External Assessment Report 2015

Subject(s)	Latin
Level(s)	Intermediate 2

The statistics used in this report are prior to the outcome of any Post Results Services requests.

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 were fourteen candidates from four centres. They were all well prepared and showed good knowledge of the texts. This year they performed better in the Interpretation paper when answering questions on Cicero, compared to those on Virgil.

Areas in which candidates performed well

Interpretation
Cicero

♦ Q1 and Q2 were very well answered and most got all the available marks.
♦ Q5 asked candidates to discuss Cicero's use of sarcasm, which could have proved tricky but most did very well.

Virgil

♦ Q7 was well done. There was a lot of English text to assimilate, summarise and analyse, and the candidates rose to this challenge well.

Translation

Candidates coped well with the passage, Horace's fable about the city mouse and the country mouse. Most candidates wrote a polished translation, with good English expression.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Interpretation
Cicero

♦ Q3 asked candidates to identify **and** to explain. Some did not include any explanation or merely implied it, so it was difficult for them to gain the full four marks.
♦ Q4 asked for 'reasons other than religion', but some candidates then discussed religious reasons, which gained them no marks.

Virgil

♦ Q6(a) about the appearance of Charon elicited very mixed responses. Some candidates had gaps in their knowledge of the text, and few got the full four marks.
♦ Q6(b) asked candidates to consider whether the list of souls created an atmosphere of sadness. Unfortunately, some simply re-produced the list without discussing the sadness aspect, which inevitably cost them marks.
♦ Q8 was a straightforward question on the use of the simile. However, this was poorly done with imprecise responses.

Translation

Singular and plural nouns were inaccurately translated. Common mistakes included; *canibus* (a dog), *cenas* (a dinner), *fercula* (a dish), *fragmenta* (a scrap).

There was a tendency for candidates to change, for no apparent reason, the active voice into the passive in their versions without mentioning the agent. This being the case, they could not get full marks for that block.

Advice to centres for preparation of future candidates

Interpretation
♦ Candidates need to be familiar with the specific details within the lines of the texts.
♦ They should ensure their responses match the value of the question.
♦ They should read all parts of the question carefully.
♦ They should be prepared to answer questions on the author's use of language.

Translation

Candidates should take care in handling the singular and plural nouns, especially the plural of neuter nouns.

They should try, wherever possible, to follow the same construction in their English translation, as was used in the Latin. They should avoid the temptation to write their own versions.

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2014	105

Number of resulted entries in 2015	14

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	92.9%	92.9%	13	42
B	7.1%	100.0%	1	36
C	0.0%	100.0%	0	30
D	0.0%	100.0%	0	27
No award	0.0%	-	0	-

The Course assessment functioned as intended, therefore no adjustment to grade boundaries was required.

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.