



Course Report 2018

Subject	Urdu
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 Urdu course assessment performed as expected. We received positive feedback from centres, and it was felt to be fair and accessible to candidates. Most candidates coped well and were able to complete the exam within the allocated time.

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 learning, culture and employability. There was a supported question worth 1 mark, and the overall purpose question (question 1). The texts were relevant and interesting, which engaged the candidates, given the quality of responses.

The reading question paper performed as expected and was accessible to candidates while providing the demand required at National 5.

Overall, candidates performed well in the reading question paper. There was a range of performances and some candidates were able to attain very good marks in the paper. There were some 'no responses', but not an excessive amount, and most candidates tried to answer all questions.

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

The writing question paper (worth 20 marks) asked candidates to reply in 120–150 words to a job advert looking for a waiting staff to work in a restaurant in Lahore in Pakistan. The job application required candidates to respond to six bullet points, four of which were predictable and the final two unpredictable.

Overall, candidates performed as expected in the writing question paper. There was a full range of responses and a good number of candidates were able to achieve 12 or 16 marks. Most candidates coped well with the first four bullet points. It was clear that centres had prepared candidates well for the writing question paper.

Many candidates attempted all six bullet points. Some candidates coped less well with the unpredictable bullet points, particularly bullet point six. Some candidates had excellent responses in the first four bullet points, but deteriorated significantly in (unpredictable) bullet points five and six.

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. The question paper covered the context of society. Candidates listened to a monologue on 'life in the town and country' and a dialogue on 'friendship'.

There were range of answers, and the marking instructions were sufficiently adapted to ensure that candidates could provide different wordings for answers.

Component 4: assignment–writing

The assignment–writing (worth 20 marks) allows candidates to produce a piece of writing in the modern language based on one of the following contexts: society, learning or culture. Candidates may refer to other contexts in their writing if they wish.

Note: candidates already have the opportunity to write on the context of employability in the writing question paper. The assignment–writing gives candidates an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ the ability to use detailed written language, in the modern language, as part of a coursework writing task on a chosen topic
- ◆ the ability to use language accurately to convey meaning
- ◆ the ability to express ideas and opinions and use content relevant to the task
- ◆ the ability to demonstrate language resource and to employ a range of vocabulary, structures and, where appropriate, tenses

Overall, candidates performed well in this question paper, producing a range of assignments on different topics.

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

Most of the centres provided evidence of internal verification and brief written comments, which helped the verifiers to assess the assessor’s judgement. Audios were provided on USBs and audio quality was good.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

Overall performance was very good in the reading question paper. Many candidates gained high marks in text 1 question (b), text 2 questions (a)(ii) and (b).

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

Most candidates attempted the first four predictable bullet points, displaying a good range of vocabulary, grammatical structures and tenses. Many candidates seemed well-prepared and confident in their writing. Candidates did not perform as well in unpredictable bullet points five and six.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

Overall performance was very good in the listening question paper. Candidates gained high marks in item 1 questions (b)(ii), (c)(ii) and (d)(i), and item 2 questions (a), (b), (d) and (e).

Component 4: assignment–writing

Overall responses for the assignment–writing were very good.

Component 5: performance–talking

In the performances sampled, candidates performed very well in the presentation, often better or much better than in the conversation. Some candidates used language and structures going beyond the demand at the level. Pronunciation was overall better in the presentation than in the conversation.

All the candidates performed according to the new changes introduced at National 5, and covered two different contexts in the conversation. Some interlocutors asked questions on more than two topics that resulted in the candidates not being able to use detailed and complex language required at this level.

Overall, candidates performed very well and secured high marks for the performance–talking.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading

Many candidates this year found the reading question paper accessible. However, for some candidates, answers required an element of detail which they did not provide, and they were unable to access the full range of marks.

Some candidates found text 1 question (a), text 2 question (a)(i), and text 3 questions (b)(ii), and (e) challenging and they were unable to answer these fully.

Component 2: question paper 1 Writing

Most candidates tried to include a range of vocabulary and structures appropriate to National 5. In terms of content and language resource, many candidates are comfortable with what is required of the writing task. Indeed, very few writings fell short on content. On the other hand, accuracy, rather than content, is still the main challenge for some candidates.

Markers found that there were some pieces of writing which had a high level of accuracy in the first four bullet points, but in the last two the level of control was much lower, and more inaccuracies appeared.

Component 3: question paper 2 Listening

This year markers did not see as many candidates being general in their answers, and many candidates did attempt to answer the questions with answers related to the question vocabulary area. Candidates found the following questions challenging and could not answer them fully, item 1 question (a) and (c)(ii), but overall performance was good.

Component 4: assignment–writing

The standard of the assignment–writing task was very good, and all markers commented favourably on the vast majority of candidates who had performed well.

Component 5: performance–talking

Some of the performances were short in length and others were unnecessarily long. Some candidates took less than 1 minute for the presentation and some talked for more than 3 minutes, which did not help the candidate to discuss the topic in detail. Centres are advised to follow the guidelines provided by SQA in the *National 5 Modern Languages Course Specification*.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper 1 Reading, and component 3: question paper 2 Listening

The advice for both the reading and listening question papers, is that candidates should read questions carefully, respond giving the correct amount of information, and ensure that enough detail is given. Candidates should ensure that if details are in the text, they should include these in their answer.

Detailed marking instructions for the reading and listening question papers are available on SQA's website, and show the level of detail required for answers. Candidates should be familiar with the approach behind these, for example where detail is required they need this to access the full range of marks.

Candidates should be familiar with a range of basic vocabulary from the four broad contexts of: society, learning, employability and culture.

Candidates can start writing notes for the first two or three of questions after the first playing, and then write notes for the next few questions after the second playing. Then after the third playing they can write answers properly in sentences with more details.

Component 4: assignment–writing

Candidates have been very well prepared by centres. Overall, performance is good in this part of the course assessment.

Candidates should be able to provide at least one accurate sentence for each of the two unpredictable bullet points. Centres are strongly encouraged to allow candidates to practise manipulating the language in a wide range of unfamiliar bullet points.

Component 5: performance–talking

The interlocutor should ask open-ended questions that enable the candidate to discuss the topic in detail. Interlocutors are also encouraged not to introduce more than two topics from two different contexts, as this leaves very little room for detailed discussion. The interlocutors should also be considerate when asking questions about the topic presented and avoid asking questions about items that candidates have already addressed in the presentation.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	74
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	45
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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	77.8%	77.8%	35	86
B	8.9%	86.7%	4	74
C	11.1%	97.8%	5	62
D	2.2%	100.0%	1	50
No award	0%	-	0	-

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.