

## SQA Higher German External Assessment Report 2014

### General comments

- Candidates, in general, responded well to most elements of the paper.
- The subject matter of the listening paper (native German speaker of Turkish origin who was spending some time at a school in Scotland) appeared to be one with which some candidates were not acquainted.
- On balance, the listening paper was judged to be slightly more challenging than last year. Grade boundaries were adjusted to take account of this.

### Reading and Directed Writing

- Candidates performed well in questions Qs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6(b), 7(a) and 7(c)
- In the translation most candidates coped extremely well with the first and last units, and had no difficulty gaining 4 points.
- A number of candidates are not acquainted with the verb *gehören* and confuse it with *hören*.
- As in previous years, some candidates failed to provide sufficient detail in their answers to access full marks for questions. In the 2014 paper, these were the points which these candidates all too often failed to include:
  - Q 2(a): **einigten sich** die beiden Freundinnen, getrennte Wege zu gehen — they **agreed** to go their separate ways.
  - Q 6(a): Ich achte **sehr genau** darauf, was ich einkaufe — I pay **very careful** attention to what I buy.
  - Q7(a): **anfangs** hatte ich auch Angst, ganz alleine in meiner Wohnung zu schlafen — **at the beginning** I was frightened of sleeping alone in my flat.
- It was disappointing that some candidates chose to ignore the task and write their pre-learned final paragraph; they therefore incurred a 2 mark penalty.

### Listening and personal response essay

- Many candidates found the following items demanding:
  - Q1(a): *mit 4 Jahren* — at the age of 4. (Candidates wrote '4 years ago'.)
  - Q 1(b): Why did her father come to Germany? 'When he was 17' is an inappropriate response.
  - Q 5: *rufen wir unsere Großeltern an* — many candidates did not know *anrufen*, 'to telephone'.
  - Q6: Many candidates did not know 'Silvester' and offered answers such as 'Easter'.
  - Q9: Many candidates rendered *alle ein oder zwei Jahre* as 'once or twice a year' rather than 'every year or two'.
  - Q10: *Die meisten Leute in der Türkei sind ziemlich offen*. Far too often candidates wrote that Germans are more open than the people in Turkey.

## Advice to centres for the preparation of future candidates

### General

- Markers commented on the number of candidates they felt had been entered inappropriately for the Higher examination, and this was confirmed by the fact that 15% of candidates gained No Award.
- 31.2% of the candidates gained an A pass, confirming once again that more candidates gain this top pass than any other grade, which is excellent. It confirms the quality work which is being done in centres and it is to be hoped that, as curriculum reforms embed themselves in Scottish schools, the decline in the number of pupils taking a language at Higher level will be halted.

### Reading and Translation

- Centres are once again advised to encourage candidates to give as much detail as possible in their responses to the comprehension questions. This could make a significant difference to those candidates whose overall mark is borderline between a C and a D.
- Detailed guidance was provided on this exercise in the 2012 and 2013 reports; centres are recommended to re-read this advice and to share it with their 2015 candidates.
- In translation, candidates should be encouraged to be consistent in the verbs they use as a repeated error will incur fewer lost marks.
- Once again, candidates should be reminded not to provide alternatives in the translation.

### Directed Writing

- Centres should advise candidates to read the introduction to the DW carefully. This year, some candidates appear not to have read the introduction to the exercise where it was stated that the group travelled by coach and ferry and instead, referred to their journey by plane.
- Centres should advise candidates to answer two part bullet points fully. If one part of a bullet point is not address the candidate will incur a penalty.
- Centres are therefore encouraged to ensure that all candidates have the skills and knowledge to write accurately on unexpected topics.

### Listening/Writing

- Centres are reminded that approximately half of the marks available should be readily accessible to potential C pass candidates; the remaining marks are intended to be challenging and allow potential B and A candidates to demonstrate their skills.
- Centres could make use of the bank of 15 Higher examinations in the current format, to develop teaching materials which introduce learners to the level of language they can expect to encounter at Higher level.
- Numbers and dates should not be ignored; especially numbers like 13 and 30, 14 and 40, 15 and 50 etc.
- Adverbs are also extremely important — sehr, zu, ganz, ziemlich, etwa, viel — and their omission can cost candidates a mark or two quite unnecessarily.
- Many young people have ready access to a rich variety of German listening material, German and Austrian radio channels, Tagesschau in 100 Minuten, Youtube, to say nothing of the wonderful ZDF Sendung Verpasst website (<http://www.zdf.de/ZDFmediathek#/hauptnavigation/sendung-verpasst>) which allows us to watch entire TV programmes from the last seven days. We are now in a position to provide learners with a wealth of material that simply was not available to us even five years ago. The

more learners are encouraged to make use of this material, the easier they will find it to score well in this section of the examination.

- Centres should prepare candidates to be flexible in responding to the short essay question. This year, a response on Family relationships was expected.
- Candidates should be discouraged from using irrelevant pre-learned material in the short essay.