



## Course report 2022

Subject	Mandarin (Simplified), Mandarin (Traditional) and Cantonese
Level	Higher

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	220
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## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

<b>A</b>	Percentage	84.1	Cumulative percentage	84.1	Number of candidates	185	Minimum mark required	80
<b>B</b>	Percentage	5.0	Cumulative percentage	89.1	Number of candidates	10	Minimum mark required	68
<b>C</b>	Percentage	4.1	Cumulative percentage	93.2	Number of candidates	10	Minimum mark required	56
<b>D</b>	Percentage	3.2	Cumulative percentage	96.4	Number of candidates	5	Minimum mark required	44
<b>No award</b>	Percentage	3.6	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	10	Minimum mark required	N/A

All figures are rounded to the nearest five. Figures between one and four inclusive have been suppressed to protect against the risk of disclosure of personal information. All percentage figures for a course have been suppressed where values between one and four inclusive have been suppressed. Cells containing suppressed figures are marked up with the shorthand [c].

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**

The question papers were fair, accessible, challenging in places, and appropriate for Higher. The marking instructions clearly explained where marks were available to differentiate responses, enabling markers to award marks and judgements in line with national standards.

The number of the entries increased again in 2022, including 10 new centres. There were more candidates from non-heritage backgrounds compared with 2019.

### **Question paper 1: Reading**

The reading question paper sampled the context of culture. It was accessible to all candidates and the level was appropriate to Higher. This resulted in a good range of performances. The questions were balanced in terms of high, low and average demand.

Candidates were required to answer comprehension questions on the text in English, including an overall purpose question. The comprehension questions were worth 20 marks in total, which included 2 marks for the overall purpose question. The majority of candidates answered most questions well, and showed a good level of overall understanding in their responses.

The last question required candidates to translate a section of the text, which was worth 10 marks. It required a great deal of sophistication and accuracy in the language. Full marks were only available with a very good translation of the text into English.

### **Question paper 1: Directed writing**

The directed writing question paper (worth 20 marks) required candidates to choose one of two scenarios taken from the contexts of employability and society. Candidates had to address six bullet points. The first bullet point contained two pieces of information. The remaining five bullet points each contained one piece of information.

The question paper was fair and accessible to all candidates.

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

The listening question paper had two parts: a monologue (worth 8 marks), and a dialogue (worth 12 marks). The paper was based on the context of society, and the topic was about extracurricular activities and family relationships.

### **Assignment–writing**

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

### **Performance–talking**

The performance–talking performed as expected. All centres selected for verification in round 2 verification used SQA’s coursework assessment tasks, as set out in the Higher course specification.

The approaches to assessments used by all centres selected for verification were valid and accepted. Assessment judgements and marks awarded were in line with national standards. Different contexts and topics were covered. SQA marking instructions were used effectively.

## **Section 2: comments on candidate performance**

Overall, candidates' performances were good and most appeared well-prepared for each component. There was a wide range of performances.

### **Areas that candidates performed well in**

Candidates performed well across all sections of the question papers, with several instances of outstanding performance.

#### **Question paper 1: Reading**

Overall, candidates performed well in the reading question paper. Most candidates had a clear understanding of the text. Questions that required less detailed answers were tackled well by the majority of candidates. Question 1, 2(a), 3(a), 3(b), 4(b) and 5 were particularly well answered, and the majority of candidates gained at least 1 out of the 2 available marks for the overall purpose question.

There were some highly competent translations, and very few candidates failed to score any marks in this question.

#### **Question paper 1: Directed writing**

Candidates continued to embrace the element of personalisation and choice in the directed writing question paper. The choice of tasks between the contexts of employability and society allowed candidates to perform well.

The revision support materials appear to have made a positive impact on the directed writing performance this year. Candidates generally coped better with the unpredictable bullet points. There were very few poor performances, with the majority of candidates scoring within the top three bands of marks. Some candidates wrote accurately, demonstrating that they could use a wide variety of structures and a range of tenses.

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

Candidates related well to the familiar topic area of extracurricular activities and family relationships.

In general, the monologue was better tackled than the dialogue and most candidates were able to gain at least half of the available marks. Questions that required less detail, or where there was optionality, were particularly well done.

