



Course Report 2018

Subject	German
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

The 2018 National 5 German course assessment performed as expected. Feedback received by centres was positive, and it was felt to be fair and accessible to candidates. The majority of candidates coped well with the level and were able to complete the exam within the allocated time.

This year, a small percentage of candidates were given a 'no award'. This is a decline on last year, and highlights the trend in the overall ability of the candidates this year.

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

The reading question paper (worth 30 marks) consisted of three texts (each worth 10 marks) on the contexts of employability, culture and learning. There were three supported questions (worth a total of 4 marks). The overall purpose question was removed this year in line with the changes made to the qualification. The texts were relevant and interesting, which engaged the candidates given the quality of responses. The question paper performed as expected, which was accessible to candidates while providing the demand and rigour required at National 5.

Overall, candidates performed well in the reading question paper. There was a full range of responses and some candidates were able to attain full marks in this paper.

Text 1 was an article about a young man who worked on a farm. Text 2 was a factual article about graffiti in Berlin. Text 3 was a passage about an initiative in a German school where parents spent a week at school with their children.

Candidates generally performed well throughout. Some candidates did not provide enough detail from the text to access some of the marks. The marking scheme allowed candidates to offer a range of answers to demonstrate their understanding from a range of contexts.

Candidates found question 3 most challenging, and questions 1 and 2 more straightforward.

Similar to last year, particular difficulties were the recognition of comparative adjectives (*weniger, lebendiger, bunter*) and plural forms of the noun (*Aussichten, Züge, Wände, Bilder*). A small number of candidates also found composite nouns (*Fleischprodukte, Landwirtschaft, Mauermalereien*) difficult. Some candidates only provided single-word answers and, as a result did not provide sufficient detail to gain some of the marks.

At this level, it is expected that candidates are able to provide detailed information or an extended answer. Some candidates did not choose the correct meaning from the dictionary, which distorted their answer and did not answer the question correctly.

There were some 'no responses' but not an excessive amount, and most candidates made an attempt to answer all questions.

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

The writing question paper (worth 20 marks) asked candidates to reply to a job advert for a member of staff at a tourist information office in Germany. The job application required candidates to respond to six bullet points, four of which were predictable and the final two bullet points were unpredictable.

Overall, candidates performed slightly less well than anticipated in the writing question paper. There was a full range of responses and a good number of candidates were able to achieve 16 or 20 marks. However, it is worth noting that in comparison to last year's question paper the number of candidates achieving the top marks fell.

Most candidates coped relatively well with the first four bullet points. It was clear that candidates had prepared well for this paper. However, it was clear that a number of candidates did not always understand what they were writing and made many errors when writing from memory. Most candidates attempted all six bullet points, but many encountered difficulties in the final two unpredictable bullet points, particularly with using auxiliary and modal verbs which lead to confusion with conjugations and word order.

Some candidates coped less well with the unpredictable bullet points, particularly the last bullet point. Some candidates had excellent responses. Some had excellent responses in the first four bullet points and then deteriorated significantly in bullet points five and six, indicating that writing spontaneously seemed to be more challenging. Many candidates kept the final two bullet points simple which worked well overall.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

The listening question paper (worth 20 marks) consisted of two parts: a monologue worth 8 marks and a dialogue worth 12 marks. There were four supported questions (worth a total of 5 marks). The question paper covered all the contexts: society, learning, employability, culture. Candidates listened to a monologue and a dialogue about life as an aid worker in another country. The level of challenge in this paper was slightly more demanding than last year's paper.

Candidates performed as expected in the listening question paper. There were a range of responses, and the marking instructions were sufficiently adapted to ensure that candidates could provide a range of answers. There were a range of topics included within the context of the paper, which sampled from a wide range of vocabulary.

Some candidates struggled with composite nouns (*Arbeitschancen, Stadtmitte, Schulzeit*) and a number were unable to recognise cognates and near-cognates (*Risiko, traditionelle, afrikanisch*). Most candidates seemed to cope well with the listening overall, others almost got the correct answer but failed to provide sufficient detail required for the point. Both item 1 and item 2 were generally well attempted.

