

Principal Assessor Report 2002

Assessment Panel:

Classical Studies

Qualification area

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
included in this report**

Classical Studies – Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2001	
Pre appeal	
Post appeal	577

Number of entries in 2002	
Pre appeal	517
Post appeal	

General comments

Fewer candidates are being presented at inappropriate levels.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

A	70%
B	60%
C	50%

General commentary on grade boundaries

Notional percentage cut-offs for each grade

Question papers and their associated marking schemes are designed to be of the required standard and to meet the assessment specification for the subject/level concerned.

For National courses the examination paper(s) are set in order that a score of approximately 50% of the total marks for all components merits a grade C (based on the grade descriptions for that grade), and similarly a score of 70 % for a grade A. The lowest mark for a grade B is set by the computer software as half way between the C and A grade boundaries.

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

As for previous years.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The standard of candidate performance was fair. Marks are boosted by excellent answers in the drama section but there is evidence that some pupils tackle questions for which they are ill-prepared in the other sections of the paper.

The main weaknesses are the inability to adapt the knowledge to the questions, the tendency to describe rather than analyse and the inability to compare.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Drama, especially Questions 2 and 3 on “Antigone” and “Medea”. There were some excellent answers which showed knowledge of the plays and maturity on the part of the candidates to deal with the issues involved.

Paper 1: Question 5
Question 9

Paper 2: Power and Freedom Question 1
Religion and Belief Question 3

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Paper 1: Question 7 on slavery
Question 11 on oracles and prophecy

In Question 7, candidates tended to slant the question to the descriptive rather than the analytical.

In Question 11, candidates simply talked about oracles in Rome and then Greece without evidence of comparison; some confused the two.

Paper 2: Power and Freedom Question 3(c)
Candidates wrote about women in general.

Religion and Belief Question 5(c)
Candidates wrote about religion, not temples.

Areas of common misunderstanding

Paper 2: Power and Freedom Question 3(c)

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

- ◆ Candidates should relate their responses to what is asked in the question and not simply produce all the knowledge they have on the topic without considering its relevance to the question.
- ◆ Candidates should take time to choose the questions which would best show their knowledge of the subject.
- ◆ Candidates should practise questions involving comparison and clearly distinguish between Greek and Roman.
- ◆ In drama, candidates should know the names of the characters; also they must not simply re-tell the plot but use relevant elements of the plot to answer the question set.
- ◆ Candidates should not prepare answers in advance.