



External Assessment Report 2012

Subject(s)	Latin
Level(s)	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

There continues to be many scripts of a high standard, and all candidates finished the papers in the allotted time. In the Interpretation paper, answers to the same questions varied from succinct to extended. Once again, the Virgil questions were slightly better answered than the Cicero ones.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Interpretation

Cicero: Question 1 (a) and (b) (i) tested the candidates' knowledge on the events leading up to the failed attempt to steal a statue, and almost all candidates showed they knew the narrative well.

Virgil: In response to question 4 about the creatures at the entrance to the Underworld, candidates produced some very imaginative responses, and most gained full marks for this question. Question 6, about Aeneas' defence against Dido's accusations, was also well done, and most answers contained detailed analysis.

Translation

Most candidates performed very well. They managed their time properly and some had time for re-drafting. There was an improvement this year in identifying singular and plural nouns correctly.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Interpretation

Cicero: Some guessed at the answer for question 1(b) (ii), while others did not understand the pun about Verres's names (question 1(c)). In question 2, some candidates answered beyond the line references (which can gain no marks), and most candidates thought that the statue of Ceres was stolen, which was not the case. In question 3, although the candidates were asked to consider how Sopater was treated, some shifted the focus in their answers and instead wrote about the statue of Metellus, which cost them marks.

Virgil: The question on the simile at the river bank (question 5(b)) was not well done, resulting in some muddled answers.

Translation

There was some confusion of vocabulary between *posse* and *portare*, and between *consisto* and *constituo*. Some candidates failed to spot *tergum* as a noun, meaning 'back', and instead translated it as 'going back'. Occasionally *eum* was omitted, presumably because the candidates did not know this pronoun came from *is, ea, id*. In line 3, *omnes Siculi* was

sometimes translated as 'all of Sicily'. A few candidates thought Arion was a girl, despite the word-list giving 'Arion (a man)'. The sentence which caused the biggest problems was in lines 1 and 2: *aquas carminibus tranquillare poterat*.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Interpretation

- ◆ Candidates should restrict their answers to the specific line references.
- ◆ They should match the length of their responses to the number of marks available.
- ◆ They should be prepared to answer 'language style' questions on 'mainstream' techniques, eg the simile.

Translation

- ◆ Candidates should check the word-list carefully, to avoid confusion over similar-looking words.
- ◆ They should be careful over unfamiliar personal names to ensure they get the correct gender.
- ◆ They should continue to check singulars and plurals.
- ◆ They should check for inconsistencies once they get to the end of the passage. (Some started out correctly referring to 'sailors' and then changed to 'sailor').

Statistical information: update on Courses

Intermediate 2

Number of resulted entries in 2011	123
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Number of resulted entries in 2012	139
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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	96.4%	96.4%	134	42
B	2.9%	99.3%	4	36
C	0.7%	100.0%	1	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
No award	0.0%	100.0%	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.