Course report 2026

National 5 German, 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 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: 1,323

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 1,295

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	731	56.4	56.4	84
B	210	16.2	72.7	71
C	194	15.0	87.6	58
D	113	8.7	96.4	45
No award	47	3.6	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 National 5 German course assessment performed as intended and was considered fair and accessible, providing an appropriate level of challenge and differentiation. The assessment sampled language from all contexts and the content was familiar and relevant to candidates. Most candidates coped well with the level and completed it within the allocated time.

Most candidates attempted all questions. There were some issues relating to legibility of handwriting, literacy and clarity of expression in English.

There was more challenge than intended in the reading and listening question papers, and we adjusted the grade boundary to account for this.

Question paper 1: Reading

The question paper included three texts of equal weight. There were three supported questions. The paper covered the contexts of employability, society and culture. The texts were on interesting topics that engaged candidates, and no single text was overly demanding.

Question paper 1: Writing

In this question paper, candidates reply by email to a job advert for the role of a Ferienhelfer (holiday assistant) at the Zeltfestival Ruhr. In the email, candidates address four predictable bullet points, and two unpredictable bullet points. The two unpredictable bullet points (what they enjoy doing in their free time and why they wanted to work at a festival in Germany) were relevant to the context and allowed candidates to demonstrate their skills and knowledge of German.

Question paper 2: Listening

This question paper has two parts: a monologue and a conversation about a school garden project and included two supported questions. The paper was on the context of learning

Although the topic was less familiar than in previous years, it had vocabulary and language that candidates could understand at this level.

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing performed as expected, with candidates selecting a range of topics from the three contexts of society, learning and culture, including family and friends, school, healthy living, home area, holidays, and film studies.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: Reading

Text 1 (employability)

- question 1(b): most candidates identified that young people found jobs online, through local companies, or worked in shops owned by friends or family, and gained both marks
- question 1(c)(i): most candidates identified that the job was in a small village or in the countryside
- question 1(c)(ii): most candidates identified that Hannah moved to the city to stay with her aunt
- question 1(d)(ii): most candidates identified that the work experience took place in a small dental practice, and gained the mark
- question 1(d)(iii): most candidates identified Hannah's tasks, such as working on a computer, speaking to patients at reception, or observing treatments, and gained both marks
- question 1(e), the gap-fill question: most candidates identified that Hannah had gained a first impression of the world of work

Text 2 (society)

- question 2(b)(i): most candidates identified the time expression *seit einem Jahr* (for a year)
- question 2(d): most candidates gained both marks in this supported question (‘high rents’ and ‘growing competition on the job market’)
- question 2(e): most candidates identified that Ralph and his family liked the peace and quiet in the countryside or that there was always someone to talk to

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(b)(i): most candidates identified that Bethan liked Austria because it was rich in culture or because she had learned German at school
- question 3(c)(i): most candidates understood *ins Gespräch kommen* (communicate, speak, chat, have a conversation, have a talk, have a discussion)
- question 3(c)(ii): most candidates identified that Italians reacted positively when he spoke Italian, even if it was not perfect

Question paper 1: Writing

- most candidates addressed the four predictable bullet points in a balanced manner and used detailed range of vocabulary, grammatical structures expected at this level
- most candidates prepared for the two unpredictable bullet points and addressed these well
- most candidates had prepared well and applied their language skills effectively in the job application

Question paper 2: Listening

Monologue

- question 1(b): most candidates identified that pupils benefited from the school garden by getting fresh air, working as a team, or growing vegetables and flowers
- question 1(c)(i): most candidates identified that the products were sold at the market or in the town centre
- question 1(c)(ii): most candidates identified '€800' for the amount of money earned from selling the products, although fewer recognised that this was more than the previous amount
- question 1(e): some candidates identified that young people learned to work independently

Conversation

- question 2(a): most candidates gained at least 1 mark by identifying that pupils wanted to be more active or enjoyed learning outdoors
- question 2(b)(i): most candidates identified that the school garden was located behind the school, in a large park near the river
- question 2(c): most candidates gained 2 or 3 marks by identifying the positive impact of the school garden, including that it helped teachers and pupils get to know one another, relieved stress, improved concentration, and increased knowledge of nature and the environment
- question 2(d): most candidates identified that pupils helped the environment by not using plastic bottles, recycling paper and glass, or travelling to school by bicycle
- question 2(e): most candidates selected the correct percentage in this supported multiple-choice question
- question 2(f): most candidates gained both marks by identifying that many pupils had concrete plans for the future, such as going to university, starting an apprenticeship, entering employment or spending time abroad