It was clear that a number of candidates had isolated pieces of vocabulary and had then guessed the answer for some questions.

Component 4: assignment–writing

The assignment – writing was introduced this year, and candidates had to complete a written task of 120–200 words in the modern language, on a topic of their choosing from the contexts of society, learning and culture. This aspect of the course allows for personalisation and choice. The assignment–writing was conducted under exam conditions and candidates were allowed to use grammar notes and a wordlist to support their writing. The teacher or lecturer annotated the candidates' first draft using a correction code, and candidates redrafted their work which was then externally marked.

Candidates chose a range of topics appropriate to National 5, for example school, healthy living, free time, holidays and home town. There were a range of responses and candidates generally did very well. Most candidates chose an appropriate title and the correct context box.

The assignment – writing allowed candidates to write about a topic in depth, and it is expected at this level that candidates are able to provide opinions and give reasons. Most candidates provided an introduction and a conclusion and most pieces were well-structured using time phrases, inversion and connectives.

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

In the sample of performances verified, the marking instructions for the presentation and conversation were, in the majority of centres, used appropriately.

Many centres provided commentaries on candidate performances with specific reference to aspects of the pegged mark commentaries provided in the marking instructions, for example comments on fluency, accuracy, and range of vocabulary.

Many centres used the National 5 Modern Languages: performance assessment record (found in the *National 5 Modern Languages Performance–talking Assessment Task*) to record commentaries about the sections of their candidates' performances.

All centres provided audio recordings of the performances as appropriate to the task.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

Generally, this question paper was well done.

Text 1 (employability context)

Most candidates coped relatively well with the majority of questions in text 1, providing sufficient detail to attain most of the marks.

- Question (a): was well done, with most candidates recognising both ideas: 'too much noise' **and** 'traffic'
- Question (b): was relatively well-attempted and most candidates provided a detailed answer. A small number of candidates only provided one-word answers, which was insufficient to gain all the marks available
- Question (c)(ii): was particularly well done
- Question (e): most candidates achieved at least 1 mark

Text 2 (learning context)

Overall, candidates coped with the range of questions in the text 2.

- Question (a): almost two-thirds of candidates were able to pick out the verb *entwickeln*, which was required for the mark
- Question (c): most candidates chose the correct box demonstrating their understanding of *am liebsten*
- Question (d)(i): was generally well done, with almost all candidates picking up at least 1 mark
- Question (d)(ii): almost all candidates recognised the cognate aggressive or identified that graffiti spoils the buildings (in the city)
- Question 2(g): most candidates picked up at least 1 mark

Text 3 (culture context)

Candidates found text 3 the most challenging. It appears that a number of candidates found it difficult to manage their time, and spent too much time on the first two questions of the writing paper. Text 3 had the highest percentage of 'no responses', or the quality of the candidates' answers deteriorated towards the end.

- Question 3(a)(ii): most candidates were able to achieve a mark here

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

Nearly all candidates attempted the first four predictable bullet points, displaying a good range of vocabulary, grammatical structures and tenses. The majority of candidates seemed well prepared and confident in their writing.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

Item 1: monologue

- Question (a): almost all candidates were able to identify either *interessant* or *spannend*
- Question (b): almost all candidates chose the correct answer in the multiple choice
- Question (d)(i): most candidates were able to identify that Eva worked in a nursery school
- Question (f): most candidates were able to recognise that Eva worked in a hospital or studied geography at university. A small number of candidates identified that she did work experience at the Red Cross

Item 2: dialogue

- Question (a): most candidates were able to identify *seit Ende meines Studiums* or *nicht so lange*
- Question (c): this question offered candidates the opportunity to choose answers from a total of 10 options. The majority of candidates picked up at least 1 mark, with half of candidates achieving all 3 marks
- Question (d): the majority of candidates gained the mark on offer by choosing one of the four correct options
- Question (e): most candidates achieved at least 1 mark in the supported question
- Question (f): the majority of candidates achieved at least 1 mark in this question

Component 4: assignment–writing

Overall, candidates performed well in the assignment – writing. There was a range of interesting topics, and most candidates were able to write in-depth about their chosen topic. Most candidates were able to write at least 120 words and provided a structured text including an introduction and a conclusion. Most candidates were able to use conjunctions to help structure their texts and gave opinions as well as justifying them. There were a range of language and grammatical structures appropriate to National 5 German.

