Course Report 2017

Subject	Latin
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: Literary Appreciation

Overall, candidates performed very well with this question paper. There were many excellent, well-structured answers, often with developed points.

Many candidates wrote more detailed answers than needed for the allocated marks. They showed a genuine engagement with all five prescribed texts, and were keen to share their views on the issues in the texts.

All questions were accessible, and each section contained some which required fuller answers requiring in-depth knowledge and/or detailed analysis to provide discrimination between 'A' and 'C' candidates.

All the language questions, often perceived as challenging, were well done by the majority of candidates. Some candidates' knowledge of rhetorical techniques, which they were keen to share, was diverse and extensive, although not required.

No areas of the question paper were found to be unsatisfactory or presented any special difficulty.

The standard of English in the written responses was very good.

Component 2: question paper: Translating

Candidates were well prepared for this question paper and were confident enough to tackle even the trickier parts of the passage. It was pleasing to see that most persevered and performed well in the more challenging sections. Most could follow the plot and the narrative and, on the whole, could manage the unfamiliar names of places and characters.

Many candidates showed commitment to producing a fluent and complete response, and some even had time for re-drafting.

There was a sense that, for all candidates, their experience was a positive one.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper: Literary Appreciation

Section 1: Catullus

Q1: This question, inviting candidates to find evidence from the text, was well done, and examples included the less obvious ones, which showed original thought from the candidates.

Q2(b): Answers were wide-ranging and diverse, showing good engagement with the text.

Q3: This question on humour was well done, with points well developed, even beyond the four available marks.

Section 2: Ovid

Q5(a): Many candidates showed impressive and detailed knowledge of the construction of the wings.

Q5(b): There were strong responses here and excellent discussion on typical behaviour of a young child.

Q7: This question was well answered with valid justification of candidates' views and accurate references from the text to support these views.

Q8: This culture question about the character of Talus, although possibly not previously considered by candidates, was particularly well done.

Section 3: Virgil

Although fewer candidates attempted this section, questions 9, 11(a), 11(b) and 11(c) were all well done, showing real engagement with, and understanding of, the text.

Section 4: Pliny

Q15: This question elicited some highly ingenious, yet valid, responses, discussing the reasons for the skeleton in chains found in the garden.

Q16: This language question, regarding the description of the dolphin's behaviour, was very well answered, with candidates using their own words to describe the author's techniques.

Section 5: Cicero

Q20: Many candidates produced thoughtful and knowledgeable answers to this question, showing a sound understanding of the complex sequence of events.

Component 2: question paper: Translating
- Unfamiliar proper names, although tricky, were well handled eg *Aegeus, Aethra, Troezen.*
- In line 3, the ablative absolute *Aethra relicta* was well done.
- In lines 4–5, the sentence *deinde…fecisset* was demanding but was managed well by a pleasing number of candidates.
- Lines 5–6 contained direct speech, which often is found to be a challenge to many candidates, but most managed this well.
- Pronouns *eum* (line 5 and line 6), *quem* (line 6) and *in quo* (line 8) were all well done.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper: Literary Appreciation

Section 1: Catullus

Q2(a): Answers tended to be a bit rambling and lacking focus. Candidates tended to write in general terms rather than write on Poem 6, which the question had asked them to do.

Q4(a): A number of candidates failed to read the question properly and wrote all they know about Roman dinner parties, rather than focus on the behaviour found at dinner parties.

Section 2: Ovid

Q6: A surprising number of candidates did not know what a simile was and, as a result, omitted the question completely, thereby losing all four marks.

Section 3: Virgil

Q10: Candidates were asked to summarise four lines of text in this question, and many found it difficult to do this accurately. Although a direct translation of the lines was not required, many could not manage even their own summary.

Section 4: Pliny

Q17: This culture question asked for evidence from the story itself, rather than from wider knowledge, and some responses unfortunately did stray beyond the story itself.

Section 5: Cicero

Q22: This culture question about governors' attitudes to provincials tended to elicit repetitive responses about cruelty. The same points, albeit written in a different way, do not gain new marks.

Component 2: question paper: Translating

Marks were unfortunately lost through the omission of minor words. Candidates were thus prevented from getting the full two marks for a particular Block, which they otherwise would have got, eg ibi (line 2); sed (line 4); diu (line 9).

There was a tendency for some candidates to put the Latin active voice into the English passive for no good reason, eg 'why he had done this' became 'why this was done by him', 'father had hidden the sword' became 'the sword hidden by the father'.

A small number of candidates wasted time by unnecessarily copying out the English links.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper: Literary Appreciation

Candidates should be expecting questions on the different skills being assessed, including literary techniques and culture. Each section will contain questions on the beginning, middle and end of each prescribed text, plus questions which overarch the whole prescription.

Marking instructions allow for candidates to gain extra marks, either for making a further new point, or for developing further a point already made.

Candidates should be expected to know the names of commonly-used literary techniques, eg simile, metaphor, alliteration.

Candidates should not stray beyond the line references referred to in the question. If there are no line references, then they can answer from their knowledge of the whole text.

Answers normally need to be supported with reference to the text. These references should show understanding of the Latin text. Latin quotes on their own will not normally gain any marks.

Culture questions will either ask for answers based on the text alone or on the text and wider knowledge. Both styles of question can be used.

Candidates can argue both ways in a response to an open question, and marks will be awarded for any valid point.

Component 2: question paper: Translating

Candidates should check their versions for any careless omissions.

There is evidence that re-drafting responses is a worthwhile task.

Candidates should be ready for any syntax and accidence in the prescribed list for National 5.

Looking up proper names in the word-list will give useful information on the name, eg a man's name, a city in Greece.

If candidates lose the thread of the story, re-reading the English links may prove helpful.

The word-list is specific to the passage, so it is always worthwhile to check even a familiar word, in case it has a specific meaning in that particular passage.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2016	445

Number of resulted entries in 2017	363

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	96.1%	96.1%	349	43
B	3.0%	99.2%	11	36
C	0.6%	99.7%	2	30
D	0.0%	99.7%	0	27
No award	0.3%	-	1	-

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.