

External Assessment Report 2013 – German Intermediate 2

Overall Performance

Feedback from markers and practitioners about the 2013 exam was very positive. The vast majority of candidates seem to have been presented at the appropriate level.

With a rise in the overall average score and, consequently, a rise in the A–C pass rate, the examining team was pleased with continued high levels of candidate performance. However, there was also a slight rise in the number of No Awards.

Reading

- All four texts were considered to be appropriate, relevant, interesting, and to cover the requisite topics well. The straightforward nature of the opening text was thought to have put candidates in good stead for coping with the rest of the paper.
- Many candidates lost marks for failing to note the comparative in question 3(a) (*selbstständiger*), which was considered to be a familiar enough item at this level.
- In 4(d), candidates struggled to comprehend “*weil ich mit den Regeln nicht zurecht kam*”
- Question 4(g) (What is an advantage of living in the boarding school?) was very poorly done, even though the answer was indicated in the text: *Das ist ein Vorteil: ich habe einen sehr kurzen Schulweg*

Listening

- Generally speaking, candidates coped with the listening questions due to the alternating difficulty of the questions. In some centres, there were some very solid performances but it appeared that preparation for the listening exam was inconsistent across centres.
- Some expressions seemed completely unfamiliar to candidates such as ‘eine Schule fürs Leben und für den Beruf’ (a school for life and for work) and ‘Südinsel’ (South Island) in the context of New Zealand. It was felt that, even without geographical knowledge of New Zealand, candidates should have been able to discern Süd and Insel.
- Candidates also struggled with “Geschäftsreisen”, “Uhr bis Mitternacht” and “Linksverkehr”.

Writing

- On the whole candidates coped well with the writing task and there were many examples of very good practice. It was felt that the majority of centres had prepared the candidates well and they were able to write a convincing job application.
- Despite its predictability, a small number of candidates appeared to be very poorly prepared for this task. They demonstrated little knowledge about balance of content, the need to cover the main five bullet points, the best order in which to address these, and of writing too much in the optional areas to the detriment of the main five points.

- In some centres, the preparation for this task was too prescriptive with nearly all candidates memorising the exact same essay rather than personalising their work. This formulaic approach led to some candidates not coping with the task accurately.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- In reading comprehension, centres should encourage candidates to read the questions carefully and to ensure that their answers give the detail required which is often stated explicitly (e.g. **Mention two things**)
- In the listening task;
 - Centres should train candidates to read the questions thoroughly in the minute preceding the first listening so that they can envisage the sort of language which will feature in the passage.
 - Candidates should be encouraged to focus on the question words to ensure that they know exactly what type of information they will need to provide.
 - Centres should train candidates to be guided by the number of marks available in determining how much information to provide.
 - By the time the CD is started, well-prepared candidates will be in control of what they are about to hear.
- In the writing task;
 - Centres should ensure that this task is practised regularly in the run-up to the May exam so that they can provide candidates with specific feedback on how to improve their performance. Evidence from appeals strongly indicates that candidates who do not receive helpful feedback on their prelims often give a worse performance in the final exam.
 - The word *Mitarbeiter* in the advert continues to baffle some candidates. In the course of the year, centres are advised to spend time reviewing the jobs across all the papers since 2000, thereby equipping their candidates better for the task.
 - Sometimes candidates skim over Bullet Points 1 to 3 and then write excessively on the other two bullet points or even the additional ones. To be most successful in this task, centres need to train candidates to address each of the five compulsory bullet points equally.