Assignment–writing

- most candidates selected appropriate topics and wrote in depth on their chosen subject
- most candidates produced well-structured assignments, often including a clear introduction and conclusion
- most candidates used a range of detailed language, making effective use of subordinate clauses and inversion
- most candidates included relevant opinions and ideas to support their writing

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper 1: Reading

Text 1 (employability)

- question 1(a): many candidates found the subordinate clause challenging. Although some recognised key vocabulary, they did not interpret the sentence accurately and often combined ideas or guessed their responses. Many did not convey the idea that 'employers want young people with work experience', instead writing more general responses such as 'that it is easier to find a job with experience'
- question 1(d)(i): many candidates did not provide enough detail, often leaving out the word *klein* (small) or not identifying *Zahnarztpraxis* (dental practice or a dentists)

Text 2 (society)

- question 2(a): many candidates missed the idea that there were more jobs available in the city. Some did not identify 'there was always something to do'
- question 2(b)(ii): many candidates did not provide enough detail and stated only that 'she wanted to become a mechanic', missing the idea that she had found an apprenticeship as a mechanic. Some candidates confused *Lehre* (apprenticeship) with teaching
- question 2(c)(i): some candidates found this question challenging. Many candidates did not interpret the subordinate clause introduced by *wenn* or provide enough detail in their responses, often leaving out key words such as *allein* (alone) and *abends* (in the evening)
- question 2(c)(ii): there were some no responses. Many candidates confused the variety of public transport available with the amount of traffic
- question 2(c)(iii): some candidates did not provide enough detail, missing 'the next bus or tram', while others confused *Straßenbahn* (tram) with train

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(a): many candidates thought Bethan had travelled to Scotland or did not identify the correct number of countries she visited
- question 3(b)(ii): some candidates did not provide enough detail:
  - missing the word *fast* (almost)
  - only identifying that she had no problems, missing the reference to shops and cafés
  - confusing the idea that she helped her friends with the idea that her friends helped her
- question 3(d): many candidates did not provide enough detail and missed that the apps were free of charge
- question 3(e): there were many no responses, which is sometimes expected towards the end of the paper. Some candidates identified the idea of broadening their horizons, but many did not identify that people should not worry about making mistakes

Question paper 1: Writing

- there were some no responses
- some pieces of writing were too short, or the language produced was not of the required standard
- a few candidates only attempted the first or second bullet points
- some candidates included a formal introduction, which is no longer required
- some candidates relied on memorised material without fully understanding it, attempting to reproduce complex learned language or missing out parts, resulting in grammatical inaccuracies and a loss of clarity
- some candidates used a limited range of grammatical structures, such as inaccurate verb agreement, word order and adjective endings
- some candidates did not demonstrate a range of tenses, particularly where they attempted to describe previous experience
- in bullet point 3, some candidates described their free-time activities, such as cinema visits and favourite film genres, but did not relate these to the skills and qualities required for the post

- most candidates attempted the two unpredictable bullet points; however, accuracy sometimes declined, for example:
    - some candidates had difficulty producing language spontaneously, with common errors including incorrect word order, unconjugated verbs and difficulties constructing sentences containing two verbs
    - there was evidence of dictionary misuse and attempts to express ideas beyond candidates' level of language competence. In many instances, simpler, more accurate language would allow them to communicate more effectively

Question paper 2: Listening

Monologue

- question 1(a)(i): some candidates did not identify the compass point south-west or that the school was located on the outskirts of the town
- question 1(a)(ii): many candidates confused *Fremdsprachen* (languages) with French and some did not identify *Geschichte* (history) or *Naturwissenschaft*en (sciences)
- question 1(d): many candidates did not identify that wind and solar energy would play an important role in the future
- question 1(e): there was evidence of mother tongue interference in responses. Many candidates did not recognise *nützlich* (useful) or *praktisch* (practical) or gave one-word answers that did not answer the question

Conversation

- question 2(a): some candidates wrote that the pupils wanted to learn about nature or did not understand that pupils were not spending all of their time in the classroom, and answered that they did not like being in class
- question 2(b)(ii): many candidates found this question challenging:
    - some did not identify that the school garden was not far from the school
    - some answered with ‘it was easy to get to’ or ‘access was easy’, which was not in the recording
    - many did not identify that pupils could walk to the garden or that water from the river was used for the garden

