

National 5 Modern Languages

Section 1: Comments on the Assessment

Component 1: Question Papers

- Texts were accessible to all candidates but proved appropriately demanding and produced a good range of performances.
- Questions were performed as expected with no unforeseen difficulties, including the 'overall purpose' question.

Component 2: Performance: Talking

- Marking instructions were used appropriately.
- Some centres need further support with developing their approaches to assessment and judgement of performance.
- Centres are advised to refer to the 'Modern Languages Performance: Talking General Assessment Information' document for guidance about recommended duration.
- It was felt that, on occasion, assessors had been lenient regarding pronunciation, possibly because they had an inclination as to what the content of the presentation/conversation would be.

Any other additional comments

- **French Listening Paper:** poorer performance in the dialogue was taken into consideration when deciding grade boundaries.
- **German Listening Paper:** this was less demanding than might have been expected and the level of challenge in this paper will need to be increased in future.

Section 2: Comments on Candidate Performance

Reading

- On the whole candidates gave enough detail to access marks available.
- The overall purpose question was very well done with the vast majority responding correctly.
- Where marks were lost, this was usually as a result of mistranslation, poor dictionary use, poor English expression, and, in some instances, insufficient detail.
- The performance of some candidates deteriorated in the final questions, perhaps due to time constraints.

Writing

- Generally speaking, candidates had prepared well for this task.
- A very small number of candidates omitted one or more bullet points.
- Most responses were structured well with appropriate opening and closing statements.
- Many candidates were able to use learned material correctly when addressing predictable bullet points.
- It was encouraging when candidates referred directly to the job being advertised rather than making a generic job application.
- Markers noted a good degree of accuracy and fluency in bullet points 1-4.
- Many candidates were also able to demonstrate accuracy and detail when addressing the two unpredictable bullet points, but some found this challenging and were unable to respond in sufficient detail and accuracy in the target language.
- Errors occurred when using past tenses or formulating relevant questions.

Listening

- As is often the case, candidates found the Listening paper challenging.
- Some candidates had developed very good skills to deal with exam questions, making the most of the time given at the beginning of the exam, e.g. some had underlined key words in questions and developed the skill of note-taking as they listened.
- Most candidates coped relatively well with the monologue and most were successful in the overall purpose question.
- Candidates found the dialogue more demanding and many did not give enough detail to access all the marks available.
- Some candidates found the topics, e.g. "health and technology", challenging and seemed unfamiliar with the vocabulary.
- Lack of understanding where knowledge of verbs was required let down some candidates.

Performance:

- Overall performance was high.
- In some cases, candidates performed at a standard close to Higher performance.
- Most candidates were able to demonstrate their ability to use detailed language in the presentation and sustain the interaction in the conversation.
- In the conversation, candidates performed better where they could reasonably cope with unexpected questions, and were able to say they had not understood or could ask for repetition and rephrasing of questions using the target language.
- A good range of open-ended questions from the interlocutor provided candidates with more opportunity to expand on answers and use detailed language. Where this was not the case, candidates resorted to repeating language and structures from their presentations in the conversation.
- Where candidates did not perform as well, pronunciation was deemed to be a major issue.
- Some candidates relied too much on prompting from the interlocutor.

- Some presentations/conversations were too short for candidates to demonstrate their ability to meet the assessment standards.
- In other instances, prolonged conversations meant that candidates' performances deteriorated and confidence was lost as they struggled to sustain the interaction.

Additional Comments

- On the whole, the performance of candidates in this year's question papers has been very good.
- Centres are to be commended in preparing candidates for the exam.
- In most instances, candidates engaged with the content of papers.

Advice to centres for the preparation of future candidates

Reading and Writing

- Centres should continue to prepare candidates to provide detailed responses.
- Candidates should develop skills in using the dictionary correctly (e.g. recognising verbs, being able to change the infinitive into the first person forms and into other tenses, etc.).
- It is worthwhile for practitioners to remind candidates that one mark will be deducted for each box ticked over and above the required number of ticks.
- Centres should continue to develop and share ways of preparing candidates for the unpredictable bullet points.
- As a guide to preparing candidates for the unpredictable bullet points, practitioners may find it useful to look at the unpredictable bullet points that came up in other languages.
- Centres should encourage candidates to ensure their responses to bullet points are relevant and reflect what is being advertised rather than just general phrases.
- Centres should encourage candidates to include a variety of grammatical structures and vocabulary and avoid repetition where possible, so that they may demonstrate the assessment standards at N5.

Listening

- Candidates should be given the opportunity to engage regularly with a range of listening materials in the target language.
- Centres should continue to prepare candidates to provide detailed responses.
- Candidates should be encouraged to revise grammar and vocabulary thoroughly and be given ample opportunity to practise applying their knowledge of these to understand spoken language.
- Centres might consider emphasising the development of strategies for this exam, such as note-taking, highlighting key words, etc.
- It is worthwhile for practitioners to remind candidates that one mark will be deducted for each box ticked over and above the required number of ticks.

Performance

- Centres are advised to encourage candidates to choose from a variety of topics in the contexts of Society, Learning, Employability and Culture.
- Centres should advise candidates on the length of their proposed presentations and how this can affect their ability to access marks.
- Centres should advise candidates in selecting contexts that lend themselves more easily to using a greater variety of structures and tenses.
- Interlocutors are encouraged to develop more open questioning techniques and to remain flexible in tailoring the length of the conversation section.
- Verifiers must be able to understand the candidate, no matter how good the content of presentation/conversation is deemed to be.
- Candidates do not need to ask a question to be awarded marks for the Natural Element. Examples of how candidates could demonstrate their ability to sustain a natural conversation could be:
 - A mixture of extended and shorter answers (not a suite of mini-presentations)
 - Appropriate thinking time
 - Natural interjections (eh, um, well, etc.)
 - Acknowledgement that they have understood the question (yes, OK, No, I don't think so, perhaps, etc.)
 - Asking for repetition or clarification
 - Repeating a question for clarity