



## Course Report 2017

Subject	Classical Studies
Level	National 5

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

This report provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers, lecturers and assessors in their preparation of candidates for future assessment. 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 assessment documents and marking instructions.

# **Section 1: Comments on the Assessment**

## **Summary of the Course assessment**

### **Component 1: Question paper**

The question paper consists of three sections. The final section provides a choice of two topics (Pompeii or Roman Britain). The three sections total 60 marks. In the 2017 cohort, item analysis showed that there were no candidates presented for the Roman Britain section. It is likely that, in the future, this section will be withdrawn from the question paper unless there are indications that candidates are going to be presented for it.

The question paper performed in line with expectation and was deemed fair in terms of the level of demand and the coverage of topics. Candidates were able to complete all three sections in the allocated time.

### **Component 2: Assignment**

Changes that were made to the allocation of marks in the assignment for this session all seemed to be acknowledged by centres, and candidates were prepared accordingly.

Candidates performed in line with expectation and overall there was a good spread of marks, with some outstanding pieces presented. It was clear to see that candidates had engaged with their chosen topics and had completed thorough research.

## **Section 2: Comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1: Question paper**

Candidates demonstrated a good level of knowledge across the three sections. Candidates were most successful in responding to the 'describe' questions (Questions 2 and 7) and in analysing the content of the sources (Questions 3, 4, 9 and 10).

#### **Component 2: Assignment**

Candidates demonstrated a wealth of knowledge on their chosen topics, with the majority achieving full marks for Section A.

Candidates also included a high level of analysis in comparing and contrasting their topic with the modern world and including supporting evidence for their conclusion.

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: Question paper**

In Question 1 candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the education of Athenian girls and boys in this question, but they did not always link this successfully to how it prepared them for adult life. A greater focus was required on the 'explain' aspect of the question.

In Question 5a some candidates did not focus on the specific actions of a leader and therefore included a lot of narrative in their responses.

### **Component 2: Assignment**

Section B: Some candidates struggled to comment on the usefulness and reliability of sources when they were using secondary sources of information.

Section E: Some candidates did not include a potential challenge or counter argument to their conclusion. A clearly thought-out topic/question would have prevented this.

## **Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates**

### **Component 1: Question paper**

Candidates were clearly well prepared for the question paper. The majority demonstrated a strong depth of knowledge across the three sections. Candidates were also well prepared for the different skills that they would have to demonstrate.

Candidates could focus further on the 'explain' question by practising linking knowledge with an outcome.

### **Component 2: Assignment**

It appeared that candidates had received a good level of support from their teachers and had been provided with the time to complete detailed research prior to the write up. All candidates were prepared for the changes that were made to the marking instructions.

Careful advice on topic choices and questions will provide candidates with the potential to achieve high marks.

Whilst it was pleasing to see that the conditions of assessment for coursework were adhered to in the majority of centres, there were a small number of examples where this may not have been the case. Following feedback from teachers, we have strengthened the conditions of assessment criteria for National 5 subjects and will do so for Higher and Advanced Higher. The criteria are published clearly on our website and in course materials and must be adhered to. SQA takes very seriously its obligation to ensure fairness and equity for all candidates in all qualifications through consistent application of assessment conditions and investigates all cases alerted to us where conditions may not have been met..

## Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	109
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Number of resulted entries in 2017	73
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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 -				
A	49.3%	49.3%	36	56
B	17.8%	67.1%	13	48
C	13.7%	80.8%	10	40
D	2.7%	83.6%	2	36
No award	16.4%	-	12	-

## 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.