



External Assessment Report 2011

Subject	Classical Greek
Level	Intermediate 2 and Higher

The statistics used in this report are pre-appeal.

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

At Intermediate 2, performances generally were of a good standard, with some very good Translations. In Interpretation, there was clear evidence that candidates had a very good knowledge and understanding of the Prescribed Text and were able to handle the information with confidence and skill. At Higher, Interpretation was generally well done, with Translation done well or very well. There were some good responses in individual Interpretation questions.

Areas in which candidates performed well

In Interpretation, at Intermediate 2, most candidates included full and frequent references from the texts to support their answers. They were able to justify their opinions fully. At Higher level, there were some good essays in the Thucydides section. In the Higher Translation, candidates performed well or very well: there were some excellent translations which were nearly faultless.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Nearly all candidates experienced some difficulty with the final sentence of the Intermediate 2 Translation passage. However, with careful thought about the use of verbs, this difficulty might have been overcome.

At Higher, in Interpretation:

Section A, question 2 (c) challenged several candidates: scansion is an important aspect of the verse prescription, and candidates should be given sufficient practice in this.

Section C, question 2 (c) proved demanding: passage 4 of the Prescribed Text is a demanding passage, and candidates were often not able to show with sufficient precision the points which the speaker was making.

At Higher in Translation, aspects of lines 3–7 proved demanding, especially line 4 and line 6. Care in identifying the exact grammar of these lines might have improved the translation.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

General

At Intermediate level, in Interpretation candidates should try to cover more than one text in the extended response question. It is unlikely that the question can be fully addressed if only a small section of the Prescribed Text is referred to. Candidates should also make it clear to what part of the text or to what incident they are referring. Specific references from the texts should be used to support points and opinions.

In Translation, at Intermediate level, candidates should give careful attention to producing acceptable English, including connectives which allow the sentence to flow more smoothly. Centres should ensure that candidates have a good understanding of tenses, cases and number and are able to handle competently subordinate clauses, especially the Genitive Absolute.

At Higher level, in Interpretation, candidates should ensure that, in the extended responses, points made should be supported by references from the texts. Similarly, if in other questions the wording states 'Refer to the text to justify your answer', candidates must support points with references. Generalised statements of the facts are unlikely to be adequate.

In Translation, candidates should use the word-list with great care: centres should ensure that candidates are familiar with the differences between αὐτός and οὗτος, so that confusion between these two words is minimised.

Statistical information: Update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2010	12
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	7
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Higher

Number of resulted entries in 2010	5
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Number of resulted entries in 2011	9
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Statistical information: Performance of candidates

Intermediate 2: Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 60				
A	85.7%	85.7%	6	42
B	14.3%	100.0%	1	36
C	0.0%	100.0%	0	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
No award	0.0%	100.0%	0	-

Higher: Distribution of Course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of Course awards	%	Cum. %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum Mark 150				
A	77.8%	77.8%	7	105
B	22.2%	100.0%	2	90
C	0.0%	100.0%	0	75
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	67
No award	0.0%	100.0%	0	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions that 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, though, very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level.

Each year, therefore, SQA 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 Head of Service 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.