



## External Assessment Report 2014

Subject(s)	Latin
Level(s)	Intermediate 2

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

### Interpretation

Candidates were well prepared and showed sound knowledge of the texts. They performed slightly better when answering the questions on Virgil, compared to those on Cicero. There were no particularly poor performances. All candidates finished within the allotted time, and the standard of English was good.

### Translation

Candidates, almost without exception, managed to produce a good translation. However, although it was not a difficult passage, candidates did make mistakes with tenses and sometimes translated what they thought the story should be. This meant there were fewer very good responses this year.

## Areas in which candidates performed well

### Interpretation

Q1 in the Cicero section invited candidates to weigh up both sides of an argument, about how well planned the theft of the statue was, and responses were very good. Candidates also restricted their answers to the specific lines, as they were asked to do, which was pleasing.

Q7 in the Virgil section (on Dido's speech) was well done. Candidates found plenty to say and were enthusiastic about sharing their views. They wrote extensively, displaying a range of opinions, and most got the full four marks.

### Translation

Most candidates wrote a polished translation, with good English expression. They completed the passage in good time and some found time to re-draft their response, which was pleasing to see.

Most managed to handle the ablative of time *illo die* correctly in line 10, and the accusative and infinitive construction *intellexit militem versipellem esse* in lines 14–15.

## Areas which candidates found demanding

### Interpretation

Q3 on the Cicero English text, Passage 2, was not particularly well done. There was confusion over the characters, events and the myth referred to at this part of the narrative. Very few responses to Q2(b) got the full two marks.

Q4(b) asked for detailed knowledge about specific lines in the Cicero text, which some candidates did not provide.

Q5 required discussion on whether Virgil succeeded in creating a dark and gloomy picture of the Underworld. Some candidates did not stay focused on the **dark and gloomy** aspect of the question and simply discussed the lines in general terms.

Q8 asked candidates to discuss Dido's reaction to Aeneas. Responses were very mixed, with some writing about Aeneas' reaction to Dido instead.

### Translation

- ◆ Candidates did not always translate tenses correctly. There were problems with the imperfect *stabat* in line 4, *iacebat* in line 14 and *curabat* in line 14. When presented with the pluperfect *oppugnauerat* in line 11 and *traiecerat* in line 12, very few candidates could translate them both correctly.
- ◆ The accusative and infinitive *vidit eum omnia vestimenta exuere* in lines 5 – 6 caused confusion.
- ◆ *ut* in line 7 was often translated as 'and', which changed the meaning completely.
- ◆ *stelas* in line 5 was often translated as singular
- ◆ In lines 9 -10, some candidates did not understand that it was the girlfriend who told the amazing story.
- ◆ Some candidates got confused, because they did not refer to the word-list accurately. *cuidam* and *coepit* were muddled up, as were *domum* and *dominum*.

## Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

### Interpretation

Candidates should ensure that they know the English sections of the Prescribed Texts thoroughly.

They should also revise the Latin texts more closely, so that they can answer questions on the detail of specific lines.

They should stay focused on what the question actually asks.

If they include Latin references in their answers, they need to show that they understand what the Latin means, with either a paraphrase or translation of the Latin. Latin references on their own normally do not gain marks.

### Translation

Candidates need to pay particular attention to tenses and be able to translate them accurately.

They should also be able to distinguish between singular and plural nouns, especially in the nominative and accusative cases.

Care needs to be taken when using the word-list, to avoid looking up the wrong word by mistake.

## Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2013	156
Number of resulted entries in 2014	105

## 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	93.3%	93.3%	98	42
B	4.8%	98.1%	5	36
C	1.9%	100.0%	2	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.