



# Case study: good practice in assessment

## Gaelic (Learners) Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit — Sabhal Mòr Ostaig

### Introduction

This case study demonstrates one way a centre has approached the *Gaelic (Learners) Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit* covering two contexts, although this can be achieved in any modern language.

### Background

We provided candidates the opportunity to attempt the *Gaelic (Learners) Assignment (National 4) Added Value Unit* (AVU) early in the session. We decided to provide this opportunity within a block during the first term, based around the contexts of learning and employability. This also provided the candidates with the building-blocks for discussing their own learning and employability.

Candidates were not assessed until they were deemed to be ready.

### Why we chose this assessment approach

The main reason for this assessment approach was that the topic worked well in covering two contexts (learning and employability). The candidates were working on content related to the topic, and we felt confident that most of the candidates could cope with the assessment early in the school year. The chosen topic of Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (Scotland's Gaelic College), grew naturally out of conversations about future learning and employability opportunities for the candidates, placing it within a realistic situation that learners of Gaelic may encounter.

Another reason for choosing this assessment approach was the language in the texts was at National 4 level, and the skills and content covered in the AVU would help them progress towards National 5. This allowed candidates to plan towards their future learning within the context of the course.

### Delivering and assessing the course

Implementation of this approach was fairly simple — we had knowledge of a wide range of AVUs through the verification process, and through the sharing of materials within local authority areas. We used these texts in order to prepare our

own texts about Sabhal Mòr Ostaig with a range of language appropriate for National 4. This development work only took 2 hours. The two texts were designed to be distinct but complementary.

We also provided an audio recording of the texts, narrated by native speakers, to complement the written texts. It was felt that this would assist the candidates with comprehension and in acquiring the vocabulary for the assessment standards 1.2 and 1.3.

An unaltered judging evidence table was used from the unit assessment support pack to make assessment judgements. It was designed as a tick list for assessment standards 1.2 and 1.3, to allow for ease of reviewing assessment decisions.

### **Benefits of using this approach**

The use of previously verified materials gave us the assurance we were using assessment approaches at the right standard for assessment. The assessment grew naturally out of learning and teaching, and was culturally relevant to the target language of Gaelic.

### **Benefits for candidates**

Candidates were able to draw relevant ideas and content from the text easily, allowing them to also go beyond basic content and phrases in their presentation for assessment standard 1.2. They could then use their ideas and content in developing their oral responses for the questions for assessment standard 1.3, in a natural and relevant fashion.

The language learned allows candidates to deal with the other contexts, as well as assisting in progression to National 5.

### **Specific benefits for teaching staff**

Basing the assessment on language which flows naturally from the candidates' own experiences and requirements, allows for teaching of language in a natural and realistic manner. Teachers or lecturers may introduce much of the language in a way which feeds into the candidates' learning.

This can be less disruptive in teaching terms in other less familiar context areas, and also allow for multi-level teaching. Teachers and lecturers also have the impression that formative assessment is not prolonged, and serves its purpose to feed into candidates' learning.

Note: the assessment tasks referred to in this case study can be found in the centre-produced prior verified materials section of SQA's secure website ((PV290) via your SQA co-ordinator.