



External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Classical Greek
Level(s)	Intermediate 2 and Higher

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers/lecturers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. 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 question papers and marking instructions for the examination.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

Intermediate 2

The candidates' performance in both elements was overall satisfactory, though this year they performed better in the Translation element than in the Interpretation. While there was good knowledge of parts of the Prescribed Text, there was some evidence that other parts were less well known.

Higher Interpretation

There were some very good performances in this paper, with a similar range of marks over the Verse and the Prose sections. It was clear that candidates had a good understanding of the texts, though in some cases exam technique was lacking in detailed referencing to the texts.

Higher Translation

Most performances in this element were good, but some contained basic errors of verb and noun translation which marred the overall accuracy of the translation.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Intermediate 2 Interpretation

Question 6: Some candidates produced good extended answers, demonstrating that they had good knowledge of the characters of Odysseus and of the Cyclops, and were able to use their knowledge of 'film structure' to answer well. It was clear that they were well engaged with the issues of the texts.

Intermediate 2 Translation

It was clear that some candidates had a good command of English idiom which allowed them to reflect the original with a high standard of accuracy.

Higher Interpretation

There was good mastery of the Verse text (Homer), and in the basic knowledge of the Plato text.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Intermediate 2 Interpretation

There was some evidence that candidates lacked detailed knowledge of the text. This resulted in answers that were too short to gain the full marks, or were too vague to score highly.

Intermediate 2 Translation

The overall performance in Translation was very good, with some candidates translating with good English idiom, which demonstrated a clear understanding of the original. There was evidence of some difficulty in translating parts where a greater demand was placed on accuracy of smaller details, such as superlatives.

Higher Interpretation

There were no areas which the candidates seemed to find excessively demanding, though some of the Homer essays were short on detailed analysis of Odysseus' character. The Plato extended response required a good understanding of the relevance of the text to modern political and non-political life, which candidates did not reference as effectively as they could have.

Higher Translation, Question 2: Plato

The passage was, in parts, demanding, both in terms of sentence structure and in terms of its underlying logic, though it is expected that candidates who choose this passage should have as wide an experience as possible in translating Plato. The demands of this type of translation are no greater than in Question 1, but particular idioms and issues need to be taken into account.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Interpretation

In this element, the key factor is a commanding and detailed knowledge of the texts. Candidates are required to support their views with references to the texts, and to offer some comments on the reason why these references apply to the question. Centres should be encouraged to study the texts with this end in mind, and to give candidates adequate practice in writing such responses. This is of particular importance in the extended responses.

Translation

Centres and candidates should ensure that they have good knowledge of the forms of the verb, especially participles and pronouns. Candidates who opt for the Plato translation should be prepared to produce a translation which will demonstrate that the logic of the passage has been followed. Help is always available in this area from the connecting English introductions, and candidates should pay close attention to the particular requirements of translating Plato: namely, the use of verbs, the use of the article plus a participle, and the idioms employed in dialogue.

Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	2
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	10
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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 - 60				
A	80.0%	80.0%	8	42
B	10.0%	90.0%	1	36
C	10.0%	100.0%	1	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

Higher

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	14
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Number of resulted entries in 2015	4
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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 -150				
A	100.0%	100.0%	4	105
B	0.0%	100.0%	0	90
C	0.0%	100.0%	0	75
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	67
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

Intermediate 2 and Higher

The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

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.