



Course Report 2016

Subject	Classical Studies
Level	Advanced Higher

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. It 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.

Section 1: Comments on the assessment

Summary of the Course assessment

Component 1: Question paper

The question paper performed as expected.

Component 2: Project: dissertation

The project: dissertation performed as expected. As a result, the Grade Boundaries were set at the notional boundaries for A, B and C grades.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Candidates performed well in the sections about Individual and Community, Heroes and Heroism and Comedy, Satire and Society.

Questions that required comparison between two or more classical sources were completed with the most assurance by candidates.

Component 2: Project: dissertation

Candidates performed well in all types of topics, although those candidates who had a clearly defined objective, a wide range of different source material to draw on, and a subject that was sufficiently ambitious for Advanced Higher level, tended to gain higher marks.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Candidates found the History and Historiography topic most demanding.

Most candidates also found the questions looking for comparison of classical sources with modern ideas very demanding.

Component 2: Project: dissertation

Candidates found it difficult to gain high marks when their work was reliant on one or two secondary sources: writing a piece of work which too closely retraces arguments in other writers' work is unlikely to access all the marks on offer.

Some candidates also had difficulty gaining high marks because they seemed unsure about how many marks were allocated for each of the skills.

Candidates particularly seemed to mix up evaluating the ongoing significance of the classical world and comparing the classical and modern worlds. For example, (a simple example, for the sake of clarity):

Comparison

Roman engineers used arches in buildings and in bridging and aqueducts to span gaps over land or rivers; and in the modern world arches are used to do the same thing.

Evaluating the ongoing significance

Roman engineers used archways to construct aqueducts as these were stronger than flat cross beams. This innovation was taken on and developed in later times to enable the construction of grand cathedrals in the high middle ages.

It should be evident from these examples how 'Comparison' can be used to introduce 'Evaluating the ongoing significance'.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

Teachers and lecturers must make sure that candidates have read all of the prescribed text.

Teachers and lecturers should pay close attention to the way in which marks are allocated for different types of question, and ensure that this is passed on to candidates very clearly.

For the questions in which candidates must compare classical sources with modern views, candidates must identify the modern views that are being asked about in the question and then show how these are reflected in the sources they have read.

Candidates should be reminded that pre-prepared responses are unlikely to produce good marks.

Candidates must be advised that the questions in the Classical Literature sections are not mini-essays on a topic. Answers must be specific to the question: this is why it is essential that candidates know all of the prescribed text adequately.

For the Evaluate and Analyse questions in the Classical Literature sections it is expected that candidates will derive approximately half the marks on offer from analysis or evaluation of the passage in the paper. Answers that make little or no reference to the extracts are unlikely to achieve pass marks.

Component 2: Project: dissertation

Teachers and lecturers must make sure they are very familiar with how marks are allocated in the published general marking instructions, and ensure that candidates are constructing work that is responding to this.

Candidates should be reminded that a piece of work which retraces a few pages of argument from the work of a modern scholar may not meet the requirements of the project: dissertation and is unlikely to access all the marks on offer.

Candidates must quote and directly reference most of their source material in their argument: their use of sources is a skill which is being assessed.

Candidates should also be reminded that referring to a source is not the same as using it. To use it candidates must show *why/how* it tells us what they claim it does.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	0
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	67
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark -				
A	65.7%	65.7%	44	105
B	19.4%	85.1%	13	90
C	4.5%	89.6%	3	75
D	1.5%	91.0%	1	67
No award	9.0%	-	6	0

General commentary on grade boundaries

- ◆ While SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional A boundary), it is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.
- ◆ Each year, SQA therefore holds a grade boundary meeting for each subject at each level where it brings together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of the management team at SQA.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.
- ◆ An exam paper at a particular level in a subject in one year tends to have a marginally different set of grade boundaries from exam papers in that subject at that level in other years. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. If SQA has already altered a boundary in a particular year in, say, Higher Chemistry, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not that closely related, as they do not contain identical questions.
- ◆ SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.