



# **Common questions about National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Gàidhlig and Gaelic-medium subjects**

## **I am unsure whether to present a candidate for Gàidhlig or Gaelic (Learners). Where can I get information?**

SQA has specific guidance on allocation to Gàidhlig or Gaelic (Learners) programmes: [www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/NQ\\_Gaidhlig\\_Allocation\\_of\\_Candidates\\_April15.pdf](http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/NQ_Gaidhlig_Allocation_of_Candidates_April15.pdf).

## **Where can I find out about the Gaelic (Learners) qualifications?**

Information about the Gaelic (Learners) qualifications is available on the [Modern Languages subject page](#).

## **Can candidates take texts into the Gàidhlig examinations?**

Yes, candidates may bring up to six unannotated texts into the National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Litreachas (Literature) question papers.

The texts:

- ◆ must not contain annotations of any kind
- ◆ must not be works which are exclusively critical
- ◆ cannot be dictionaries
- ◆ can include personally compiled anthologies and/or collections

Note: candidates no longer have to list the texts brought into the examination in their answer booklet.

## **What types of texts are used in the reading question papers?**

- ◆ National 5: one non-fiction
- ◆ Higher: one fiction **or** one non-fiction
- ◆ Advanced Higher: one fiction **and** one non-fiction

## **What types of texts are used in the Èisteachd (Listening) question papers?**

- ◆ National 5: one non-fiction
- ◆ Higher: one non-fiction

## **How long should the còmhradh (performance–talking) last?**

- ◆ National 5: approximately 6–8 minutes with the teacher or lecturer
- ◆ Higher: approximately 10 minutes with the teacher or lecturer
- ◆ Advanced Higher: approximately 20 minutes with a visiting assessor

## **Why were the Higher specimen question papers changed for 2018–19 onwards?**

The removal of unit assessment resulted in a Revised National Qualification (RNQ). The new specimen question papers (SQP) reflect these changes, with the former writing section of the question paper becoming the Litreachas (Literature) paper.

There is no change to the format of the Leughadh (Reading) question paper under RNQ. The texts for this paper could be either fiction or non-fiction. As the previous SQPs and the subsequent live papers have all used fiction texts, and as a reminder that future question papers could use non-fiction texts for Higher Gàidhlig, we decided to publish a new Leughadh (Reading) SQP based on a non-fiction text.

SQA publish one SQP per component on the website. While there is optionality for the Higher Leughadh (Reading) SQP, we replaced the fiction SQP with the non-fiction SQP. The previous fiction SQP ('An Sgàthan') is still a valid example of the kind of text and questions that could appear in live papers, and is available from the qualifications officer.

## **Why is there an additional question paper for revised Advanced Higher Gàidhlig?**

The removal of unit assessment has resulted in a revised National Qualification. The addition of the Eadar-theangachadh (Translating) question paper reflects these changes, following the removal of the Translating and Interpreting Skills unit from the course.

The approach to this assessment and the text-types is similar to the Advanced Higher Gàidhlig qualification prior to CfE development. New marking instructions allow for an element of holistic marking, which better reflects the assessment principles behind CfE. A specimen question paper is available to illustrate both the assessment and the marking instructions.

## **For National 5 and Higher, what are the conditions for the assignment–writing?**

As outlined in the course specifications, the assignment–writing must be conducted under some supervision and control. There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access, for example stimulus texts, grammar reference books and dictionaries.

Depending on the task, or purpose of the writing, it may be appropriate for candidates to conduct research online or by referring to print publications. Alternatively, candidates may produce work which is personal or imaginative in nature and relies on no external resources. You can find the document *Guidance on conditions of assessment for coursework* under the 'Coursework' tab of the [Gàidhlig webpage](#). The guidance provides information on reasonable assistance and supervision, as well as the use of resources, and plagiarism.

## **For National 5 and Higher, why is spelling and grammar not prominent in the marking instructions for the Litreachas (Literature) question paper and the obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)?**

The Literature question paper for both levels now focuses on the content of what the candidate has written, rather than the writing style or accuracy. The general marking principles make this clear:

‘Responses lacking in structure and coherence and/or which contain many technical errors are likely to be self-penalising’.

The marking instructions for the assignment–writing at both levels contain the following statement in the detailed marking instructions:

‘For the piece to meet the minimum requirements for the 13–10 range, it must display satisfactory technical accuracy. Writing may contain errors, but these will not be significant. Paragraphing, sentence construction, spelling and punctuation should be sufficiently accurate so that meaning is clear at the first reading.’

## **For National 5 and Higher, can candidates cover the same topic for the còmhradh (performance–talking) and the obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)?**

Yes, but we would discourage this. Candidates would benefit more from exploring different areas, as more exposure to a variety of contexts helps prepare them for the other elements of the course assessment.

In addition, candidates should be clear that the performance–talking should be a conversation, not a monologue. The course specification states ‘During the performance candidates may use notes with up to five headings (of not more than eight words each) and/or visual aids to assist them, purely as an aid to memory’. Candidates would not be able to read from their assignment as over-reliance on a written text is not permitted.

## **For the Higher obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing), can candidates write about the same subject as they did for National 5?**

Yes, but we would discourage this. Candidates would benefit more from exploring different areas, as more exposure to a variety of contexts helps prepare them better for the other elements of the course assessment. There is an increased word count for Higher and the marking instructions are adapted for this level.

## **Can the obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing) cover the same topic as candidates have used for their English portfolio?**

Yes, but we would discourage this as it could become a translation exercise and risks the candidate's language being unnatural. It is likely that candidates would benefit more from exploring different areas, as more exposure to a variety of contexts helps prepare them for the other elements of the course assessment.

The assignment–writing only requires one piece of writing to be submitted, which is either broadly creative or broadly discursive. The word count for the assignment–writing is:

- ◆ National 5: 700–1,000 words
- ◆ Higher: 1,200–1,500 words

## **Are Advanced Higher Gàidhlig candidates no longer required to undertake a specialist study project?**

With the removal of unit assessment, the specialist study of language or literature is no longer mandatory. The performance–talking is unchanged and it is highly recommended that candidates undertake their own research in preparation for their performance. The research process is not formally assessed, but gives candidates the language, content and confidence to interact with the visiting assessor.

## **Are unit assessments still valid?**

Unit assessments remain valid but are no longer a mandatory part of course assessment for National Qualifications. It is at the centre's discretion to decide if candidates may benefit from sitting a unit, or units.

The changes relating to the removal of unit assessments only relate to SQA National Courses. They do not affect SQA Awards, such as the Scottish Studies Award.

Given the Scottish context, centres delivering Gàidhlig may be interested in entering candidates for these awards. More details are on [SQA's website](#).

## **How can I internally verify my assessments if I am the only Gàidhlig teacher in the school?**

You could work with a colleague from another centre, for example through a network of schools, or a partnership arrangement with another school or college.

You can find more information on internal verification on [SQA's website](#).

## **Gaelic-medium subjects (Eachdraidh, Cruinn-eòlas, Nuadh-eòlas, Matamataig, Gnìomhachas Matamataigs)**

**Will candidates entered for Gaelic-medium examinations still have access to the English versions of the questions papers for reference during the examination?**

Yes. This option will continue in line with practice in other countries which also have bilingual examination provision.

Candidates should continue to write their answers in Gaelic in the Gaelic-medium answer booklets.

National Qualification questions and answers can be found on the [frequently asked questions section](#) of SQA's website.

Questions and answers on the changes to National Courses can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqchanges)