

Modern languages and Gaelic

Performance across SQA courses in Modern Languages – including Chinese Languages (Cantonese and Mandarin), French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu as well as Gaelic (Learners) and Gàidhlig) – has continued to remain stable in 2013, with pass rates largely in line with those of previous years.

Despite a decrease in the number of candidates entered for National Qualifications in 2013 – down from 158,908 in 2012 to 150,986 in this year – uptake levels across most Modern Languages courses have remained fairly stable.

There was a general decline in entries at Intermediate 1 across Modern Languages courses (notably a 13.2% decrease in French) between 2012 and 2013. However, in some subjects at Intermediate 2 level, uptake has risen. There was a large rise in the number of entries for Spanish at this level (341 more entries, an increase of 19.9%).

Although number of candidates are still relatively small, there were increases in uptake at Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2 Mandarin (Simplified), picking up 62 more entries in 2013 (a 77.5% increase).

Uptake at Higher level has decreased in some subjects and there was a disappointing decline of 9.6% (452 candidates) in the entries for Higher French. Good news for Higher Italian, with a 34% increase in entries as compared with 2012, and Advanced Higher German with an increase in uptake of 8.7%.

Chinese languages

There were many positive aspects in performance and uptake for Chinese languages, particularly for Mandarin (Simplified), which is usually taken by learners from a non-heritage background.

Scottish Baccalaureate

There are more candidates being certificated for the Languages Interdisciplinary Project Unit than for the overall Scottish Baccalaureate in Languages supporting the assertion that the Interdisciplinary Project is seen as a worthwhile qualification in its own right.

Universities have praised the Interdisciplinary Project component as excellent preparation for higher education in terms of the high-order generic and cognitive skills which candidates develop and the independent learning which it encourages.

SQA Awards – Modern Languages for Life and Work

Available at SCQF levels 3 and 4, the Modern Languages for Life and Work Award is based around two existing SQA Units (Modern Languages for Work Purposes *and* Building Own Employability Skills) and one new Unit (Modern Languages for Life).

The Award is available in Cantonese, French, Gaelic (Learners), German, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Spanish and Urdu and learners can choose to study one language or two over the duration of the Award. Learners will develop language and employability skills while pursuing their own interests in a cultural context.

Nearly 200 centers attended the launch event for this Award in April 2013. One of the key benefits highlighted by practitioners is that the Award offers candidates, who decide in S4 not to opt for a full National Course in a modern language, the opportunity to gain a language qualification in S3.

Robert Quinn, Head of Humanities, Arts and Business Qualifications at SQA, said: “The recent success of the new Award in Modern Languages for Life and Work and the growing confidence the higher education sector has placed in the Languages Interdisciplinary Project available in-line with the Scottish Baccalaureate, demonstrates our commitment to supporting qualifications in modern languages at all appropriate levels. SQA will ensure that its modern languages qualifications continue to offer a stimulating pathway for learners appropriate to their level of study, meet industry expectations and maintain national standards.”

More information on the Modern Languages for Life and Work Award is available on the [SQA website](#).

Further details on the new National Qualifications in modern languages can be found here:

<http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45775.html>