Assignment–writing

- some candidates selected topics that were too difficult or they covered several topics with not enough depth, limiting the quality of their response
- 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. These responses sometimes closely resembled the job application task in the writing question paper
- some candidates did not include a range of opinions, conjunctions or extended ideas
- in some cases, 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 physical descriptions of family members and pets, rather than developing their ideas

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

You should ensure candidates:

- use the dictionary carefully and do not always choose the first definition listed
- read each question carefully and underline or highlight the key word or words in the question that should lead them to the answer in the text
- underline or highlight the matching key word or words in German in the text so they can identify where the answer is
- check their answers carefully to ensure that they addressed all parts of the question and it makes sense in English
- are guided by the number of marks for each question and give as much detail in their response as they have understood
- are aware that two words are required for 1 mark at National 5. They should look at the surrounding text to ensure all relevant detail is included
- refer to the productive grammar grid in our National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification to ensure they cover all relevant areas of grammar. This can help candidates identify relationships between words and recognise tenses where more than one verb is used
- recognise common grammatical features at this level, including comparative adjectives and compound nouns
- use the tense of the question as a guide to the tense that should be in their response
- do not include additional information that is not related to the text or question. This could negate any correct information, and they could miss out on marks

Question paper 1: Writing

As the writing is in the form of an email, there is no requirement for candidates to use formal beginning and endings. Many candidates who include formal beginnings and endings often make errors in these.

You should ensure candidates:

- know they should keep the content of each bullet point appropriate to the job application and the context of the task
- are aware that for bullet point 3, they should include information that is relevant to the role. If referring to free-time activities or hobbies, they must make clear how these demonstrate relevant skills, qualities or experience
- focus on describing personal skills, interests and qualities that support the application rather than listing information
- are aware that for bullet point 4, they do not need to use the past tense. This bullet point provides a natural opportunity to demonstrate accurate use of a range of tenses, in line with the productive grammar grid
- avoid lists, particularly when describing school subjects in bullet point 2
- extended language provides opportunities to demonstrate their skills
- practise addressing a range of unpredictable bullet points. Using examples from other National 5 languages may help them become familiar with different contexts and task types
- attempt all six bullet points
- leave time to read through their piece of writing to check they've covered all bullet points and not made mistakes in spelling, adjective endings, accents
- develop productive grammar skills, including asking questions accurately, to support more varied and controlled writing
- refer to the marking instructions for this paper, so they know what is required in terms of content, accuracy and language resource: variety, range and structures to gain high marks
- support their ideas with relevant detail, opinions and reasons rather than relying on descriptive statements
- use a range of sentence structures where appropriate, including subordinate clauses and inversion, to demonstrate greater control of language

Question paper 2: Listening

You should ensure candidates:

- read the introduction before the recording so they're aware of the context
- read all questions carefully before listening, and underline or highlight the key words so they can listen for the correct answer
- regularly practise note-taking to improve their listening skills
- when making notes, they must:
    - use the space provided for notes
    - cross out rather than scribbling over any answers they want to delete
    - not draw a line down the middle of the page, as this makes it more difficult for markers to find the correct answers
- know that they hear the monologue and conversation three times and should make use of the third listening to check the accuracy and specific details of their answers
- use the number of marks available for each question as a guide to the amount of detail required
- are aware that two words are normally required for 1 mark at National 5, for example a country on its own would not be enough detail
- regularly practise vocabulary, including countries, numbers, weather expressions, transport and question words, to improve accuracy and understanding
- give one clear answer rather than a series of alternatives separated by oblique lines (/). Where candidates give contradictory answers, they may miss out on marks
- provide accurate answers, and avoid adding extra information that changes or contradicts an otherwise correct answer

Assignment–writing

You should ensure candidates:

- plan their writing
- avoid writing in pencil or a gel pen
- include an introduction and conclusion
- write about one topic in depth
- include a range of ideas, opinions and reasons to support their writing
- write in a structured way, including paragraphs and punctuation
- link sentences and paragraphs
- choose a topic that allows them to demonstrate the full range of their language, as appropriate for the level
- are discouraged from writing lists, repeated sentence patterns or having a limited range of verbs
- use language that includes a range of sentence structures and grammatical features where appropriate, such as subordinate clauses, inversion and descriptive adjectives
- check their writing remains focused on the chosen topic and that they include enough detail to develop their ideas
- proofread their work, using a dictionary to check the accuracy of their writing (spelling and vocabulary choice)