

External Assessment Report 2013 – Intermediate 2 Gaelic (Learners)

Overall Performance

It was felt that the examination was appropriate in terms of content, which related clearly to the prescribed topics for this level. Despite this, candidates performed poorly in all three elements of the external assessment, especially in the writing.

Evidence suggests that many candidates had not been well prepared for the demands of Intermediate 2 and might have been more suitably presented for Intermediate 1, or have concentrated solely on the unit awards at Intermediate 2.

Areas in which candidates performed well

- A few candidates achieved close to full marks in the Reading paper, demonstrating a good knowledge of vocabulary and good exam skills.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Writing

- Despite its predictable nature, candidates performed very poorly in this section. This was felt to be both disappointing and worrying given that writing becomes compulsory in the new National Qualifications.
- Some candidates' written responses were very limited and did not allow them to demonstrate an appropriate range of language structures or vocabulary.

Reading and Listening

- The performance of candidates in both the Reading and Listening papers was also weak.
- Many candidates did not demonstrate an understanding of basic vocabulary (time, money, names, and weather), which is very concerning. Examples:

Listening

- Very few managed to answer 'teenagers' correctly in Question 1.
- The topics of money and clothes in Question 7b were poorly answered.
- In Question 8, detail was missing in answers. Candidates should listen for phrases like 'about'.
- In Question 15, very few candidates gave the correct answer of 'media'.

Reading

- Question 1a) and 4b): 'Sweden', 'India' — countries were poorly answered.
- Question 1c): detail was missing in answers, candidates should listen for phrases like 'more than'.
- Question 3d): 'magazines' — very few answered correctly.
- Question 3f): detail was missing in answers. Candidates should pay attention to phrases like 'about'.

Advice to centres on the preparation of future candidates

- The continuing number of poor performances in writing and the high number of estimated fails suggests that some centres may still be having difficulty in presenting candidates at the correct level relative to their ability. Centres are encouraged to make effective use of the all the guidance issued by the SQA.
- Centres should encourage candidates to ensure that handwriting is legible, and to distinguish clearly between rough notes and what they wish to be considered as final answers.

Writing

- Centres should seek to prioritise the development of writing skills at this level.
- Centres need to give further guidance to candidates on what constitutes an adequate amount of writing, with sufficient variety in vocabulary and language structures appropriate to this level.
- Candidates should be given guidance to avoid excessive repetition and the excessive use of English in their writing pieces.
- Candidates need to be able to write in different formats, e.g. a letter, a report and a diary extract. They must respond appropriately to the question that is before them, e.g. if the question asks for a letter, it should be set out in the correct format with address, etc.

Reading/Listening

- Candidates should be guided by the number of points awarded for each question. This is often indicated in bold, e.g. '**Mention two things**', '**Give a detailed answer**', etc.
- Centres should ensure time is spent in the course of the year familiarising candidates with common areas of vocabulary for Intermediate 2 topics: time, months, days, money, numbers, place-names, countries, weather, common adjectives, comparatives, etc.
- Many candidates would benefit from more focused practice of dictionary skills, to avoid common mistakes.
- Centres should ensure that candidates have enough time to refine their exam technique by working through past papers. Their attention should be drawn to the availability of past papers on the SQA website.
- In listening, candidates hear the recording three times and should be encouraged to make use of the third listening to check the accuracy and specific details of their answers.