Some centres opted for all candidates to do the same topic, whereas other centres allowed candidate choice.

Component 5: performance–talking

Generally, candidates performed well in the performance – talking.

Presentation

In most cases, candidates performed more confidently in this section of the performance–talking, with many well-structured and fluent performances. Generally, the presentation provides an opportunity for candidates to show control of the language.

Conversation

Overall, candidates performed well in the conversation. They were able to sustain an interaction based on the same, or related topic to the presentation context, and then moved on to another context in the course of the conversation.

Where interlocutors used a wide variety of questions in the conversation section, this often helped candidates to avoid recycling the same language and structures from their presentations into their conversations.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

Text 1

- Question (a): a small number of candidates only provided one answer when the question was explicitly looking for two
- Question (b): some candidates did not provide sufficient detail or missed out *körperlich* and *unglaublich*, which were essential for the marks
- Question (c)(i): most candidates achieved at least 1 mark in this question, however there seemed to be some dictionary misuse with a number of candidates mistranslating *Landwirtschaft*. A number of candidates did not recognise *kombiniert* as a past participle which led to some awkward expressions in English. A number of candidates missed out *verschiedenen* in their answer which was essential to gain the mark
- Question (c)(ii): most candidates achieved the mark in this question, however a small number did not provide sufficient detail to gain the mark, for example 'he wants to work on a farm' with no rendering of owning the farm or his own farm. Others missed out the idea of *wertvoll* when talking about his experience
- Question (d): some candidates were guessing answers without making reference to the text, for example 'bigger farms and GM crops'. A number of candidates were unable to convey the idea of *weniger* when referring to the financial help from the government. Some candidates were translating *bekommen* as 'become'. Others translated *Fleischprodukte* as 'fish products'
- Question (e): A number of candidates mentioned repairs but missed out the idea of constant or continual. Some candidates mixed the ideas that the machinery costs a lot of money (to buy) and it needs repaired constantly. Some candidates wrote 'it costs a lot to repair' which did not convey the meaning in the text

Text 2

- Question (a): some candidates did not convey the meaning of *entwicklen*. Some guessed the answer from the word *Kreativität*. Some insufficient answers included 'show their creativity' or 'be creative'
- Question (b): a considerable number of candidates did not understand *Teil*, or were unable to break down the compound noun *Jugendkultur*. Some candidates also guessed the answer, for example 'they get to express themselves', or showed no understanding of the point being made in the text, 'it's a culture for young people'
- Question (c): a small number of candidates still ticked more than one box or leave the answer blank
- Question (d)(i): some candidates did not provide enough detail or convey the idea of (more) colourful or lively and opted for generic answers, for example 'the walls look better'
- Question (e): almost half of the candidates did not get the point here. Either not enough detail was provided, or the subordinate clause caused problems with comprehension. Some candidates mistook the numbers, for example 'it cost 50 million euros to remove over 35 years'
- Question (f): most candidates found this question challenging and were unable to break down the compound noun *Mauermalereien*

Question (g): Most candidates got at least 1 mark in this question. The majority opted for the answer 'it is an international symbol of freedom'. A small number of candidates mistook *Freiheit* for *Freizeit*. A number of candidates found the translation of *Bilder* difficult, or mistook the paintings/pictures to be 'photos of artists', which is a misrepresentation of the text. Again, some candidates failed to provide enough detail and missed out essential elements, for example *mehr als*.

