



Course Report 2018

Subject	Classical Studies
Level	National 5

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. 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. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

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

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Summary of the course assessment

Component 1: question paper

The question paper has three sections. The final section provides a choice of two topics (Pompeii or Roman Britain). The three sections total 80 marks (new format of question paper was extended by 20 marks, which are available across sections 1 and 3).

The question paper generally performed in line with expectations and was deemed fair in terms of the level of demand and the coverage of topics. Candidates coped well with the new 'explain' and 'compare' questions. Candidates performed particularly well in section 1: Life in classical Greece, which highlighted the topics that clearly resonate with candidates. The majority of candidates were able to complete all three sections in the allocated time.

Component 2: assignment

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.

There were some centres who favoured using secondary sources of evidence. These sources were not analysed as effectively as those who used primary sources of evidence.

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 1, 7(a), 8(a), 9, and 15). The 'to what extent ...' question in the Life in classical Greece section (question 3) was answered very well with candidates showing a wealth of knowledge. Candidates were also well prepared for explaining the content of the sources (questions 5, 13, and 19). Candidates approached the Life in classical Greece section with a vast amount of knowledge and understanding of how the ancient and modern worlds compare.

Component 2: assignment:

Candidates demonstrated a wealth of knowledge on their chosen topics with the majority of candidates achieving full marks for drawing on straightforward, mainly factual, knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue.

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

Question 2: candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of gods and religion in the ancient Greek world but they did not always focus successfully on the reasons why they were important to the citizens of classical Athens.

Questions 6, 14, 20: candidates were focusing on omissions from the sources and what the source said. Candidates need to address the range of prompts to access full marks. Many candidates were repeating information that was provided in the paper for 'who wrote it' and 'when it was written'. Candidates need to respond to the information with comments if they hope to achieve marks for their observations.

Question 8(b): candidates were not always referring to the examples in the text mentioned in their response in 8(a), when comparing the modern world and the classical world.

Component 2: assignment

Commenting on the usefulness or reliability of two sources of information: some candidates struggled to comment on the usefulness and reliability of sources when they were using secondary sources of information.

Reference to both supporting information and potential challenges or counterarguments: some candidates did not include a potential challenge or counterargument in their conclusion. A clearly thought out topic and/or 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 as the majority of candidates' demonstrated depth of knowledge across the three sections. Candidates were also well prepared for the different skills that they are asked to demonstrate.

One area that candidates could focus further on is reading the questions carefully and focusing on key words. For example many candidates missed the 'typical experience' of the theatre in question 9, and why working in the fullery was an 'unpleasant experience' in question 10. Candidates were providing knowledge about the theatre and fullery but not necessarily answering the specific question.

Some candidates were struggling to comment on 'who wrote it' and 'when they wrote it' in questions 6, 14, and 20. Candidates are not awarded marks for repeating information that is provided in the paper.

Component 2: assignment

Candidates had clearly received a good level of support from their teachers and lecturers, and had been provided with the time to complete detailed research prior to writing the report of their findings.

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

Candidates who are selecting primary sources of evidence have more to discuss and therefore we would recommend that candidates utilise primary evidence rather than secondary evidence.

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	73
------------------------------------	----

Number of resulted entries in 2018	78
------------------------------------	----

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	44.9%	44.9%	35	73
B	17.9%	62.8%	14	64
C	20.5%	83.3%	16	56
D	7.7%	91.0%	6	47
No award	9.0%	-	7	-

General commentary on grade boundaries

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.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which 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.

Therefore SQA holds a grade boundary meeting every year for each subject at each level to bring 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.

Grade boundaries from exam papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.