



Course Report 2016

Subject	Gaidhlig
Level	N5

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

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It 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.

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading

The performance in Reading was good. No specific issues were identified in the marking process and no specific issues were raised by presenting centres. It was considered that the passage was relevant and was pitched at an appropriate level. The topic of the passage appeared to be relevant to the candidates and there were no identified barriers to comprehension.

The questions were also deemed to be appropriate, offering candidates appropriate challenge. There was an appropriate range of questions which enabled candidates to identify information in the text, to demonstrate comprehension and to give a personal reaction to parts of the text.

Writing

There were a number of very good responses, and a few candidates achieved 20/20. These responses were characterised by relevant content, good structure and appropriate use of a wide range of vocabulary. However, there were also a few poor responses which only merited 5/20 or 6/20. These responses were very brief and lacked structure & accuracy.

The responses to Literature concentrated mainly on Poetry and Short Stories. However, it was pleasing to see that these responses covered a wider range of texts and writers than in recent years. A number of candidates wrote about personal research they had undertaken. Many of these responses were on interesting topics and were very well presented.

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening

The performance in Listening was good. The passage appeared to be at an appropriate level, and the quality of the recordings was good, with very clear diction. No issues were raised by centres and no specific issues were identified during the marking process. The questions also appeared to be appropriate. Candidates found them to be accessible, but they also provided appropriate challenge.

Component 3: Performance

Candidates performed as expected in this aspect of the assessment. Candidates' performance covered a wide range of topics. Candidates should ensure that the topics they choose give them the opportunity to fully demonstrate their skills and allow them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

Reading

The overall performance of candidates in this paper was good. Candidates' responses showed that they could cope with the requirements of the different types of questions. This indicated that candidates were well prepared for the exam. There were few candidates whose performance was poor. Most candidates gave comprehensive, concise answers.

No specific difficulties were identified with regard to the topic of the passage or with regard to the wording of questions. The vast majority of the questions were 2 or 3 mark questions. Two questions were allocated 4 marks. The 2-mark questions generally required candidates to provide concise information, although some, such as 1(b) and 5(a), required candidates to give a personal opinion.

Candidates coped well with the two questions that carried 4 marks. Candidates were required to provide a lot of information in each of these questions, but most were able to do that effectively. The marking scheme for these two questions was quite flexible, enabling candidates to gain marks from a number of possible answers. This was of benefit to candidates and gave scope for them to give personal interpretations.

A number of candidates only achieved one mark in Question 8. This was mainly because their answers were quite brief and general, for example 'airson innse dhuinn mu dheidhinn beatha agus obair Tholkien'.

Writing

There were many good responses to the questions on Literature. Most candidates answered the specific question that was asked. This was particularly true of the more able candidates. However, candidates need to be wary that they answer the specific question that is asked in the question paper and that they do not simply present a 'prepared response'.

There was strong evidence of good preparation, particularly in the responses to literature. A very wide range of texts was covered in the responses to literature. A Theme of 'war' featured strongly, both in poetry and short stories. Among the texts covered on this topic were:

- ◆ Aig a' Chloich Chuimhne
- ◆ Banntrach Cogaidh
- ◆ An Taghadh
- ◆ Bùrn
- ◆ Oidhche Cogadh a' Ghulf
- ◆ Ann am Bosnia
- ◆ Màiri Iain Mhurch' Chalum

In addition, there were responses on a range of other topics. These included texts such as:

- ◆ A' Chraobh
- ◆ Oran na Cloiche
- ◆ Ar Cànan 's ar clò
- ◆ Na Stocainnean
- ◆ Bodach Chreagabhaigh

There were a number of responses on personal research, these were of a good quality. There was evidence of good research and responses were well structured. Among the topics covered were:

- ◆ An Iolaire
- ◆ Iomain anns an sgìre agam
- ◆ Mòdan Ionadail
- ◆ A' chlàrsach
- ◆ Sùlasgeir agus an guga
- ◆ Caisteal Leòdhais
- ◆ Tiriodh

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening

Candidates performed well in the Listening. It was considered that they found the topic in the passage engaging and relevant. Most candidates showed a good understanding of the passage and gave concise answers. They coped well with most of the questions

Candidates coped well with most of the questions which required brief concise responses, for example questions 1, 3, 7 and 8.

In some questions, the marking scheme was flexible to enable candidates to give correct responses from different options, for example questions 5(a) and 6. Although candidates were specifically asked for two pieces of information in each of these questions, a number of candidates gave three items of information. Candidates are not penalised for that, but they should be reminded that it is only necessary to provide the requested number of items in their answer.

Some candidates' handwriting was difficult to read. This is more evident in the Listening or the Writing because candidates are under pressure of time to write their answers, and because they have no written text to refer to.

Component 3: performance

The performance of candidates was very good overall, with a number of excellent performances from across this year's cohort.

The performances were generally of an appropriate length and took the form of a conversation. The topics chosen for the performances provided the candidates with the opportunity to fully demonstrate their language skills. Candidates were allowed to set the tone and pace of the conversation and this benefited them greatly.

Assessors used a range of open-ended questions. This is to be commended as closed questions restrict the performance of the candidate.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

A number of candidates failed to get full marks in a few questions. Many candidates failed to get 2 marks in Question 1 (b). Some candidates did not get the 2 marks because they failed to give their own opinion; they simply wrote evidence from the passage. Others failed to appreciate that they were required to look at a hypothetical situation. Others simply gave only one brief piece of evidence even though there were 2 marks allocated to the question.

Another slightly problematic question was Q 6(a). A large number of candidates only achieved one mark because they only wrote one part of the answer ('bha e ag obair air an leabhar airson dà bhliadhna dheug'). The second part of the answer was more difficult to identify ('tha an sgrìobhadair a' cleachdadh nam facail 'mu dheireadh thall').

There were no aspects of the Writing paper which candidates found demanding

Component 2: question paper 2: Listening

Questions 4 and 9 posed problems for many candidates.

In question 4, many candidates failed to get all the information required for 3 marks and others failed to structure their answer clearly enough. Some candidates failed to get full marks by missing out the point regarding 'a' milleadh sealladh nan rionnagan' or by suggesting that 'tha na miltean de dhaoine a' dol ann airson coimhead tron phrosbaig' was a suitable answer.

A number of candidates failed to make a strong enough link between (a) and (b) in Question 9. Question 9(a) asked candidates to identify Calum's main purpose in the text, apart from telling about his trip. Many candidates failed to give a sufficiently clear 'purpose'. Consequently, it was often difficult for them to achieve good marks in (b). Other candidates gave a good 'purpose' in (a) but failed to provide good enough evidence in (b).

Candidates were required to provide evidence from the passage in (b) to demonstrate how well Calum had achieved his purpose. Some candidates either provided responses that had been provided earlier in other answers and failed to provide anything additional, or gave answers that were too vague and did not relate closely enough to the passage.

Component 3: performance

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

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper 1: Reading and Writing

There was strong evidence this year that candidates were well prepared for the Question papers. Teachers need to continue to prepare candidates to this standard. The fact that no specific issues arose in the marking process indicated that teachers are preparing candidates well for all aspects of the assessments.

Component 3: Performance

There was strong evidence this year that candidates were well prepared for the Talking assessment. Teachers need to continue to prepare candidates to this standard. It is important that the Talking assessment is a natural discussion between the teacher and the candidate rather than an 'interview' type situation.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	167
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	158
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	67.7%	67.7%	107	70
B	21.5%	89.2%	34	60
C	7.0%	96.2%	11	50
D	1.9%	98.1%	3	45
No award	1.9%	-	3	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will 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.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings 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.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ 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.