



Course Report 2018

Subject	Gaelic (Learners)
Level	National 5

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

The reading question paper consisted of three reading texts. These texts sampled the contexts of culture, learning and employability and 10 marks were available for each item. There was a range questions of varying difficulty, including three supported questions.

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

The writing question paper was comparable to previous years. Candidates were asked to respond to a job advert at a university. The two unpredictable bullet points allowed scope for candidates to demonstrate their skills. A maximum of 20 marks are awarded in this assessment. Pegged marks are applied. Markers considered content, accuracy and language resource as per the marking instructions.

Overall, candidates performed to a good standard in this question paper with some candidates achieving very high marks in both sections.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

The listening question paper contained a monologue and conversation based on the context of society. A maximum 8 marks are awarded for the monologue and 12 marks for the conversation. The paper contained three supported questions.

This was the first time the context of society was assessed in this question paper. In the monologue, candidates listened to a piece about healthy lifestyles in Scotland. It contained a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary. Information included statistical information, what people should do to have a healthy lifestyle, and the advantages of having a healthy lifestyle.

The conversation was an interview with a teenage boy who discussed his previous and current lifestyle. It also contained a range of grammatical structures and vocabulary including irregular verbs, comparatives and complex adjectives.

While the conversation and especially the monologue were considered to be testing texts on a previously unassessed context, the questions and required responses were appropriate to National 5. Health is a relevant and topical subject that is covered widely in centres, and candidates performed well in this question paper as a result. In addition, candidates now have more opportunities to practise their skills, as there are more past papers available.

Component 4: assignment-writing

The assignment-writing requires candidates to write 120–200 words on any of the following contexts: society, learning and culture. They must give the title of their response in the box provided. A maximum of 20 marks can be awarded for the assignment-writing. Pegged marks are applied.

Candidates must produce a piece of writing which contains a range of detailed language appropriate to National 5. Candidates must also convey meaning accurately and express ideas and opinions.

Candidates may produce one draft, which the teacher can provide feedback using a correction code. Corrections must not be written in the target language. Candidates may use a dictionary and other reference material when producing the draft but they must not be given writing frames and/or templates to assist them. Candidates may redraft the draft once, and this must be done in the booklet provided. Candidates may use their corrected draft when producing the second and final copy.

Overall, the assignment-writing performed as intended. Responses were based on a variety of topics, for example a holiday, personal profile, school life, hobbies, language learning and favourite music. Markers considered the content, accuracy and language resource as per the marking instructions.

The grade boundaries for C and A were raised by 2 marks as a result of increased accessibility evidenced in relation to the new assignment – writing in its introductory year. Such adjustment enables the national standard to be maintained from year to year.

Component 5: performance-talking

The performance-talking performed as expected. The samples observed reflected a range of attainment with candidates, on the most part, displaying a good level of language skill in talking. Centres applied assessment judgements well, with reference to the marking instructions and a commitment to rigorous internal verification.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

Candidates performed very well in the following questions:

Text 1

Question (c): many candidates accessed the first 2 out of the 3 marks: ‘meet new people’ and ‘see a different culture’

Question (f): many candidates accessed the full mark allocation

Text 2

Question 2(c): supported question

Text 3

Question (c): supported question

Question (e): many candidates accessed the full the mark allocation

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

The vast majority of candidates dealt well with the four predictable bullet points. Some candidates coped very well with the two unpredictable bullet points. A few responses went beyond the level expected at National 5.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

Candidates performed well in the following areas:

Item 1

Question (a): supported question

Question (e): supported question

Item 2

Question (b) supported question

Question (d)(i) ‘friends’

Component 4: assignment-writing

Candidates generally performed well with this new assignment-writing. Centres are also to be commended for their work in preparing candidates.

Some responses were excellent and contained language beyond what is required at National 5. Candidates who were awarded ‘good’ or ‘very good’ produced responses which were structured appropriately, contained a range of detailed language, demonstrated a high degree of accuracy and expressed opinions and ideas.

Component 5: performance–talking

Candidates performed well in the presentation element of the performance–talking. They were well prepared, displaying a range of vocabulary and tenses, as well as a range of language structures suitable to the level. Candidates tended to perform better in the presentation than in the conversation, although candidates at all levels of attainment showed that they had worked hard on their ‘sustaining the conversation’ skills.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

The candidates found the following questions demanding:

Text 2

- Question (a) very few candidates accessed the mark 'more than 3,000'
Question (d) 'to write other exams in Gaelic'

Text 3

- Question (a) 'opposite the theatre'
Question (d) 'about 8.30'

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

Some candidates were not secure in their application of the language required to address the first four bullet points and lost marks for not including detailed and accurate language.

