



Course report 2023

Higher Latin

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022: 230

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 215

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

A	Number of candidates	196	Percentage	91.2	Cumulative percentage	91.2	Minimum mark required	91
B	Number of candidates	9	Percentage	4.2	Cumulative percentage	95.3	Minimum mark required	78
C	Number of candidates	3	Percentage	1.4	Cumulative percentage	96.7	Minimum mark required	65
D	Number of candidates	2	Percentage	0.9	Cumulative percentage	97.7	Minimum mark required	52
No award	Number of candidates	5	Percentage	2.3	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

Please note that rounding has not been applied to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of SQA's website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper: Literary appreciation

The question paper performed as expected. The requirements for this component were modified for 2022 with a reduction in the number of authors to be considered from two to one, and this modification was continued for the 2023 diet.

The question paper sampled all parts of the course and all types of question.

Most candidates engaged intelligently with the questions. All questions were accessible, and none appeared to have presented barriers to the majority of candidates. In general, candidates appeared to know the texts. There was a good spread of marks demonstrating that the questions were accessible to all and allowed for differentiation.

Most candidates demonstrated good examination technique and familiarity with handling examination pressures.

Virgil was the most popular author, followed by Pliny, Ovid, Cicero, and Catullus.

Question paper: Translating

Most candidates engaged well with the paper. They were able to follow the narrative and produce satisfactory English versions of the text.

The paper was set at an appropriate level of challenge. There were a number of shorter blocks which enabled less able candidates to demonstrate their understanding. Almost all candidates finished the paper.

This question paper performed as expected, with a spread of marks suggesting a suitable level of challenge. The grade boundaries were set at the notional figure.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper: Literary appreciation

Section 1

- ◆ questions 1(b), 2(b), 4, 5(a), 7 and 8: Most candidates achieved high marks.

Section 2

- ◆ questions 9, 10, 11(a), 12, 13(b), 4(a), 15(a), 15(b) and 16(b): Most candidates achieved high marks.

Section 3

- ◆ questions 18(a), 19 and 20: Most candidates achieved high marks.

Section 4

- ◆ questions 27(a), 27(b), 27(c), 27(d), 28(a), 28(b), 30, 31(a), 32 and 33: Most candidates achieved high marks.

Section 5

- ◆ questions 34, 35(b), 35(c), 36, and 40: Most candidates achieved high marks.

Most candidates engaged well with the questions and appeared to know the texts to a satisfactory level.

Question paper: Translating

- ◆ Block 1, 2, 4, 5: Most candidates translated these blocks very well.
- ◆ Block 3: Most candidates did well here too; a few said: 'His friend persuaded him'.
- ◆ Block 8: Most candidates translated this block very well, although some translated *sedebat* as 'was sat'.
- ◆ Block 10: Some candidates translated this as passive but most scored full marks.
- ◆ Block 11: Most candidates translated this block very well. A few translated *stabat* as 'was stood'.
- ◆ Block 12: Almost all candidates translated this block very well.
- ◆ Block 14: Most candidates translated this block correctly. A few translated *illa* as 'he' or 'she'.
- ◆ Block 16: Most candidates translated this block correctly. A very small number did not identify the genitive singular correctly and wrote 'the girlfriend arrived at the farm'.
- ◆ Block 17: Most candidates correctly identified the pluperfect subjunctive.
- ◆ Block 19, 20, 22: Most candidates translated these block correctly.

- ◆ Block 24: A few candidates translated the verb as passive, but the majority coped well with this block.
- ◆ Block 25: Most candidates coped very well with the accusative and infinitive construction.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper: Literary appreciation

Section 1

- ◆ questions 2(a) and 3(a): some candidates did not perform well in these questions.

Section 2

- ◆ questions 11(a) and 16(a): some candidates did not perform well in these questions.

Section 3

- ◆ questions 18(b), 21,22(a), 22(b), 23, 25 and 26: some candidates did not perform well in these questions.

Section 4

- ◆ questions 29(a), 29(b), and 31(b): some candidates did not perform well in these questions.

Section 5

- ◆ questions 35(a), 37, 39 and 41: some candidates did not perform well in these questions.

