



Course Report 2018

Subject	Gàidhlig
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: Leughadh (Reading)

Candidates performed very well in the reading question paper. Markers felt the passage had been set at an appropriate level and that the questions posed no specific problems for candidates. Centres did not raise any issues. The passage was about the Duke of Edinburgh Award and it was evident that candidates were readily able to relate to the passage. The questions posed no particular barriers for candidates; they were able to show good understanding of the passage and they were able to undertake appropriate analysis of the passage appropriately. A couple of questions proved to be challenging for some candidates, but that is to be expected. It was felt that there was an appropriate range of questions to enable all candidates to demonstrate their ability. Some questions required brief specific responses while others required lengthier detailed responses.

Component 2: question paper 1: Litreachas (Literature)

Overall, the responses from candidates in the literature question paper were good. There were a number of excellent responses, showing detailed familiarity with the chosen text, and an ability to undertake detailed analysis of the text, with relevant reference to the text. Good use of quotations was evident.

There were a number of very poor performances. Some of these responses were difficult to read due to poor handwriting. These candidates' responses showed little evidence of knowledge of the text or an ability to engage in analysis of the chosen text.

Candidates were required to answer one of the five questions in this question paper. Each question covered one of the following genres: poetry, short story, novel, drama, film or television. Candidates' chose to respond to only two of these genres: poetry and short story. There were more responses on short story than on poetry. It would be good to see responses on the other three genres. However, it is recognised that there are fewer resources available in schools on these genres.

Candidates wrote about a wide range of short stories and poems. It is pleasing to see that candidates are familiar with a range of literature. Some of the most popular short stories were Bùrn, Na h-lùdhaich, An Taghadh, Aig a' Chloich Chuimhne, Ann am Bosnia.. Some of the most popular poems were: Ar Cànan 's ar Clò, An t-Seann Bhean, Cisteachan-laighe, Lite gun Shalainn.

Overall, candidates performed well. Most responses were well structured, with good analysis of the text. A good number of responses made relevant evaluative comments and indicated a personal response to the text.

Component 3: question paper 2: Èisteachd (Listening)

The responses of candidates in the listening question paper were very good. It was evident during the marking process, that the paper was set at an appropriate level and that candidates were able to cope well with the passage and with the questions. Centres did not raise any issues. The passage seemed to be accessible to candidates and there were no issues with the recording process.

The questions require candidates to show their understanding of an audio passage that is played for them. The vast majority of questions posed no difficulty for candidates. Question 6 (worth 1 mark) proved problematic for candidates. The question was *cuin a bha am Parbh cudromach do na Lochlannaich?* The expected answer was *nuair a bha iad a' seòladh sìos an cost an iar*. This answer was contained in the passage extract: *mar chomharra-stiùiridh airson nan longan mòra aca 's iad a' seòladh sìos an cost an iar*. It is possible that the language in the text was a bit challenging for some candidates. A number of candidates also offered the answer *aig àm an dara cogaidh*. This appeared later in the passage, and was incorrect.

Apart from question 6, the only other question, which was slightly challenging, was question 3(b). A number of candidates only gave one part of the expected response, and only achieved 1 of the 2 marks available.

As with the reading question paper, candidates need to take note of the number of marks allocated to a question and ensure that their response has sufficient detail to reflect the number of marks.

Overall, this proved to be a good question paper and candidates performed very well.

Component 4: Obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)

Candidates performed well in the assignment – writing. There were a number of very good responses and few very poor responses. It was pleasing to see responses on a wide range of topics. Some candidates wrote about research they had undertaken for interesting subjects, other candidates wrote about interesting personal experiences and there were very good examples of creative writing. One of the most pleasing aspects of this part of the assessment was the wide range of responses received. Candidates were able to submit writing of their own choosing, focusing on their own ability or interest. The assignment – writing was new this year, and markers felt that the responses were very good and that the change in the assessment arrangements was a major improvement.

The vast majority of responses were well presented and well structured. Because candidates were writing on a topic of their own choice and had an opportunity to redraft, it is felt that they performed better than they would under the time pressure of examination conditions. The assignment–writing structure allows candidates time to consider what they are going to write about, to prepare their work, and to ensure that it is submitted in a clear legible format.

Overall, the performance of candidates in this part of the assessment was good.

Component 5: Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Of the samples observed, all candidates performed as expected. Candidates participated in conversations that covered a range of subjects that supported them in their performance.

In the samples, performances were mostly in the specified conversation model and this benefitted pupils greatly. Samples were also of an appropriate length. Assessors should ensure that the assessment consists of a conversation as opposed to a presentation.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)

Candidates performed very well in the reading question paper. They were able to cope well with the vast majority of the questions. The marks allocated to questions ranged from 1 to 4. Most candidates were able to give accurate, concise responses for the questions allocated 1 or 2 marks. Generally, 1 or 2 mark questions are looking for items of information from the text. Less confident candidates often find it more difficult to secure marks where they are asked to give their own opinion. Some candidates did not give sufficient detail for the questions requiring longer responses.