Text 3

- Question 3(a)(i): a significant number of candidates were unable to identify the *Schuldirektorin* as the head teacher
- Question 3(b)(ii): about a third of candidates did not get a mark for this question, with some answers ranging from 'from the kids in her school' or 'from her time at school'
- Question 3(c): again insufficient detail was provided and some candidates missed the idea of '*nicht alle*'. The inversion for the second point seemed to cause problems for a small number of candidates and a number chose the wrong meaning of *Bescheinigung* from the dictionary. A number of candidates only provided one point
- Question 3(d): the relative clause seemed to cause some confusion. A considerable number of candidates did not recognise vocabulary, for example *Eltern* and *Firmen*. And a few candidates made no attempt to answer this question
- Question 3(e): around a third of candidates did not achieve any marks for this question. Some candidates failed to recognise vocabulary that would be expected at National 5, for example *Spaß*, *Zusammenarbeit*, *heute*, *Menschen*, *locker* and *entspannt*. A number of candidates simply guessed answers or did not provide enough detail

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

Most candidates attempted bullet points five and six in the writing question paper. The accuracy of the bullet points deteriorated significantly in the last two bullet points, and a considerable number of candidates were unable to form basic sentences using two verbs. The result was unconjugated verbs and incorrect word order.

In the first four bullet points, it was evident that a growing number of candidates had not adequately prepared for these, despite the predictability. Some candidates did not provide a range of tenses and some had particular difficulty in forming the past tense. Other points of difficulty for some candidates were adjective endings, word order and verb agreement.

A small number of candidates had also over-prepared for the first four bullet points and it was clear that they did not always understand what they were writing. The language was so complicated in parts that some candidates were making errors which detracted from the overall impression of the marking, particularly where they missed out chunks of learned material.

Some centres are still encouraging pupils to write a formal introduction which is no longer necessary.

In bullet point two, a number of candidates are writing about how they hate school and which subjects they dislike. It may be worth remembering the context of the writing is a job application. Teachers may wish consider making this clear to candidates when preparing for the writing.

In bullet point three, a small number of candidates were still writing about free-time activities with no mention of skills and qualities. Free-time activities are often mentioned without any relevance to the job, for example going to the cinema and their favourite types of films. It is important to remember that the bullet point is looking for information on skills and/or interests which make them right for the job.

In bullet point six, some candidates made tenuous links to future plans, despite the bullet point asking specifically for career/job plans for the future.

Overall, the quality of the writing question paper deteriorated this year, with fewer candidates gaining full marks in the paper. A growing number of candidates achieved a mark of 8 or 12.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

Item 1: monologue

- Question 1(c): a number of candidates were unable to break down the compound noun *Arbeitschancen*
- Question 1(d)(i): this question was simplified in the marking instruction as a considerable number of candidates were unable to provide enough detailed information. Many candidates missed out *in der Stadtmitte*
- Question 1(d)(ii): a number of candidates were unable to recognise the past tense of *lesen* and *singen*. Again, candidates were not providing enough detail in their answers, for example 'she read books' or 'she sang songs'. A number of candidates chose the information 'she worked from 9–12' which did not answer the question

Item 2: dialogue

- Question 2(b)(i): most candidates were thrown by *nein* at the beginning of the playing and opted for 'that he did not earn enough'
- Question 2(b)(ii): most candidates were unable to recognise the word *gefährlich* or the near-cognate *Risiko*
- Question 2(c): some candidates did not provide enough detail in their answers and missed out adjectives or qualifiers. A significant number of candidates though *höflich* was helpful
- Question 2(g): some candidates were unable to identify that he wanted to have kids. Many opted for 'to see his kids', despite the verb being *haben*

Component 4: assignment–writing

The assignment–writing allows candidates to write in-depth about one topic. A small number of centres had encouraged candidates to write about a range of topics which did not allow candidates to provide sufficient detail about a particular topic.

