



External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Latin
Level(s)	Intermediate 1

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

The seven candidates all performed well and answered the questions with maturity, lucidly and some wrote extensively (possibly too extensively at times). They coped equally well with the Interpretation paper and the Translation paper.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Interpretation

Cicero

Q1, about the attack on the temple of Hercules, was well answered and Q1(b) elicited answers weighing up different sides of an argument, which showed independent thinking and good analysis. Q2(b), on Verres' wicked behaviour, also encouraged candidates to give a variety of answers, all valid. Q3(b), on the treatment of Sopater, was also well done.

Catullus

The candidates were clear about the main themes and were keen to discuss Catullus' love affair at some length and with some personal comment, which was pleasing to read: eg Q5 about feeling sorry for Catullus, Q6 about Lesbia's life in the future without Catullus, and Q7 about the relationship break-up.

Ovid

Q8(a), about the making of the wings, was well done, with candidates showing good understanding of the text. Candidates also wrote well in response to Q8(b)(i), on the father/son relationship.

Translation

Candidates coped well with the passage, an animal fable about a flea, a lion and a spider, although some parts might have been tricky. They correctly translated the comparative *robustior* in line 4, and the superlative *fortissimo* in line 13.

They also had no problem with the two sets of direct speech, in lines 2 – 5 and in lines 11 – 13. They accurately translated the first and second person singular verbs: *timeo*, *potes*, *possum*, *sum*, *poteram*.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Interpretation

Cicero

There were no questions which the candidates found demanding.

Catullus

Some candidates were confused over the content of some of the poems. Some did not know what the theme of Poem 5 was (Q4) and, as a result, got it muddled with another poem, which they then discussed. This got them no marks.

Ovid

No-one produced the correct answer to Q8(b)(ii), which asked for a specific reference to the text, indicating that candidates were vague about the specific details in the text.

Translation

Candidates had problems translating the tenses of verbs accurately. Present tenses were not well done: *est* line 7, *habet* line 7, *despiciunt* line 12, *consumit* line 12. The pluperfect *exstiterat* line 9 was not correctly translated. Although candidates did not lose a mark for failing to spot the imperfect tense, very few translated *festinabat* line 9 correctly.

Because *illam* line 6 appeared in the word-list as ‘that; he, she, it’, nobody got it correct.

Although candidates spotted the superlative *fortissimo* in line 13, they failed to recognise the genitive plural *omnium bestiarum* which followed it, and so were not able to translate the whole phrase accurately.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Interpretation

Candidates need to be familiar with the general themes of the texts and also the specific details within the lines of the texts.

They should ensure their responses match the value of the question.

Translation

Candidates should take care in handling the different tenses accurately. Although the present tense is not common in narrative passages, it nevertheless does appear in direct speech and in other contexts, and so candidates are expected to be able to translate it correctly.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	5
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Number of resulted entries in 2014	7
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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	100.0%	100.0%	7	42
B	0.0%	100.0%	0	36
C	0.0%	100.0%	0	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

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.