For the most part, language and evaluation questions scored lower marks than factual questions, reflecting the greater demand exerted by evaluation questions.

Question paper: Translating

- ◆ Block 1: A number of candidates struggled with the word order and translated 'Nicerus wanted a girlfriend to visit'.
- ◆ Block 6: Many candidates did not translate the imperfect correctly and lost a mark.
- ◆ Block 7: A number of candidates did not correctly identify the neuter accusative plural.
- ◆ Block 9: Some candidates did not translate *ut*; some translated *exuit* as imperfect.
- ◆ Block 13: Some candidates failed to translate *ut* correctly and wrote 'and picked up' rather than 'to pick up'.
- ◆ Block 15: A few candidates missed the accusative plural and so did not translate the essential idea correctly.
- ◆ Block 18: A small number of candidates struggled with the 2nd person singular verb and found this block quite difficult.
- ◆ Block 21: Some candidates missed the ablative singular and translated: 'our slave's spear'.
- ◆ Block 23: The word order in this block proved challenging for some candidates as they began translating with *iacebat* — 'he was laying the soldier in the bed'.
- ◆ Block 25: Some candidates struggled to translate *illum* correctly.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper: Literary appreciation

Candidates should expect all parts of the prescribed text to be sampled. There will always be a range of different types of question, a range of command words and a range of questions worth varying marks. Candidates should gain experience and practice in understanding the meaning of command words and question types. Questions on Roman culture and Latin literary techniques will appear at least once in every section. There will be questions addressing candidates' knowledge of the text and questions assessing skills of analysis, argument and evaluation.

To answer the 'Roman culture' questions, candidates will not be expected to include information beyond what they have learnt specifically from the text but would be given credit for correct information from their own knowledge.

Candidates need to ensure that they do not stray beyond the line references given in the question. A frequent cause of loss of marks is when candidates refer to the wrong section of text.

A few candidates attempted to answer on several of the sections, having failed to understand that they should select only one. Again, candidates should be aware of exam requirements.

Bullet points are acceptable in extended responses, as long as they are sufficiently expanded. Single words are not normally sufficient to demonstrate knowledge.

Matching the length of answer to the number of marks available is a useful skill to practise. Over-long and repetitive answers are unnecessary and are not good use of time.

Where appropriate, candidates can argue both 'yes' and 'no' to questions, and credit will be given to any valid point. It may be helpful to allow candidates to practise writing 'yes' and 'no' answers to the same question. It is one way to achieve marks in high value questions.

Question paper: Translating

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate their skills in handling a wide range of accidence and syntax. Centres are reminded that the list of prescribed accidence and syntax is available on page 5 of the course specification, available on SQA's Higher Latin subject page. Accurate application of accidence and syntax will always be rewarded.

Effective use of the wordlist: care needs to be taken to find the correct meaning in the wordlist and to review the sense of the translation. The wordlist supplies meanings for the Latin word in the context of the passage, so even if candidates know the meaning of the Latin word, taking a few moments to check the specific meaning would be advisable, particularly as a word which is repeated in a passage may have multiple meanings listed in the wordlist. Some candidates assume they know a word and fail to check the specific meaning in the wordlist.

It is very important for candidates to read the words in the passage carefully and accurately. In the 2023 assessment, some candidates misread *stelis*, 'tombstones' as *stellis*, 'stars', and confused *lupus*, 'wolf' and *luna*, 'moon' and mixed up 'secum' and 'secundum'. Candidates should practise using wordlists in this way and determining the correct choice by reference to context. However, candidates who supply a correct alternative meaning would not be penalised.

Candidates should be encouraged to check that they have not omitted any 'small' words. Reading the passage two or three times before attempting to translate will be helpful.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject at every level. Therefore, SQA holds a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures was developed to support learners and centres. This included modifications to course assessment, retained from the 2021–22 session. This support was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while recognising a lessening of the impact of disruption to learning and teaching as a result of the pandemic. The revision support that was available for the 2021–22 session was not offered to learners in 2022–23.

In addition, SQA adopted a sensitive approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining

standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams continue to do so in different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019 and 2022.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2023 and the ongoing impact the disruption from the pandemic has had on learners. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and the removal of revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2023 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2023 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).