A number of candidates did not provide a title, provided a title in English, or provided a title that was not appropriate for the text that they had written, for example ‘Holidays’ or ‘German writing 2nd draft’.

In the topic of family, it is advised that candidates move away from providing the names, ages and physical descriptions of family members as the language used is often too basic for National 5 and is often very repetitive.

A number of candidates had chosen a film study as part of their assignment–writing. Sometimes these were unsuccessful, as the language required to write about such complex ideas was far beyond the ability of the candidates.

Some candidates wrote well below the 120 word minimum, and some texts were written as single paragraphs. For a number of candidates, handwriting was particularly poor which made marking some texts challenging.

A number of texts were basic and very repetitive. Basic grammatical concepts caused some candidates problems, for example capitalising nouns, verb endings, word order and basic inversion.

A very small number of centres had not followed the advice given in the Understanding Standard examples and the course support notes.

Component 5: performance–talking

In the presentation, a small number of candidates seemed to struggle with the complexity of the language of the topic they had chosen. In preparation for delivering the presentation, centres should provide advice to candidates as to what level of language they should be able to cope with and should ensure candidates understand their presentation. Topics for this part of the performance should be taken from Appendix 3: contexts, topic and topic development, in the *National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification* available on the Modern Languages subject page.

A few performances were significantly too long or too short and this affected candidates’ performances. Centres are advised to refer to the information regarding the recommended length of time the presentation and conversation should last, so that candidates are able to demonstrate their ability to meet the demands of National 5, as provided in the *Modern Languages Performance–talking Assessment Task*.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

Some candidates did not provide sufficient detail to gain the marks on offer. Candidates should be guided by the marks awarded for each question and should provide as much detail as they have understood. It is important to note that it is rare for a single-word answer to be sufficient detail at National 5. It may be worth advising candidates to look at what comes before and what comes after, to ensure that all the necessary detail is included.

Centres should encourage dictionary-skill practice to allow candidates to select the most appropriate translations in the context of the text. It is also important that candidate responses answer the question being asked. It may be worthwhile reminding candidates that the information comes in a chronological order and the questions include hooks to support the candidate throughout the text.

Candidates should be familiar with a range of grammatical structures as outlined in Appendix 2: productive grammar grid, in the *National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification*. This should assist them in identifying the relationship between the words in the sentence, including the tense, and if there is more than one verb in the sentence. Comparative adjectives and composite nouns are common features at National 5. The tense of the question should give candidates a good idea of the tense they should be using.

Candidates should be discouraged from giving additional information that is not related to the text or the question, as this could negate any correct information and they could therefore lose the marks gained for correct information.

Candidates should be encouraged to read each question carefully and highlight or underline keywords to help them find the correct answer in the text. They should also be encouraged to write in bullet points containing the relevant information. It may be useful to encourage candidates to read the question and their answer at the end of the paper to ensure that the question has been answered, and that what they have written in English makes sense.

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

It should be made clear to candidates that no formal introduction or conclusion is required, as many candidates struggled to learn these accurately.

Candidates should be advised that for bullet point three, the information should be relevant to the job. A number of candidates had written about their free-time but not mentioned any skills. It is important to remember the context of the paper, in this case that it is a job application.

In bullet point four, some candidates chose to write in the present tense, which limited the range of tenses in the piece overall. Candidates should try to showcase a range of tense accurately to achieve the best possible mark.

For the unpredictable bullet points, candidates should have the opportunity to practice a range of these, and it may be worthwhile looking to other languages for ideas.

It is important that candidates attempt all six bullet points to ensure that enough is written, as this can have an impact on their overall mark.

Candidates should check that they cover all bullet points, and use their dictionary to check the accuracy of what they have written. Centres should concentrate on a range of productive grammar skills, including how to form questions. Centres should also make candidates aware of the marking criteria so candidates know what is expected of them in this question paper.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

In the listening question paper, candidates should be guided by the number of marks awarded for each question, to ensure that sufficient detail is provided. It is important to note that it is rare for a single-word answer to be of sufficient detail at National 5, for example a country on its own would not be sufficient detail. In relation to the 2018 paper, candidates should revisit some basic vocabulary, for example countries, numbers, weather expressions, question words to ensure they provide sufficient detail.

