

SQA Higher Gaelic (learners) External Assessment Report 2014

General comments

- Improved performance in listening and good use of idiomatic Gaelic perhaps indicates increased opportunity to listen to and view Gaelic speakers on national media services.

Listening

- There were still a significant number of candidates who did not pass this section of the exam, but there was an overall improvement in candidates' performance.
- Most candidates attempted to answer all the questions, with some seeming to take clues from the questions themselves or from key words in the passage.

Literature

- Generally, the Literature section was executed well, with evidence of prior preparation.
- It was very pleasing to note that in some of the packs from centres the candidates had written on a variety of pieces, showing that they had exposure to a wide range of texts throughout of the course.
- In one or two cases however, candidates had all written about the same text, in a very similar manner.
- In a couple of instances candidates chose the incorrect question for their chosen text, and this caused them to drop valuable marks, their essays being marked out of 20 instead of 40.

Writing

- There was a marked improvement in candidates answering the question set, rather than adapting a previously learned essay.
- Within the Careers questions candidates chose only questions 1 and 2, and there were some excellent responses to these questions. Within the Food & Health questions candidates chose only questions 2 and 3, and again answered these questions very well.
- There were some excellent pieces which displayed a natural use of language, and it was evident that candidates had tried to include some idiomatic phrases in their writing.
- Where candidates seemed to be writing about a holiday from memory, using the past tense, they did so very well. Where they had to be more creative with language to fit the question there were more mistakes, but it was a positive sign that these candidates had read and understood the question they were answering.
- Often in the short story responses there was not enough focus on analysing or evaluating, and too much time was spent re-telling the story.
- Despite having the texts in the exam, some candidates did not have sufficient evidence from the text to support the points raised.

- Most candidates chose to write about Holidays, and most chose question 2. Here, many candidates failed to answer the question fully, ie the **idea of a** perfect holiday, and wrote instead about a holiday they had been on in the past, which caused them to lose marks.

Reading

- Candidates did not perform as well in the Reading paper as they have in previous year. A number of candidates did not pass this section of the exam, some with marks as low as 1/40, which is surprising for this level.
- The first page of questions was generally executed well, but some candidates appeared to struggle as they progressed through the paper.

Advice to centres for the preparation of future candidates

Writing

- Centres need to stress to candidates the need to answer the questions set.

Literature

- As with the writing section, centres should stress to candidates that they need to answer, and refer to, the question set.
- Candidates should be prepared to evaluate techniques used by the authors. It is on the personal response, analysis, evaluation, etc that candidates are marked.
- Candidates should be encouraged to access a wide variety of texts to broaden their exposure to contemporary literature.

Listening

- Continue to encourage candidates to access the spoken word to build natural language competences.