candidates wrote the singular ‘ticket’ instead of the plural ‘tickets’ and did not gain the mark
- question 3(c)(i): some candidates wrote ‘money’ instead of ‘purse’ or ‘wallet’ and did not gain the mark
- question 3(d)(ii): some candidates wrote ‘library’ instead of ‘study’ and did not gain the mark

Question paper 2: Listening

- question 1(a)(i): some candidates wrote ‘more than once’ instead of ‘two times’ or ‘twice’ and did not gain the mark
- question 1(a)(ii): some candidates used the verb ‘practise’ instead of ‘learn’ and did not gain the mark
- question 1(e): some candidates only wrote ‘food’ and did not include the adjective ‘spicy’ and did not gain the mark
- question 1(f): some candidates wrote ‘rest’ instead of ‘nap’ or ‘sleep’ and did not gain the mark
- question 2(b)(ii): some candidates wrote ‘near’ instead of ‘next to’ and did not gain the mark
- question 2(c)(ii): some candidates wrote ‘after eating’ instead of ‘after breakfast’ and did not gain the mark
- question 2(f): some candidates wrote ‘scenery’ or ‘landscape’ instead of ‘environment’ and did not gain the mark

Question paper 1: Writing

- some candidates made character errors, including:
  - radical and stroke errors
  - 门 instead of 们
  - confused the question particle ma 吗 with 妈/马
  - nian 年 was written as 牛, with the vertical stroke above the top line
- some candidates made visual and character shape errors:
  - some wrote 学主 instead of 学生、
  - some wrote 在 instead of 住
- some candidates overused ‘每个天’
- some showed dictionary misuse
- some mixed up 兴趣 with 有趣
- some made errors with:
  - 我有趣这个工作 for ‘I am interested in the job’
  - 这个工作很有兴趣 for ‘this job is very interesting’
  - 我快乐有机会 for ‘I am happy to have the opportunity to'

Assignment–writing

- a few candidates chose to write a personal profile, which provided limited opportunity to develop ideas or demonstrate the range of detailed language expected at National 5. In some cases, these responses closely resembled the job application task in the question paper
- while some candidates demonstrated good levels of accuracy, they did not include a sufficient range of opinions, conjunctions or extended ideas. Repetitive language was common, particularly when writing about family and friends
- a small number of candidates produced language more appropriate to National 3 or National 4, for example through the use of extended noun lists to describe their local area or basic physical descriptions of family members and pets, rather than developing their ideas
- some candidates adapted their presentation for the performance–talking into their assignments. This sometimes changed the content from their original assignment topic

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

You should ensure candidates:

- read questions carefully and then respond by giving the correct amount of information, ensuring that they give enough detail
- follow instructions carefully, for example when asked to ‘tick’ a correct box, put a ‘tick’ not a ‘cross’ or any other symbol
- make their handwriting legible, as this can affect their mark
- strikethrough any errors or mistakes with a single line
- continue to develop dictionary skills as part of the course and think about the context of a word to decide which meaning is most appropriate
- read through answers carefully to ensure they make sense in English, especially when answering ‘complete the sentence’ type question

Question paper 1: Writing

You should ensure candidates:

- take time to check ‘spelling’, especially with common sight characters 是，和,住，在，今，年
- are aware using paragraphs to address all bullet points helps give clear and structured responses
- practise manipulating the language in a range of unfamiliar bullet points
- know that they should not provide a formal introduction and/or end to the job application as this reduces the time they have for the required areas
- provide detailed language, for example taking it beyond a simple subject-verb-object structure, when responding to the unpredictable bullet points
- write enough accurate and detailed language for the unpredictable bullet points
- leave time to read through their piece of writing to ensure they have addressed all bullet points and not made mistakes, for example spelling, and words missed out

Question paper 2: Listening

You should ensure candidates:

- are aware that the listening exam is not a memory test and they should take notes while they listen, preferably on a separate piece of paper
- read questions carefully, then respond by giving the correct amount of information, ensuring they give enough detail
- avoid making a long list of answers or include guesses as this could negate the correct information and result in not gaining marks
- make their handwriting legible, as this can affect their mark
- present their answers clearly, for example there should be a clear distinction between answers and notes
- practise note-taking, as this helps improve their performance in listening
- make use of the third listening to check the accuracy and specific details of their answers

Assignment–writing

You should ensure candidates:

- are aware the assignment–writing should be on the contexts of either society, learning or culture
- know they must not write on the context of employability as this is covered in the writing question paper
- tick the correct box on the answer booklet
- plan their writing before they begin
- write in black or blue ink
- include a clear introduction and conclusion
- develop one topic in sufficient depth rather than covering several topics superficially
- include a range of relevant ideas, opinions and reasons to support their writing
- structure their writing clearly, using paragraphs where appropriate
- link ideas and paragraphs to produce a coherent piece of writing
- choose a topic that is appropriate for National 5 and allows them to demonstrate the full range of their language

- avoid relying on lists, repeated sentence patterns or a limited range of verbs
- use language that reflects the National 5 standard, including a range of sentence structures and grammatical features where appropriate, such as subordinate clauses, inversion and descriptive adjectives
- check that the content remains focused on the chosen topic throughout and that sufficient detail is included to develop their ideas
- proofread their work carefully, using a dictionary where appropriate to improve the accuracy of spelling and vocabulary choice