#### **Performance—talking**

The overall standard of candidate performance was very high.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates' performance was satisfactory, though there are some points to address:

- ◆ some candidates didn't pay attention to details, for example:
  - question 1: 'good opportunity to learn **local** culture' (学习**当地**文化的好机会), a number of candidates answered 'good opportunity to learn culture' and missed the important detail 'local'
  - question 3(b): 'participate in **different** sports' (参加**各种各样**的运动), a number of candidates answered 'play sports' and missed the key detail 'different/various'
- ◆ a few candidates only translated or retold the text without assertion and justification. A number of candidates failed to provide any references from the text or justification that demonstrated an accurate reading of the text
- ◆ some answers were not specific enough, for example:
  - question 4(b): many candidates who responded 'she couldn't understand' and omitted 'at the beginning', wouldn't gain the mark
- ◆ the translation has always been a challenging part in the reading question paper. Some candidates did not gain marks due to lack of precision and accuracy. For example:
  - sense unit 1: past tense should be used, for example 'I have dreamed', 'I have been dreaming', 'I dreamed', 'My dream was'. The use of present tense was not accurate
  - sense unit 5: the meaning of 现在 must be translated. Many candidates did not gain marks through a basic lack of accuracy, omitting words, and incorrect use of the dictionary

### Question paper 1: Directed writing

A number of candidates failed to address all the bullet points, including the double questions in the first bullet point, for which they did not gain the marks. Candidates from a native speakers' background often missed the bullet points despite writing excellent language and structure.

In scenario 2, bullet point six posed the most difficulty for some candidates. They used pre-learned materials about 'whether they would recommend the experience' instead of addressing 'whether they would consider working in another country in the future'.

### Question paper 2: Listening

The listening question paper was on the context of society. The two items talked about extracurricular activities and family relationships. Although these are familiar to candidates, it proved challenging if they tried to predict answers or rely on guess work.

Some candidates were unable to answer the questions accurately, often understanding part of the information, but not providing sufficient detail, for example:

- ◆ item 2(f) 和**父母**好好聊一聊, 'have a chat with **parents**.' Some candidates responded 'have a chat with family' and did not gain the mark

### **Performance–talking**

In terms of the conversation, many candidates were able to interact well with teacher or lecturers and respond accordingly.

It was noted that some performances at Higher lasted longer than expected and this affected the overall mark.

## Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ read the marking instructions for the 2022 question paper, to demonstrate to them the correct amount of detail required for a mark at Higher level in both reading and listening, as well as the precision required for translation
- ◆ are given the writing criteria for directed writing and discuss it
- ◆ who have heritage background, are aware of the structure and understand the approaches of the question paper
- ◆ are aware that, apart from writing pieces, answers should be written in English and not in Chinese or pinyin
- ◆ must make their handwriting legible, as this can affect their mark

### Question paper 1: Reading

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ know the difference between reading for comprehension and providing accurate and precise translation
- ◆ use the detailed marking instructions for reading (available on SQA's website) to show the level of detail required for answers
- ◆ read the whole passage first, rather than sentence by sentence, in order to gain the full understanding
- ◆ pay particular attention to the articles and tense used in the translation passage
- ◆ do not include information from the translation section in their comprehension answers
- ◆ allow enough time to complete the translation as accuracy plays an important role
- ◆ for the overall purpose question, know they must draw meaning from their overall understanding of the text rather than translating part of the text

### Question paper 1: Directed writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ check that they have addressed all the bullet points or parts of bullet points
- ◆ have the opportunity to practise more unpredictable bullet points in class and to learn techniques to deal with these bullet points
- ◆ address all bullet points in a balanced way and try to use a variety of language structures and resources in order to achieve high marks

## **Question paper 2: Listening**

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ study the heading, questions and the marks allocated to them before they listen to the recording. This helps them to anticipate the type of information that is required
- ◆ do not presume the context of what they hear and avoid guesswork
- ◆ give as much detail as possible in their answers so as not to miss out on marks through lack of accuracy and inaccurate information
- ◆ use the detailed marking instructions for listening (available on SQA's website) to show the level of detail required for answers

## **Performance–talking**

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

- ◆ practise interacting on different themes and within various contexts by using a range of techniques
- ◆ use detailed language to express ideas and opinions as widely as possible
- ◆ become familiar with different sentence patterns related to various contexts and speak naturally
- ◆ are aware that they may hear different open-ended questions to allow them to demonstrate their full ability to use Chinese
- ◆ due to the different scenarios, are supported, step by step, on how to structure their responses and become fully engaged in the interaction

Teachers and lecturers are reminded to refer to the Understanding Standards materials for internally-assessed components of course assessment, accessible on SQA's secure site.

## 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](#).