External Assessment Report 2015

Subject	Latin
Level	Higher

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The Interpretation paper was generally well done. Candidates knew the texts well and could express their knowledge well and fully in the vast majority of cases.

There were no questions that gave rise to concern. Time management was good this year.

In the Translation paper, the overall standard was very encouraging indeed, with all the candidates following the string of narrative and most gaining over half marks.

Candidates have clearly been trained in effective and careful application of the word-list.

There was a very good standard of literacy, for example in use of punctuation, fluent phraseology and articulate expression.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Interpretation

♦ Virgil Q2(a) asked candidates to discuss the effectiveness of the similes, and this was well done.
♦ Virgil Q2(c) contained the scansion questions and, this year, these were particularly well done.
♦ Virgil Q5(b) in an extended response, asked for discussion on Virgil's poetic skills, which elicited some very pleasing and considered answers.
♦ Plautus Q1 was well done, with most candidates offering an excellent summary of sixty-seven lines of text.
♦ Plautus Q3, about Daemones' strange dream, produced some excellent and thoughtful responses.
♦ All candidates showed that they understood the narrative, by referring to all three women in response to Plautus Q4, and they all understood the "shell" joke in Plautus Q5.
♦ The two Plautus extended response questions, 6(a) and 6(b), were equally popular. Candidates answered in full, well-considered responses, with plenty of relevant references to the text. More candidates than usual got full marks for these questions.
♦ Cicero Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q5(b) were all very well done, with confident candidates eager to display their knowledge of the text and to share their views and opinions.

Translation

All candidates finished within time, and all sections were completed. The meanings listed in the word-list, quite specific to the narrative of the passage, encouraged candidates to follow the sense.

Candidates were able to translate the essential idea satisfactorily in most instances.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Interpretation

♦ In response to Virgil Q1, some candidates muddled the death of Misenus with the death of Palinurus.

♦ In Virgil Q2(b), there was confusion over the content of the specific lines, and candidates tended to stray beyond the specified lines in their responses.

♦ Virgil Q3 asked candidates to discuss the various reactions of Charon, but most candidates failed to discuss more than one of his reactions, which was mainly 'angry'.

♦ In Virgil Q4(a), some candidates strayed outside the lines and discussed an earlier passage instead.

♦ In Virgil 5(a), one of the extended response questions, some candidates failed to consider a **range** of sources of help which Aeneas received, and instead they discussed only help from the Sibyl.

♦ Plautus Q2 asked candidates to consider ways the writer created humour. Most were good at identifying examples, but weaker at explaining **why** the examples were meant to be funny.

Translation

♦ In Block 2d, there were problems with *quae,* as it needed to be included as the connecting pronoun for the three marks.

♦ In Block 4b, some candidates failed to include both descriptors of Sassia ie that she was a shocking woman **and** that she was the mother of Habitus.

♦ In Block 5c, some failed to attribute *haec* to *mulier*.

♦ Candidates showed a lack of confidence in identifying the role of case endings in Block 6b, failing to see *ceteros* as accusative plural and that *ignaros* was agreeing with it. Block 6 caused the most confusion overall.

♦ In Block 7a, the imperfect subjunctive *essent* was not well handled.

♦ Throughout the passage, candidates failed to put the correct form of names in their versions eg *Habitum*, *Cluentiam*, *Melino*.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Interpretation

♦ Candidates need to be familiar with the specific details within the lines of the texts, not just the general plot.

♦ They should ensure their responses match the value of the question and restrict their responses to the specified lines.

♦ They should be prepared to answer questions on the author's use of language and be able to discuss its effectiveness in a meaningful way.

Translation

♦ Candidates should consult the word-list for the correct forms of proper names.

- They should be familiar with the various forms of *esse*.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	258

Number of resulted entries in 2015	90

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	74.4%	74.4%	67	105
B	16.7%	91.1%	15	90
C	6.7%	97.8%	6	75
D	0.0%	97.8%	0	67
No award	2.2%	-	2	-

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.