Course report 2022

Subject	Mandarin (Simplified), Mandarin (Traditional) and Cantonese
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	255

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	74.7	Cumulative percentage	74.7	Number of candidates	190	Minimum mark required	80
B	Percentage	11.7	Cumulative percentage	86.4	Number of candidates	30	Minimum mark required	68
C	Percentage	7.8	Cumulative percentage	94.2	Number of candidates	20	Minimum mark required	56
D	Percentage	3.1	Cumulative percentage	97.3	Number of candidates	10	Minimum mark required	44
No award	Percentage	2.7	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	5	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.

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Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

The question paper performed as intended. Responses across the three texts in the reading question paper showed an equal level of demand. Understandably, performance in the supported questions were significantly better than performance in the short response questions.

Question paper 1: Writing

The writing question paper performed as intended. It provided an appropriate level of demand, which most candidates coped well with. There was evidence to suggest that a small number of candidates may benefit from better planning and time management to meet the demands of the two components in one sitting.

Question paper 2: Listening

The question paper performed as intended. The listening paper had two parts: one monologue (worth 8 marks) and one conversation (worth 12 marks). The texts are linked thematically and were based on the context of learning. It provided an appropriate level of demand, which most candidates coped well with.

Assignment–writing

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

Performance–talking

The performance–talking performed as expected. The approach 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.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper 1: Reading

Candidates coped very well in this paper. Many candidates were able to read and understand the texts, and this is reflected in the successful responses to the questions. A significant number of candidates attempted all questions across the three texts in this paper.

Question paper 1: Writing

The question paper provided an appropriate level of demand, which most candidates coped well with. Most candidates were able to write a convincing response in Chinese, addressing the job advert with detailed language, with a good range of vocabulary and structures.

Several candidates fully addressed the bullet points and handled the unpredictable bullet points well and were able to access the higher marks available.

Question paper 2: Listening

Many candidates were able to listen and understand in the listening question paper. Candidates found questions 1(a) and 2(g) the most demanding.

Performance–talking

Many candidates produced detailed and well-organised content for their presentations on different topics. With the help of pinyin, candidates demonstrated good pronunciation and intonation sufficient to be readily understood by a native speaker of Chinese. Without undue hesitation, candidates were able to complete their presentation appropriately.

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

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: Reading

For text 3, teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates look at how many marks each question is worth before they begin their answer. This will ensure they don't waste time writing overly long and descriptive answers to short-answer questions.

Question paper 1: Writing

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates carefully read the unpredictable bullet points. They must use their knowledge of the language to construct an answer that meets the demand of the question, rather than relying too heavily on pre-learned materials.

Question paper 2: Listening

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ look at the marks allocated to the unsupported questions and then structure an appropriate response

♦ make more use of the 'dead air' time between utterances to read the questions, before listening, to look for clues in the question and predict the type of answer, for example 'Is it a number or a name?'

♦ practise note-taking while the audio is playing, and practise listening techniques using past papers

♦ don't leave writing to the end as there is a lot of information to remember, and they are likely to be feeling under pressure

♦ tune their ears to Chinese by listening to Chinese audio listening exercises **prior** to entering the exam. A well-tuned Chinese ear helps candidates to quickly make sense of what the speaker is saying

♦ read the questions carefully, identify the command words and produce valid responses according to command words

Performance–talking

Teachers and lecturers should ensure candidates:

♦ practise interacting on different topics and themes 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, available on SQA's secure site.

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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.

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