Question 1 asked candidates to summarise information from the text. There were 3 marks allocated to this question. The vast majority of candidates correctly identified the required information.

Question 2 asked candidates to identify two organisations that offer the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Almost all candidates achieved the 2 available marks. The information required was brief and easy to identify.

More able candidates performed well in questions where they had to make deductions or offer a personal opinion. For example, questions 4, 8(a), 9(a) and (b). With these questions, candidates had to ensure that they were showing analysis of the text. They needed to ensure that their responses were sufficiently lengthy and detailed to secure marks. Although many candidates achieved 1 mark in question 9(a), they sometimes failed to secure marks in 9(b) because they did not give supporting evidence from the text.

Overall, candidates performed best in questions that required them to identify brief information in the text.

Component 2: question paper 1: Litreachas (Literature)

Some candidates gave particularly good answers, with detailed analysis of the text. They gave a good personal response to the text and used appropriate quotations to support their answer. There was little evidence of candidates giving a 'prepared response'.

Component 3: question paper 2: Èisteachd (Listening)

Candidates performed very well in the listening question paper. With the exception of question 6, all questions performed well. Most of the questions required brief responses, as candidates are working under the pressure of time, and need to pay attention in order to identify all the relevant detail.

Component 4: Obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)

Some of the best responses were in creative writing. A number of candidates submitted very good responses in this genre. There were also good responses on interesting personal experiences. Markers commented that it was pleasing to see such a variety of responses, many of which were of good quality.

Component 5: Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Candidates performed well when discussing topics that they had chosen, as well as general conversation regarding their courses and interests. Candidates selected topics that were appropriate to support them in achieving the best possible mark. Some candidates did take full control of the conversation and lead the discussion. This allowed these candidates to fully demonstrate their ability and achieve marks that reflected their ability.

Candidates performed very well in this aspect of the assessment. Candidates were well prepared and discussed a range of different topics that allowed them to perform to the best of their abilities.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1: Leughadh (Reading)

Candidates must ensure that if they give a personal opinion, as in question 9(a), and they must give a full response with direct reference to the text in the second part of the question as required in 9(b).

The following questions performed less well: questions 6(a) and (b) (worth 1 mark each), question 8(a) (worth 2 marks), and question 9(b) (worth 2 marks).

Some candidates were unclear about the answer required for question 6. A number of candidates did not provide any answer, while others gave an answer for either (a) or (b) but did not give an answer for both. A few other candidates gave incorrect answers. Question 6(a) asked candidates to show how the Duke of Edinburgh Award can have a lifelong influence on participants. Question 6(b) asked candidates to give a specific example of this influence. Some candidates failed to recognise the distinction between the two questions.

Question 8 required candidates to give their own views on why the Duke of Edinburgh Award requires true diligence. Many candidates' responses were too brief to justify the allocation of 2 marks.

Question 9(b) required candidates to justify their response to question 9(a). However, a number of candidates' responses were not sufficiently detailed. Candidates need to take note of the number of marks allocated to a question, and ensure that their response has sufficient content to reflect the number of marks.

Component 2: question paper 1: Litreachas (Literature)

Candidates should read the wording of the question carefully and answer what is specifically required. The best responses address the specific question asked.

Component 3: question paper 2: Èisteachd (Listening)

A number of candidates found question 6 difficult.

Some candidates did not achieve full marks in questions 3(a). It has been suggested by markers that they may have thought that the area referred to (*Am Parbh*) was actually an

island because the passage states: *Ann an dòigh, tha am Parbh coltach ri eilean iomallach.* However, the vast majority of candidates answered the question correctly.

Component 4: Obair shònraichte–sgrìobhadh (assignment–writing)

Candidates performed very well in the assignment–writing with no specific difficulties.

Component 5: Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Some candidates found it difficult to initiate the conversation; however, they were able to keep the conversation flowing with some encouragement from the assessor.

In the samples verified, there was no evidence of candidates choosing a topic which was too complex, and some did lack vocabulary regarding their chosen topic. As a result, further focus on vocabulary specific to the chosen topic should be incorporated into preparation for the assessment.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

There was strong evidence again this year that candidates were well prepared for the examinations. This was shown by the very good performance of candidates.

In the reading and listening question papers, candidates need to bear in mind the number of marks allocated to each question, and ensure that their responses reflect the number of marks.

The handwriting of some candidates continues to cause problems. There are still candidates who may benefit from the use of scribe or word processing options.

Component 5: Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Candidates should ensure that they have knowledge of, and can apply, vocabulary that is specific to their chosen topic in a natural manner.

Assessors must ensure that the assessment consists of a conversation. A series of prepared generic questions do not support candidates as much as a natural, flowing conversation.

Teachers, lecturers and assessors are encouraged to make use of Understanding Standards materials, to help them in supporting candidates so that they can perform to the best of their ability in the best possible conditions.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	151
Number of resulted entries in 2018	183

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	62.8%	62.8%	115	84
B	17.5%	80.3%	32	72
C	12.6%	92.9%	23	60
D	5.5%	98.4%	10	48
No award	1.6%	-	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.