

Principal Assessor Report 2003

Assessment Panel:

Latin and Classical Greek

Qualification area:

**Subject(s) and Level(s)
Included in this report**

Latin Advanced Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2002	52
Pre appeal	

Number of entries in 2003	35
Pre appeal	

General comments re entry numbers

The fall in numbers is particularly disappointing considering the steady rise over the last 10 years or so but is possibly a result of so many department closures.

Grade boundaries at C, B and A for each subject area included in the report

A	70%
B	60%
C	50%

General commentary on passmarks and grade boundaries

- While SQA aims to set examinations and create mark schemes which will allow a competent candidate to score a minimum 50% of the available marks (notional passmark) and a very well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70%, it is almost impossible to get the standard absolutely on target every year, in every subject and level
- Each year we therefore hold a passmark meeting for each subject at each level where we bring together all the information available (statistical and judgmental). 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 senior management team at SQA
- We adjust the passmark downwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly more demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- We adjust the passmark upwards if there is evidence that we have set a slightly less demanding exam than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance
- Where the standard appears to be very similar to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries
- 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 are different. This is also the case for exams set in centres. And just because SQA has altered a boundary in a particular year in say Higher Chemistry 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
- Our main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain standards across the years, even as syllabuses evolve and change

Comments on grade boundaries for each subject area

Grade boundaries were set at *a priori* levels.

Comments on candidate performance

General comments

The candidates performed very well on the whole with most achieving at least a B; there were 6 in the upper A bracket. Only 2 failed to achieve level C. Most candidates were able to do well in at least one of the three sections of assessment.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Interpretation

Section A Of the 6 candidates who chose this section most performed very well indeed, tackling all questions with relish and considerable competence.

Section B The candidates who chose this section performed very well indeed where preparation had been thorough. Most candidates were able to tackle the whole paper this year though some did fail to finish.

Translation

The candidates found this paper more challenging than the Interpretation paper. Performance was better in the Virgil than in the Livy.

Dissertations

Some of these were masterly. All candidates made a very reasonable attempt.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Interpretation

Questions involving 'tone' caused more widespread difficulty.

Translation

There were some problems, as ever, due to poor use of dictionary but some real carelessness, eg too many candidates thought that Romulus = Romanus or Rome. Participles and adjectival agreement continued to give problems. Passives were often ignored.

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Interpretation Teachers could emphasise to candidates the need to be concise and that bullet points are acceptable.

Translation Every opportunity must be taken to ensure that candidates do not look up a word and take the first meaning they see but that they check all the information such as gender of nouns, to help ensure they have the right word in the first place.

Dissertations Candidates need to be reminded that their work should be a discussion of their topic throughout. In particular, comparison should be used as it arises, not added in as an appendage, and only as appropriate.