When addressing the two unpredictable bullet points, some candidates were unable to match the standard achieved when addressing the predictable bullet points.

There were some instances of dictionary misuse and mother tongue interference.

The performance of a small number of candidates would suggest that these candidates were presented at the wrong level.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

Candidates found the following questions demanding:

Item 1

- Question (d) comparative proved challenging for a number of candidates
Question (f) 'the number of people going to the doctor to go down'. Conveying this detail accurately was challenging for some

Item 2

- Question (d)(ii) 'East of Spain'

Component 4: assignment-writing

Some candidates submitted responses that were not of the standard required at National 5. In these cases, there was not a sufficient amount of detailed language, sentence structures were too basic, and a high number of inaccuracies impeded the quality of the responses.

Component 5: performance-talking

Overall, candidates dealt well with the performance-talking. However, they do find the conversation more demanding than the presentation, and those candidates who were the highest achieving tended to cope with the conversation better.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

Candidates must ensure they:

- ◆ carefully read the command words in the questions: what, where, when, why
- ◆ practise their dictionary skills to ensure that they do not lose marks needlessly. The words and/or phrases which proved challenging, for example *mu choinneamh an taigh-chluiche* could be found in the dictionary
- ◆ give specific details, for example *mu* and *còrr is* are quite often given with times and numbers. At National 5, candidates are expected to give this level of detail
- ◆ avoid giving extraneous information as this can be self-penalising if any information is contradictory

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

Candidates must include a range of detailed language and they should aim for a high degree of accuracy. Candidates can also add to the authenticity of their responses by including appropriate openings and closing, for example *Chunnaic mi an sanas agaibh agus thaù uidh agam anns an obair, Tha mi a' coimhead air adhart ri cluinntinn bhuaibh, Le deagh dhùrachd' Is mise le meas.*

Candidates should also avoid giving information that is not relevant to the job application, for example it is not necessary to describe a home town or village and discuss family members and pets.

With regard to the unpredictable bullet points, candidates should check to see if they have addressed the unpredictable bullet points when addressing the four predictable bullet points. If they have already addressed the unpredictable bullet points, it is not necessary to repeat themselves.

Candidates, teachers, and lecturers should also be aware of the marking instructions. Candidates are marked on content, accuracy and language resource.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

Candidates should receive as many opportunities as possible to develop their listening skills. Candidates hear the monologue and conversation three times in total and they are advised to use the third playing to check all their answers to ensure that they have provided sufficient detail.

Candidates should also avoid giving extraneous information as this can be self-penalising if any information is contradictory.

Component 4: assignment-writing

Candidates should be advised to select a topic which allows them to demonstrate a range of detailed language appropriate to National 5. While it is acceptable to choose a seemingly more straightforward topic such as a personal profile, candidates must ensure that responses do not contain language which is too simplistic or basic.

Candidates should avoid writing responses which contain long lists as this limits opportunities to demonstrate their full range of skills.

Candidates should not apply the same language and vocabulary in both the assignment-writing and the writing question paper. They should not be writing about the same topic in both assessments.

Candidates should also consider how they structure their responses. They should include appropriate opening and closing paragraphs.

Candidates should be encouraged to show an awareness of:

- ◆ a range of verbs
- ◆ tenses
- ◆ connectives
- ◆ more complex and/or sophisticated adjectives
- ◆ adjective modifiers
- ◆ gender
- ◆ dative case
- ◆ comparatives
- ◆ idioms
- ◆ prepositional pronouns
- ◆ plurals
- ◆ past participle

Appropriate sentence structures include:

- ◆ 's e/chan e...
- ◆ 's ann/chan ann...
- ◆ is toigh/cha toigh leam...
- ◆ past and future tense — regular and irregular verbs
- ◆ 's urrainn/chan urrainn...
- ◆ faodaidh/chan fhaod...
- ◆ feumaidh/chan fheum...

- ◆ is fheàrr leam...

Component 5: performance–talking

Candidates should be prepared to cover at least two contexts naturally.

Talking should be an integral part of coursework on a regular basis, with particular emphasis on dealing with language difficulties and Gaelic's use of the verb for answering yes and no.

While personalisation and choice are important, it is also important that centres provide guidance to candidates regarding a suitable format for their presentation in order that they can achieve the highest possible grade.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	115
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	107
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	49.5%	49.5%	53	86
B	24.3%	73.8%	26	74
C	11.2%	85.0%	12	62
D	12.1%	97.2%	13	50
No award	2.8%	-	3	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary).

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Therefore SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from exam papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.