



## Course report 2022

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| Subject | French     |
| Level   | National 5 |

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any appeals.

# Grade boundary and statistical information

## Statistical information: update on courses

|                                    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Number of resulted entries in 2022 | 6630 |
|------------------------------------|------|

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

|                 |            |      |                       |      |                      |      |                       |     |
|-----------------|------------|------|-----------------------|------|----------------------|------|-----------------------|-----|
| <b>A</b>        | Percentage | 58.8 | Cumulative percentage | 58.8 | Number of candidates | 3895 | Minimum mark required | 74  |
| <b>B</b>        | Percentage | 15.4 | Cumulative percentage | 74.2 | Number of candidates | 1025 | Minimum mark required | 61  |
| <b>C</b>        | Percentage | 12.5 | Cumulative percentage | 86.7 | Number of candidates | 830  | Minimum mark required | 48  |
| <b>D</b>        | Percentage | 8.0  | Cumulative percentage | 94.7 | Number of candidates | 530  | Minimum mark required | 35  |
| <b>No award</b> | Percentage | 5.3  | Cumulative percentage | N/A  | Number of candidates | 350  | Minimum mark required | N/A |

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the statistics page of [SQA's website](#).

# Section 1: comments on the assessment

## Question paper 1: Reading

The reading question paper was comprised of three texts of equal weight (10 marks for each item). There were three supported questions (worth 4 marks in total). The question paper covered the contexts of learning, culture and employability (the three contexts not covered in the listening question paper). The texts were based on interesting and relevant topics that engaged candidates.

Each text was accessible to all candidates. Texts 1 and 2 proved to be more challenging than text 3, and there were more no responses to questions overall compared to previous years. This was taken into account when setting the grade boundary..

## Question paper 1: Writing

The writing question paper required candidates to reply by email to a job advert. The question paper is worth 20 marks, with four predictable bullet points and two unpredictable bullet points. Overall, marks awarded were high, with candidates performing slightly better compared to previous years. Many achieved full marks.

## Question paper 2: Listening

The listening question paper was comprised of two parts: a monologue worth 8 marks and a conversation worth 12 marks, both included a supported question worth 1 mark each. The question paper was based on the context of society.

Some of the questions proved slightly more demanding for candidates. Given the disruption over the last two years, it was clear from candidates' responses that the lack of face-to-face learning and teaching, and the opportunity to regularly practise and listen to French had impacted on their exam technique and listening skills. This was taken into account when setting the grade boundary.

## Assignment–writing

The requirement to complete the assignment–writing was removed for session 2021–22.

## Performance–talking

The performance–talking provided sufficient opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their skill in this area.

## Section 2: comments on candidate performance

### Question paper 1: Reading

Overall, despite the circumstances over the last two years, candidates performed relatively well in the reading question paper. Candidates coped better with text 3 than texts 1 and 2, with more than half gaining all available marks. Some candidates struggled with time management and exam technique.

#### Text 1 – context: learning

Questions 1(a) (supported question) and 1(b) were both worth 1 mark: many candidates answered these well and gained the available marks.

#### Text 2 – context: culture

Questions 2(a)(i) worth 1 mark, and 2(a)(ii) worth 2 marks: most candidates were able to give enough detail to gain full marks. The supported question 2(d)(i), worth 1 mark, was answered particularly well with nearly all candidates gaining the mark.

#### Text 3 – context: employability

Overall, the candidates coped well with all questions in text 3, with more than half of the candidates giving enough detail to gain the available marks. Candidates coped particularly well with questions 3(a) (supported question) and 3(d)(i), both worth 1 mark.

### Question paper 1: Writing

Candidates performed well in this question paper, with most being well-prepared to tackle the unpredictable bullet points. Many candidates addressed the four predictable bullet points in a balanced manner and were able to use detailed vocabulary and grammatical structures expected at National 5. Most candidates were prepared for the two unpredictable bullet points and did address these, albeit to a greater or lesser extent. It was encouraging to see many candidates referring directly to the job advertised, rather than a generic job application.

### Question paper 2: Listening

Most candidates found this question paper challenging, with few getting full marks.

