



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

Gàidhlig

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

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

Information about the Gaelic (Learners) qualifications is available on the Modern Languages subject page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45901.html.

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 unannotated texts:

- ◆ must not contain written 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 room in their answer booklet: the table in the question paper booklets asking for a list of titles has been removed.

What types of texts are used in the Gàidhlig Reading question papers?

National 5 Reading: non-fiction

Higher Reading: fiction OR non-fiction

Advanced Higher: fiction AND non-fiction

What types of texts are used in the Gàidhlig Listening question papers?

National 5 Listening: non-fiction

Higher Listening: non-fiction

Why has the Higher specimen question paper changed?

The removal of unit assessment has resulted in a Revised National Qualification (RNQ). The new specimen question paper (SQP) reflects these changes, with the former Writing question paper becoming the Literature paper.

There is no change to the format of the Reading question paper under RNQ. The texts for the Reading 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 have decided to publish a new Reading SQP based on a non-fiction text.

SQA only publish one SQP per subject on the website. Therefore, while there is optionality for the Higher Reading SQP, the fiction SQP has been replaced with the non-fiction SQP. The previous fiction SQP ('An Sgàthan') is still a valid example of what kind of text, and questions that could appear in live papers, and is available from the qualifications officer if you require a copy.

What are the conditions for the assignment–writing for National 5 and Higher?

As outlined in the course specification, the assignment should be conducted under some supervision and control, and 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* within the Coursework tab of the Gàidhlig webpage www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45677.html. The guidance provides information on reasonable assistance and supervision, as well as the use of resources, and plagiarism.

Why is spelling and grammar not prominent in the marking instructions for the Literature paper and the assignment–writing for National 5 and Higher?

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 also have an important statement in the general marking principles, where it is stated:

‘Satisfactory technical accuracy is a requirement for the piece to meet the minimum requirements for the 13–10 range. 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’.

Can candidates cover the same topic for the performance–talking and the assignment–writing?

Yes, but we would discourage this. It is likely that 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. In addition, it should be made clear to candidates 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’. Therefore, candidates would not be able to read from their assignment since over-reliance on a written text is not permitted.

Can candidates write about the same subject for my assignment–writing in Higher as they did for National 5?

Yes, but we would discourage this. It is likely that 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. Remember that there is an increased word count for Higher and that the marking instructions are adapted for this level.

Can the assignment–writing cover the same topic as candidates have used for their English portfolio?

Yes, but we would discourage this as it could easily 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 will help prepare them better for the other elements of the course assessment. Remember that the assignment–writing for Gàidhlig only requires **one piece of writing** to be submitted, which is either broadly creative **or** broadly discursive. The word count for National 5 is 700–1,000 words. The word count for Higher is 1,200–1,500 words.

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 can be found here:

www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/64329.html.

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 here www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/74671.html.

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