



Course Report 2019

Subject	Gàidhlig
Level	Advanced Higher

This report provides information on the candidates' performance. 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

Question Paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical Criticism)

The Sgrùdadh (Practical Criticism) question paper performed as expected. Feedback from markers suggested that the question paper was fair in terms of overall level of challenge and demand, and the texts were suitably accessible and able to differentiate between candidates.

The prose text was on the subject of the internet and the fiction text was the poem 'Aithreachas na h-Oidhche'.

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and Writing)

Marking suggested again that this question paper was fair in terms of the overall level of demand, content, and that there was plenty scope for candidates to select suitable questions in both literature and writing to demonstrate their ability.

Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Visiting assessors again commented on candidates' willingness to converse on a range of different topics including their coursework, research they had carried out, and future plans.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Question paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical Criticism)

This year, many candidates performed well in the questions on the poetry section and most made a good attempt at working with the questions on the prose text.

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and Writing)

In the literature section of the question paper, the prose and poetry sections were the most popular. There were a number of successful comparison answers using more than one text, and answers which dealt with a novel, notably *An t-Aonaran*.

In the writing section of the question paper, many chose the title 'Latha a dh'atharraich mo bheatha' and composed different genres of writing. As with last year, the most popular was personal experience, with candidates' writing dealing with a variety of situations. Candidates covered a range of different topics for nearly all the other titles.

Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Visiting assessors commented on the detail which some candidates were able to give in discussion about their personal research and their coursework. They also commented on their willingness to engage in conversation and lead the discussion.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Question paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical Criticism)

Some candidates found questions in the prose section more demanding, and some were unsure of the need to use evidence and refer to quotations where required.

Some misread questions, particularly question 1, where they missed the need to focus on the connection the writer had to television. A number of candidates found questions dealing with imagery and style challenging, and failed to explain examples in sufficient depth. The imagery questions in the poetry section were also a challenge for some candidates.

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and Writing)

In the literature section of the question paper, some candidates' responses lacked a depth of analysis.

There was a lack of a holistic coverage of texts at times, particularly with poetry where there was a 'cherry-picking' of different quotations, which did not cover some of the key ideas of the text. Some essays completely avoided to mention some of the key aspects of texts. Candidates should be aware of the depth of analysis at this level and the progression of skills which they are required to demonstrate.

In the writing section of the question paper, some candidates' essays were at times weak, under-developed and lacked any style or complexity.

Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Some candidates need to be more prepared to discuss the literature covered in their course, and to have more of a working knowledge of features of the texts studied and a grasp of the ideas within them.

Some candidates were also under-prepared to discuss the research they had carried out or could only do this at a superficial level.

Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates

Question paper: Sgrùdadh (Practical Criticism)

Candidates should:

- ◆ have a good knowledge of the different techniques and aspects of style when looking at prose
- ◆ focus on how imagery is illustrated
- ◆ take note of the line references given in questions
- ◆ ensure they give sufficiently detailed explanations of how meaning has been interpreted
- ◆ continue to ensure time is managed appropriately so that marks are not lost
- ◆ consider how bullets can assist their answering technique

Question paper: Litreachas agus Sgrìobhadh (Literature and Writing)

Candidates should:

- ◆ continue to have the opportunity to study a range of literature within their course
- ◆ practise developing a stylish approach to critical essay writing, which is a progression of skills, and has some depth of analysis and personal response
- ◆ be aware of the need to give a holistic coverage of texts
- ◆ structure answers to questions which focus on comparison so that this is inherent within the whole essay rather than being left to a brief point at the end
- ◆ recognise the focus of questions and be aware of the key words within the question and any quotations given as part of them
- ◆ in writing, ensure there is some development of style and accuracy with spelling and grammar, and engagement with the reader. The best pieces of writing are those which are able to balance these

Còmhradh (performance–talking)

Candidates should:

- ◆ ensure they have a good knowledge of the literature and other aspects of the work that they have covered in the course
- ◆ be able to highlight themes and techniques inherent within them
- ◆ ensure their personal research studies are rooted in an appropriate amount of study and have some substance to them

As in previous years, the best conversations were seen to come from studies which had engaged the candidates' personal interests, and where they demonstrated their own opinions and thoughts about them.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	30
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Number of resulted entries in 2019	29
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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	44.8%	44.8%	13	70
B	27.6%	72.4%	8	60
C	20.7%	93.1%	6	50
D	6.9%	100.0%	2	45
No award	0.0%	-	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 that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary)
- ◆ 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.