

An Comunn Gàidhealach

Bronze, Silver & Gold assessment scheme

Learners' Guide

See also 1) the sample conversations and 2) 'Sgeama Measaidh a' Chomuinn Ghàidhealaich' where, in English, the Language Outcomes and Function Descriptions are detailed.

The levels: There are 3 levels of conversational Gaelic competence, Bronze, Silver and Gold and there are cards issued when a level is attained. The following explains what the cards are for and what the assessment for each card entails and the level of knowledge / competence needed in order to be granted a card.

What the cards are for: The Bronze Card has 3 levels and is the one suitable for choir members. The Silver Card follows on from the Bronze, has 4 levels, and is required for Silver Pendant competitions. The Gold Card is required for Gold Medal competitions. The recipient should be fluent and able to conduct an interview with the media.

What the assessment entails and the level of competence needed:

The Bronze Card: For the Bronze Card there are 3 levels and 8 sample conversations, as follows: level 1 – two conversations; level 2 – three conversations; level 3 – three conversations. Each conversation has 20 key simple structures or phrases and it is expected that you will be able to use these in conversation with the assessor. The conversations are only **examples** to illustrate how the key structures **could** be used in conversation. During the testing, it is not expected that these conversations are followed verbatim. Indeed, it is very likely that the assessor will have to enlarge on the conversation in order to include the main structures which are being tested. The assessor will ensure that the actual conversations are as natural as possible while incorporating the key structures.

The key phrases are sample phrases and you will be expected to know closely related words or phrases. In Conversation 1, for example, we have “Tha i brèagha an-diugh” but you might also be expected to use “fuar” and “fliuch”.

In order to move from one conversation to the next, it is necessary for you to be able to understand and use 50%, or 10 out of 20, of the key structures / phrases. The assessor will ensure that the key phrases are included in your conversation and his / her assistant will keep a note of your progress on the assessment sheet. The assessment would normally take up to 15 minutes, but may take longer.

An important point: It is important to note that you will not be asked to do all the conversations at each level. The assessor will soon know, as he / she speaks to you, what level you are comfortable with, and usually you will do just one conversation for each level, that is, levels 1, 2 and 3, three conversations in total. It will be necessary for you to get at least 50% in these conversations to achieve the Bronze Card.

At the end of the assessment the assessor will let you know at what level you are. For example, if you get 50% in the conversations for level 1 but only 40% at level 2, he / she will let you know that and the work you will require to do before coming back to try again.

The Silver Card: For the Silver Card there are 4 levels, that is, levels 4-7, and 16 sample conversations. In the conversations, the key structures you are expected to know are underlined. In the assessment itself you will be expected to do just any **4 of the 16 conversations**, that is, one for each level. The same procedure is followed for the Silver Card as for the Bronze except that it is necessary to achieve 60%, or 12 out of 20 phrases, in each conversation before moving on to the next. It will be necessary for you to get at least 60% in each of the 4 conversations to achieve the Silver Card. The assessment would normally take up to 20 minutes.

At this level, in order to cover the key structures appropriately, the conversation will likely take the form 1) of a short role play where you take the part of a character or you might be 2) given a topic to discuss, for example, holidays, pastimes, likes and dislikes. The role play will be explained to you

carefully before the actual assessment starts. During the role play, the assessor will make sure the key structures are included.

The Gold Card: For the Gold Card the assessor might, as a preliminary, start with the formal Level 8 sample conversation before moving on to have a normal conversation with you. To achieve the Gold Card, you are expected to be fluent, that is, to talk about any normal everyday subject. But, critically, as a singer, you should be able to confidently conduct an interview with the media and discuss the songs you are singing.

If you are a Gaelic learner, or an out of practice Gaelic speaker, it would probably be advisable to try for the Silver Card first. On the other hand, if you consider yourself an obviously fluent Gaelic speaker, either because you learnt Gaelic to a fluent level or were brought up with the language, you could go straight for the Gold Card. The assessor will advise on the day of the assessment which category you are in.