



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Classical Studies
Level(s)	Intermediate 1 and 2, 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 1

Results at this level have been improving every year. Candidates clearly enjoy the course, especially the Classical Mythology and the Drama. Breaking down marks for questions from 4 or 5 to 2 and 1 has made a big difference to performance. Candidates have the knowledge and shorter answers suit them better.

Intermediate 2

Performance was very good in all sections of the paper. Many candidates achieved full marks in the essay questions in Section B. It is encouraging to see some new centres entering candidates very successfully.

Higher

The results were excellent this year with 81% of the candidates passing the exam and 36% achieving an A grade. Essay writing skills are much improved.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Intermediate 1

Candidates, as always, answered well in the Classical Drama section. However, this year they were answering well in all sections. In the past, Roman Archaeology and Civilisation has proved difficult but once again breaking down questions has allowed candidates to show their knowledge without having to write long answers.

Intermediate 2

Candidates performed well in all sections. In Section B, essays were well-structured and often gained full marks.

Higher

Drama questions are always well answered, especially Section 2 Questions 1 and 2 on 'Antigone' and 'Medea', but this year many candidates chose to answer Question 4 on two plays, and this they did very successfully.

In Section 2, Power and Freedom, Question 6 on how to achieve political success and Question 8 on slavery were the most popular and achieved the best marks. Questions 10 and 12 in the Religion and Belief section proved most popular, and the performance of candidates was very good.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Intermediate 1 and 2

No questions here posed problems for the candidates. They are obviously being well prepared for the exams.

Higher

Candidates had difficulty in Section 1 with Question 4 on Pompey and Caesar, and Question 6 on Augustus, the provinces in the Power and Freedom area; and with Question 5 on Mithraism and Question 6 on emperor worship in Religion and Belief.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Results at all levels are very encouraging, and the uptake of Classical Studies in new centres bodes well for the future.

Reference to marking instructions is making a difference to results as each year they are improving. Essay skills are also improving. However, some candidates are wasting time by writing a paragraph on what they intend to say in the essay; this is unnecessary. Some are writing out the question which is using up valuable time and is also unnecessary.

There are still candidates whose writing is very difficult to read, and they are often able candidates; so it is important to ensure they receive the extra time/support necessary and encouragement to write clearly.

Statistical information: update on Courses - Higher

Number of resulted entries in 2013	348
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	403
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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 200				
A	36.2%	36.2%	146	70
B	22.6%	58.8%	91	60
C	23.1%	81.9%	93	50
D	4.2%	86.1%	17	45
No award	13.9%	-	56	-

Intermediate 2

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	122
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	103
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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	63.1%	63.1%	65	52
B	16.5%	79.6%	17	44
C	9.7%	89.3%	10	37
D	1.0%	90.3%	1	33
No award	9.7%	-	10	-

Intermediate 1

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	23
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	11
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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	27.3%	27.3%	3	35
B	36.4%	63.6%	4	30
C	9.1%	72.7%	1	25
D	0.0%	72.7%	0	22
No award	27.3%	-	3	-

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.