Course report 2026

National 5 Urdu, 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: 109

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 76

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	51	67.1	67.1	84
B	10	13.2	80.3	72
C	11	14.5	94.7	60
D	3	3.9	98.7	48
No award	1	1.3	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 papers included three texts of equal weight and was on the contexts of society (pocket money), employability (work experience) and culture (Punjab culture day).

The reading texts and questions were relevant and accessible for candidates.

The vocabulary in text 3 was more challenging than intended for some candidates. We adjusted the grade boundary to account for this.

Question paper 1: Writing

The writing question paper performed as intended and was accessible for candidates. In this paper, candidates reply to a job advert for a job in cinema.

In the email, candidates address four predictable bullet points, and two unpredictable bullet points. The two unpredictable bullet points (your availability for the job and your interest in working with people) were relevant to the context and allowed candidates to demonstrate their skills and knowledge of Urdu.

Question paper 2: Listening

The listening question paper performed as intended. The paper was based on the context of learning. The listening paper was comprised of two parts: a monologue (a pupil talks about their English class) and a conversation (two pupils discuss school activities).

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing performed as expected, with candidates selecting a range of topics from the contexts of society, learning, and culture.

Most candidates chose to write their assignments from the contexts of society and culture, especially holidays.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: Reading

Text 1 (society)

- question 1(c): most candidates identified both points from ‘buys science magazines for himself’ and ‘he buys gifts for his friends’
- question 1(e): most candidates identified both points from ‘branded clothes’ and ‘modern mobile phone’

Text 2 (learning)

- question 2(b): most candidates identified the age ‘5 to 11’ and gained the mark

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(b): offered optionality, and most candidates identified two from the three options: ‘thousands of tourists visit Punjab’, ‘to see or explore historical forts or castles’, ‘to visit beautiful flower gardens’

Question paper 1: Writing

- candidates who accessed the full range of marks wrote a full and detailed job application
- 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(d)(i): offered optionality, and most candidates identified either ‘should be in charge of dividing the class into groups’ or ‘keep an eye on all students to see if they are taking part in activities’

Conversation

- question 2(b): offered four options, and most candidates gained the 2 marks available for: ‘fresh air’, ‘open environment’, ‘good influence on mood’ or ‘good for your health’
- question 2(c): offered four options for 2 marks: ‘map of the place’, ‘timetable of the day’, ‘each class is an hour long’, ‘they walk to the next class’
- question 2(d)(i): offered three options for 2 marks: ‘the plants or trees were beside them’, ‘it’s easier to memorise terms or names’ or ‘it’s interesting to do biology experiments in the park or outside’
- question 2(d)(iii): offered three options for 2 marks: ‘when the grass is wet’ or ‘it’s difficult to sit on wet grass’; ‘they go back to school if there is rain on the day’; ‘when park is crowded then difficult to concentrate’

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

Some candidates lacked detail in their answers and missed out on marks.

Text 1 (society)

question 1(b): some candidates did not provide enough detail in ‘how much pocket money would be appropriate for their children’, ‘everything is getting more expensive’ or ‘they discuss with other parents about this too’

Text 2 (learning)

- question 2(a): some candidates did not identify the correct information from ‘they go out to study in the park, ‘have breakfast together’ or ‘they come back at or before the end of school day’

Text 3 (culture)

- question 3(a): some candidates did not give enough detail to gain 2 marks from ‘most populated’ and ‘one of the oldest cultures in the world’
- question 3(c): some candidates did not identify the word ‘spring’
- question 3(d): some candidates did not include ‘Punjabi centre’ (so that people around world get to know about Punjab culture)
- question 3(e): some candidates did not give enough detail from ‘essay competition’, ‘traditional sports (competitions)’, ‘popular or famous Punjabi music or songs’ and ‘Punjabi or bhangra dance’

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 in Urdu, or made errors in verbs
- 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

Question paper 2: Listening

Monologue

- question 1(b): some candidates did not identify either: ‘all her friends used to sit in the same group’, ‘they were talking too much’ or ‘they did less work’
- question 1(d)(ii): some candidates did not identify: ‘so that students can benefit from each other’s knowledge or skills’

Conversation

- question 2(d)(ii): some candidates did not identify: ‘students are enthusiastic or more interested’, ‘less motivated students pay more attention’ or ‘walking makes them active’

Assignment–writing

- some candidates did not include a title in English
- some candidates did not write enough, and some wrote more than the suggested word count, which was, at times, self-penalising
- 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 Urdu 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
- 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

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
- avoid lists, particularly when describing school subjects in bullet point 2

- use extended language which 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 errors 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

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 and write their title in English
- 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
- 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)