It is also vital that candidates read the introductions and are aware of the context.

Candidates should be discouraged from providing a range of alternative answers using oblique lines (/), as some candidates lost marks if it was not clear what their answer was, or if the two answers contradicted each other.

Candidates need to be careful to provide accurate answers. A small number of candidates negated the correct answer by providing additional information which was incorrect.

Candidates should read the questions carefully; highlighting key words that can help them structure the text. Centres should also encourage candidates to write in bullet points and to score out any notes with a single line. Some candidates took extensive notes and this practice should be encouraged through continued practice in class. Notes should be kept to the side of the paper. Some candidates drew a line down the middle of the paper, which made it more difficult for markers to find the correct answers.

Candidates hear both the monologue and the dialogue three times, and should be encouraged to use the third time to check the accuracy of what they have written.

Component 4: assignment–writing

Candidates should be encouraged to write about a single topic or context. This will allow them to provide more detailed information. Candidates should be discouraged from writing about a range of topics or including information that is not relevant to the topic.

It is important that all candidates choose an appropriate title for their text and this should be written in German. They should only choose one context for their piece of writing. Candidates should also be encouraged to structure their texts with a clear introduction and conclusion, and use conjunctions and linking phrases to structure their writing. It would also be useful if candidates provided a word count at the end of their texts.

Candidates should also be guided away from choosing a topic that is beyond their linguistic capabilities. If the candidate opts to do a film study, then it would be appropriate to focus on, for example the portrayal of a character, how others see him or her. They may mention the main themes and whether or not they enjoyed the film. It is advised to steer away from complex analyses, which is generally beyond the ability of National 5 candidates.

Candidates should also avoid listing or repetitive language. As already mentioned, candidates should move beyond providing names, ages and physical descriptions when talking about family and friends or listing what they eat every day.

Candidates should be encouraged to look at the productive grammar grid and ensure that they cover a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

At National 5, candidates are expected to use detailed language and give opinions and reasons. Candidates should be made aware of the marking criteria so they know what is expected of them in the assignment–writing. Candidates should be encouraged to use a range of tenses (where appropriate) and include examples of inversion and subordinate clauses.

Component 5: performance–talking

Care must be taken to provide candidates with every opportunity for personalisation and choice, especially where there are large numbers of candidates, or where candidates are being taught in bi-level groups.

In terms of the recommended duration of the performance–talking, centres are advised to refer to the *National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification*.

Interlocutors should ask questions in the conversation which follow on naturally from the presentation topic chosen by candidates, as recommended in the course specification. Making a natural link between the topic chosen by the candidate for their presentation, and the beginning of the conversation is good practice. Interlocutors should ensure they do not start the conversation with a question unrelated to the presentation, as this does not aid the natural flow of the conversation.

Referring to other topics in the course of the conversation allows for personalisation and choice. Interlocutors should move on naturally to other topics thereby allowing the candidates to demonstrate a variety of language. Interlocutors should ensure they do not ask questions which lead to candidates repeating parts of their presentation in their answers. Interlocutors should therefore try to avoid asking questions about items that candidates have already addressed in the presentation.

Centres should ensure they are not overly prescriptive in preparing candidates for the conversation. Conversations should be as spontaneous as possible for the level assessed. It is recommended that centres ask a range of questions adapted to the responses of each candidate, rather than asking the same questions to all candidates. A wider variety of questions in the conversation can aid candidates to develop strategies to cope with the unexpected.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	1899
------------------------------------	------

Number of resulted entries in 2018	1859
------------------------------------	------

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	52.6%	52.6%	978	86
B	20.6%	73.2%	383	74
C	14.0%	87.3%	261	62
D	9.1%	96.3%	169	50
No award	3.7%	-	68	-

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.