



## External Assessment Report 2009

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<b>Subject</b>	Latin
<b>Level</b>	Intermediate 2

**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

Most candidates were clearly well prepared and gave thoughtful answers, and they demonstrated that they could express themselves in good English. There was strong evidence in the Interpretation paper that the candidates had really enjoyed studying the prescribed texts. It is pleasing to report that several candidates achieved full marks for the Interpretation paper. Unfortunately however, a small number did fail this paper with very low marks. These candidates might have benefited from being presented for Intermediate 1.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### *Interpretation:*

Questions on Virgil were better done than the Cicero questions. Candidates wrote quality answers on the characters at the entrance to the Underworld (question 4) and they showed impressive knowledge of the Aeneas/Dido episode (question 6).

Where Latin was quoted by the candidate, it was generally well done and was accurate and relevant.

### *Translation:*

Candidates coped well with the tricky twists in the Cacus story and all got the idea of how Hercules managed to confuse Cacus. There is evidence this year that candidates can handle the active and passive voices better.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### *Interpretation:*

Discussion on Cicero's choice of words (question 1(a)) proved challenging. The question on the Orcus myth (question 2) was also not well done, as candidates merely retold the myth, rather than showing how it fitted with Verres' crimes. Some omitted to consider how Cicero made his narrative "vivid" (question 3) and instead retold the story.

### *Translation:*

Some weaker candidates failed to follow the rules of construction and syntax and, if they had not done so, they would have found tricky questions less tricky, e.g. "quiete" was translated as a verb; "pulchritudine" was not recognised as ablative singular; "a Caco" was translated as "of Cacus". Some failed to spot neuter plurals.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

- Consider presenting less able candidates for Intermediate 1
- The correct use of the word list needs to be emphasised.
- In the Interpretation questions, candidates need to restrict themselves to the correct lines and to read questions more closely.
- Also in the Interpretation paper, candidates should avoid quoting Latin without showing **any** knowledge of what it means.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2008	102
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Number of resulted entries in 2009	107
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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	77.6%	77.6%	83	42
B	14.0%	91.6%	15	36
C	4.7%	96.3%	5	30
D	2.8%	99.1%	3	27
No award	0.9%	100.0%	1	-

### 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 all the available information is brought together (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 Higher Chemistry for example, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter boundaries in their prelim exam in Higher Chemistry. The two are not particularly closely related as they do not contain identical questions.
- SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels, and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.