



Course Report 2016

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 largely performed as expected. Feedback indicates that it was positively received by centres, and that it was felt to be fair and accessible for candidates. The majority of candidates understood what was required, and were able to complete the three required sections in the allocated time.

The 4-mark source-based 'Explain' questions differentiated candidates, as did the 8-mark question in Section 1. However, in the 'Describe' questions worth 4–6 marks, there was less discrimination, with most candidates scoring high marks.

The grade boundaries were adjusted to take account of the low demand in some questions, and a review of the current model for the question paper will take place.

Component 2: Assignment

Overall candidates performed well in the assignment, in line with previous years. Centres have clearly read through the guidelines and requirements and prepared their candidates accordingly. There was a good choice of topics with a clear focus on relevant sources and their usefulness in analysing the question.

One area that was not always addressed was the concept of the challenge and counter-argument.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: Question paper

Questions 1 and 8 were both answered well with candidates demonstrating a clear knowledge of the subject matter, often writing more detail than was required for the amount of marks on offer.

Questions 4 and 10 were answered well, with candidates clearly utilising the prompts to comment on the different aspects of the sources.

Question 5(c) was carefully considered by candidates, with some good modern examples being utilised in comparison to the ancient heroes.

Component 2: Assignment

Section B: Candidates had clearly researched their topics in detail and the majority received full marks for the factual content and analysis.

Section C: The majority of candidates structured their assignments in a coherent manner receiving full marks for structure.

Section E: Candidates included thoughtful and reflective content when comparing and contrasting their topic with the modern world.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: Question paper

Question 5(a): Some candidates did not include examples specific to the question and told the story of the texts they had read.

Question 6(b): Candidates often did not include enough comparisons to gain full marks for this 5-mark question.

Question 7: Candidates often did not address why religion was important to the people of Pompeii, and simply described religion in Pompeii.

Component 2: Assignment

Section E: Candidates did not always include both similarities *and* differences in their response. To gain full marks in this section, candidates require either one similarity and two differences, or two similarities and one difference, in their response.

Section G: Candidates seemed to find it difficult to express a challenge or counter-argument for their topic. Many did not include this element at all, therefore losing out on valuable marks.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: Question paper

It was clear that many candidates had enjoyed studying the material for the question paper and that centres had provided good support in covering the subject matter.

In the source-based 'Explain' questions, candidates should refer to the sources and explain by providing greater detail about the reference they have chosen.

In the literature component, candidates should avoid storytelling and focus on specific examples from the texts they have studied.

Component 2: Assignment

It was clear that overall candidate performance in the assignment was strong this year. This reflects good support and preparation from teachers/lecturers in facilitating opportunities for candidates to undertake research, giving more candidates the potential of being able to achieve high marks in this part of the course.

When deciding on a topic and title for the assignment, candidates should be encouraged to consider the limitations of a topic and the ability to provide a counter argument. For example, 'How good were the lives of Greek women compared to women today?' provides much greater scope for candidates than, 'How good were the lives of Greek women?'

Primary sources allow for greater analysis than secondary sources. Comments on sources should be specific rather than generic.

Candidates should feel confident using primary visual sources (mosaics, statues, buildings etc) as well as written sources.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	69
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Number of resulted entries in 2016	109
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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	49.5%	49.5%	54	64
B	21.1%	70.6%	23	56
C	15.6%	86.2%	17	48
D	5.5%	91.7%	6	44
No award	8.3%	-	9	-

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.