

Principal Assessor Report 2004

Assessment Panel:

Latin and Classical Greek

Qualification area

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

Latin – Intermediate 1, Intermediate 2 and Higher

Statistical information: update

Number of entries in 2003	Int 1	Int2	Higher
	4	31	283

Number of entries in 2004	Int 1	Int2	Higher
	1	93	244

General comments re entry numbers

Intermediate 1 continues to attract very few candidates, but numbers continue to rise at Intermediate 2, as some centres cease to offer Standard Grade at S3/4. Numbers at Higher show a slight decrease, reflecting closure of departments in some centres. However, there is only a small decline given that 2003 showed a slight increase over previous years.

Statistical Information: Performance of candidates

Distribution of awards

There was a very good performance at Intermediate 2, with approximately 80% of candidates achieving either Upper A or A award.

Comments on any significant changes in percentages or distribution of awards

Performance at Higher was markedly poorer than last year. However, it was noted that last year's results were very strong indeed.

Grade boundaries for each subject area included in the report

Higher

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	37.3	37.3	91	105
B	19.7	57.0	48	90
C	20.5	77.5	50	75
D	9.0	86.5	22	67
No award	13.5	100.0	33	0

Intermediate 1

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	-	-	-	42
B	100.0	100.0	1	36
C	-	-	-	30
D	-	-	-	27
No award	-	-	-	0

Intermediate 2

Distribution of awards	%	Cum %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
A	80.6	80.6	75	42
B	8.6	89.2	8	36
C	7.5	96.8	7	30
D	1.1	97.8	1	27
No award	2.2	100.0	2	0

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 candidate performance

General comments

Performance at Intermediate 2 was very good indeed. Performance at Higher was less good than last year.

While there were some excellent candidates at Higher Grade, there were fewer awards at Upper A and A than in previous years. There were also some very poor candidates.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates performed well

Intermediate 2: Candidates performed well in both Interpretation and Translation, although Translation was better done than Interpretation, perhaps suggesting lack of preparation.

Translation: lines 10-16 were well done.

Interpretation: Cicero questions were better done than Virgil. This may reflect more complex, adult issues in Virgil.

Higher:

Interpretation: Virgil Q. 1 (a-c); Q. 2(c); Q. 3(a)

Plautus Q. 1; Q. 4(b)

Cicero Q. 1(a); Q. 3(b)

There were some good answers to the Virgil essay question on myths, magic and monsters.

Translation: The last paragraph was well handled by the majority of candidates.

Areas of external assessment in which candidates had difficulty

Intermediate 2:

Interpretation: Q. 6(b), the simile question, was poorly done.

Translation:

the superlative “pulcherrimam” not recognised

“ipse” ignored

“in matrimonium duxit” usually translated literally

“quare hoc fecisset” - “why this has been done”

“hoc signo” - ablative not recognised

Higher:

Interpretation: As usual, the 10 mark questions were often poorly done and low marks gained in this part of the paper can have a significant effect on the final grade.

Candidates must read the questions carefully and structure their answers accordingly. Too many are still using stock answers which do not adequately address the question. Candidates should not rely on “one answer fits all”. In some cases scansion caused problems. Candidates in one centre had clearly not been taught it at all.

Translation: candidates failed to recognise imperfect tense

“ridens...inquit” - “he laughed...he said”

“vento” construed as subject

plurals unrecognised

“-ne” not recognised
“eadem” misconstrued (also “idem”)
“quo Gelo ornaverat”
99% missed “ei”
“father of Apollo”

Recommendations

Feedback to centres

Interpretation

Concentrate on essay questions. Stress to candidates that they must take account of the questions asked and refer to the question in their answer. If the question has different parts, then answer all parts, and refer to all passages mentioned in the question. Back up arguments with relevant references to the text.

Translation

Ensure candidates recognise pronouns, participles and singular/plural.