#### Monologue

Question 1(a) worth 1 mark: this was a supported question and nearly all candidates gained the mark.

#### Conversation

Question 2(a)(i) worth 1 mark: this was a supported question and nearly all candidates gained the mark.

Question 2(b)(ii) worth 1 mark: this was answered well, with most candidates gaining the mark.

### **Performance–talking**

Some candidates did not perform well because their choice of topic or some of the questioning strategies did not allow candidates to respond using language at this level. Some conversations were significantly short for this level, and this affected candidates' pegged marks, regardless of how well they performed. Other conversations were unnecessarily prolonged and this affected the candidates' overall performances.

## Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

### Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should:

- ◆ encourage candidates to read each question carefully and underline the key word or words in the question that will lead them to the answer in the text
- ◆ encourage candidates to read their own answers carefully to ensure they make sense in English
- ◆ ensure candidates are being guided by the number of marks available for each question and give as much detail in their answer as they have understood
- ◆ discourage candidates from giving extra information as this could negate any correct information and result in not gaining the mark(s)
- ◆ ensure candidates have a sound knowledge of verb conjugation, adjective endings, and the comparative. This will minimise mistranslation if using a dictionary for comprehension
- ◆ remind candidates to use the dictionary carefully and not always choose the first definition listed
- ◆ ensure candidates are aware of common ‘false friends’ and encourage them to check these carefully in the dictionary

### Question paper 1: Writing

As the writing is in the form of an email, there is no requirement for candidates to use the formal beginning and endings. Many candidates who include these formal beginnings and endings often make errors in these parts.

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates:

- ◆ read the information carefully regarding the job for which they are applying
- ◆ know to address all six bullet points (if either one of these has been covered in the predictable bullet points, they do not need to be readdressed, as this can lead to repetition and/or inaccuracies)
- ◆ are aware there is no requirement for bullet point 4 (related work experience) to be in the past tense
- ◆ only write about a past professional experience if they can use the past tenses in French accurately
- ◆ write enough detailed language accurately for the unpredictable bullet points
- ◆ use the dictionary to check the accuracy of what they have written (spelling, accents, genders) — not to create new sentences
- ◆ ask questions regarding the job, as this could be one of the unpredictable bullet points
- ◆ leave time to read through their piece of writing to ensure all bullets have been covered and basic mistakes have not been made, for example spelling, adjective endings, accents and words missed out

- ◆ know the criteria used in assessing candidate writing, so that they are aware of what is required in terms of content, accuracy and range and variety of language to achieve the good and very good categories
- ◆ handwriting is legible

### **Question paper 2: Listening**

The difficult circumstances over the last two years have meant that candidates have often not been able to practise their listening skills on a regular basis. This is a skill that candidates find difficult. Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates regularly practise this skill and use French as often as possible in the classroom and reinforce listening strategies. More practise involving note-taking would help candidates improve their listening skills.

Teachers and lecturers should:

- ◆ encourage candidates to read all the questions carefully and underline the key words to listen out for so they can pick out the required information more easily
- ◆ remind candidates they hear both the monologue and conversation three times and should make use of the third listening to check the accuracy and specific details of their answers
- ◆ ensure candidates are being guided by the number of marks available for each question and should give as much detail in their answer as they have understood
- ◆ encourage candidates to answer every question; however, candidates should be discouraged from giving extra information and giving long lists of possible answers as this could negate any correct information and result in not gaining the mark(s)
- ◆ ensure that candidates are able to give accurate answers through confident knowledge of numbers, seasons, months, common adjectives, nationalities, school subjects, weather expressions, days of the week and question words, so that some of the more accessible points of information are not lost through lack of sufficiently accurate details

### **Performance–talking**

Assessors should allow candidates to pause during the conversation to think about their answers: as this is a natural part of a conversation. They should give candidates appropriate time to think and respond. However, if candidates struggle to answer certain questions, assessors should try to support the candidate by rephrasing, asking another question or changing the topic.

## Appendix 1: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in very different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2022. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2022 Awarding—Methodology Report](#).