Course report 2024

Higher Urdu

This report provides information on 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. You should read the report with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2024 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2023:   81

Number of resulted entries in 2024:   102

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	99	Percentage	97.1	Cumulative percentage	97.1	Minimum mark required	84
B	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	1	Cumulative percentage	98	Minimum mark required	72
C	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	1	Cumulative percentage	99	Minimum mark required	60
D	Number of candidates	0	Percentage	0	Cumulative percentage	99	Minimum mark required	48
No award	Number of candidates	1	Percentage	1	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

♦ 'most' means greater than 70%
♦ 'many' means 50% to 69%
♦ 'some' means 25% to 49%
♦ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the statistics and information page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

The reading paper performed well and there was a good range of questions for A–C level candidates. Some candidates were able to relate to finishing school, career planning and how they could use their skills and qualities for their future path.

Some candidates answered questions 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9 very well. These questions were about future planning, using and improving qualities and skills, asking for advice and how best to keep up with business requirements. Overall, the paper was appropriate to the level. The translation section tends to be challenging for some candidates.

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Candidates had to choose between two scenarios: learning (spend three months abroad in a Pakistani college) and culture (spend a year abroad). Most candidates chose scenario 2 (culture).

A–type candidates write full detailed responses to all four bullet points, whereas C–type candidates miss some bullet points. Some candidates missed one or two bullet points and could not achieve full marks. Overall, the paper was accessible to all candidates.

Question paper 2: Listening

The listening paper was based on the context of society. A few candidates found questions 1(c) and 2(f) challenging. Questions 1(b), (d), 2(a) and (c) were answered very well. Overall, the paper was accessible to all candidates.

Assignment–writing

The assignment–writing was reinstated this session. Most candidates performed very well. Candidates had prepared well and chose a range of topics from all contexts. Most candidates wrote assignments based on the contexts of society and culture.

Performance–talking

Overall, the performances were very good. Candidates selected topics that allowed them to use a range of structures, vocabulary and tenses appropriate to the level.

Most candidates chose a second topic from a different context. Some candidates disadvantaged themselves by choosing too many topics.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper 1: Reading

Some candidates did not fully answer questions 1, 2, and the translation. Some candidates found the final question challenging. Candidates have to translate the underlined text in Urdu, which is divided into five sense units. Sometimes candidates missed information and did not gain the marks.

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Some candidates made spelling and grammar mistakes. Most candidates chose scenario 2. Most candidates were able write in a focused and structured way, presenting topics in paragraphs.

Question paper 2: Listening

Most candidates performed well in the listening paper. A few candidates found questions 1(c) and 2(f) challenging.

Questions 1(b), (d), 2(a) and (c) in the listening paper were answered well.

Assignment–writing

Overall, the performance of candidates in the assignment–writing was good. Candidates with a sound understanding of discursive or persuasive writing gained higher marks.

Performance–talking

Most candidates performed very well and were able to understand and respond well to questions. In some performances, candidates took the initiative to ask questions, which showed they had good understanding of the spoken language.

Most candidates presented their topics very well. In the follow-on discussion, they chose two or more topics from different contexts. Some candidates discussed too many topics.

A few of the performances went beyond the recommended duration, with a few being significantly shorter. This prevented a few candidates from accessing the higher pegged marks.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ try to answer all questions
♦ frequently practise translating from Urdu to English in class to help them access the full range of marks

Question paper 1: Directed writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ answer all the bullet points
♦ practise Urdu writing in class
♦ check grammar and spelling
♦ ensure their handwriting is legible

Question paper 2: Listening

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ make notes during the first listen to the recording and then start writing full answers after listening for the second time
♦ use the last 5 minutes to review their answers

Assignment–writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ develop their dictionary skills
♦ ensure their handwriting is legible

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ choose two different topics from two different contexts
♦ choose topics that allow them to use detailed and complex language
♦ do not choose too many topics. If they choose four or five topics, they will not have enough time to discuss them all

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

♦ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)

♦ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade 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 for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.

♦ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.

♦ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

During the pandemic, we modified National Qualifications course assessments, for example we removed elements of coursework. We kept these modifications in place until the 2022–23 session. The education community agreed that retaining the modifications for longer than this could have a detrimental impact on learning and progression to the next stage of education, employment or training. After discussions with candidates, teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and others, we returned to full course assessment for the 2023–24 session.

SQA's approach to awarding was announced in March 2024 and explained that any impact on candidates completing coursework for the first time, as part of their SQA assessments, would be considered in our grading decisions and incorporated into our well-established

grading processes. This provides fairness and safeguards for candidates and helps to provide assurances across the wider education community as we return to established awarding.

Our approach to awarding is broadly aligned to other nations of the UK that have returned to normal grading arrangements.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [National Qualifications 2024 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).