Course Report 2016

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

Component 1: question paper: Literary Appreciation

Overall, candidates coped well with this question paper. Catullus, Pliny and Ovid were the most popular choices.

Candidates seem to have engaged positively with the texts, and the vast majority appeared to be well prepared for the wide-ranging questions sampling knowledge and skills. There were very few questions in any of the five sections which were not attempted. None of the candidates ran out of time. Candidates generally expressed themselves clearly and were keen to share their knowledge, views and opinions. Many answers were very full and went beyond what was required for the marks available.

In answers which required a critical response, and in answers about Roman culture, candidates gave a wide range of interesting answers, which indicated that they had given a great deal of thought to the texts.

Some responses were outstanding and contained real depth of understanding, imagination and creativity.

Component 2: question paper: Translating

Candidates followed the story well and were careful to observe all of the vocabulary. In many cases, great care had been taken over detail. Where grammar or syntax proved challenging, candidates used common sense effectively to arrive at a sensible meaning.

Several candidates aimed for especially fluent and stylish versions. A number produced exceptional translations.

There was evidence that all tried very hard. Candidates persisted and made an effort to translate into good English. However, shortcomings in English hampered some. A few were unaware of the past tense of some common English verbs, eg brung; seen; spreaded.

Section 2: Comments on candidate performance

Areas in which candidates performed well

Component 1: question paper: Literary Appreciation

Section 1: Catullus

Q1(b): This question was well done with a variety of imaginative responses, some comparing the ancient setting with modern life situations to great effect.

Q2(c): Some candidates discussed the repetition of ideas and others discussed the repetition of words, and both approaches were equally valid.

Section 2: Ovid

Qs 4 and 5: Candidates clearly knew the characters in the story well and were able to discuss their personalities at length and with insight.

Q6(b): There was a huge range of responses when considering the fates of Icarus and Talus, which showed great imagination and analysis. No-one appeared to misunderstand the word 'fates' and many got the full four marks.

Q7: The culture question about the father/son relationship in Roman society was very well done indeed with very strong responses, reflecting real engagement with the question.

Section 3: Virgil

Q11: This 'do you agree…?' question was well done, provided that the candidate did agree. Although it is acceptable to disagree in any question, it was difficult to get a second mark if the candidate did disagree in this instance.

Q12: The culture question on ancient warfare was very well done, and candidates used their in-depth knowledge of the text to make valid points on the topic. The text provided a lot of scope for candidates to discuss, despite there being a lack of battles in this prescription.

Section 4: Pliny

Q13(b): This question elicited very interesting answers, requiring deduction and logical thinking.

Q14(a) and (b): These questions produced excellent responses on the work, mental attitude and approach of the philosopher.

Q16: The culture question on whether the Romans were animal lovers produced many balanced answers. Candidates skilfully weighed up both sides and supported their answers with references to the dolphin story, as well as drawing on their wider knowledge.

Section 5: Cicero

Q17: Candidates discussed the implication of armed slaves in Roman society, displaying real understanding in their answers.

Q18(b): This question elicited extensive, thoughtful responses beyond the one mark available.

Q20(a): This challenging question about a Roman governor's behaviour was very well answered. Some candidates made comment based on an ancient point of view, while others looked at it from a modern point of view. Both approaches were equally valid.

Component 2: question paper: Translating

♦ A pleasing number of candidates translated the perfect passive tense correctly: *relictus est.*
♦ Many spotted, and translated correctly, the pluperfect tense: *consumpserat.*
♦ The accusative and infinitive construction was well done: *ante se transire.*
♦ Candidates used context within the story to help them to make sense of the narrative, treating the story as a whole entity.
♦ Time management was well handled by candidates.

Areas which candidates found demanding

Component 1: question paper: Literary Appreciation

Section 1: Catulllus

Q1 (a): Some candidates found it difficult to get a second mark for 'thin flame'. However, most of the many interpretations of this phrase were valid, and candidates got a second mark for development.

Q2(a): Some candidates also found it difficult to get a second mark here and wrote the same point twice or else repeated the wording in the question eg 'Catullus had travelled far'.

Q3: In this culture question, some candidates were confused about what 'social life' actually meant and instead wrote in general terms about Roman society. Nevertheless, because many wrote at great length, they still managed to cover enough of what was required to gain the full three marks.

Section 2: Ovid

Q6(a): There was some confusion about the timeline in the story, which meant many candidates were not altogether clear how Talus fitted into the story.

Section 3: Virgil

Q9: Candidates wanted to write about the metaphor contained within the word *uterum,* instead of answering the question which asked about 'sense of danger'.

Q10(a): Many responses did not contain enough to gain the third available mark.

Q10(b): There was confusion (or possible guesswork) about the advice given by Laocoon.

Section 4: Pliny

Q13(a): There was some confusion over the sequence of events in the narrative, which lost some candidates marks in this question.

Q13(c): Finding a second action carried out by Athenodorus was a challenge for some candidates.

Section 5: Cicero

Q20(b): Most candidates did not manage to gain the third mark for this question, as they omitted to include the point that 'the gods would punish Verres'.

Q21: This culture question, on the power and influence of the ordinary people, was found to be demanding and some candidates lost focus in their responses. It proved difficult for some candidates to get the third mark. There was some evidence that candidates had prepared set answers for another culture question altogether.

Component 2: question paper: Translating

♦ Many candidates were unsure of how to incorporate an ablative absolute fluently into the flow of the sentence: *ceteris dispersis; emissa sagitta*.
♦ Only about half the number of candidates observed the superlative adverb: *tristissime*.
♦ The least well understood feature in the translation was the relative pronoun. The phrase *inter quos* 'among whom' was not well done, as it does not lend itself to current idiom and does not sit naturally with candidates.
♦ Few candidates recognised the plural *radiis*.
♦ The present participle *fugientem* proved challenging to translate, thereby making it difficult to translate the block into fluent English. Candidates did not seem to know that the present participle indicated an action going on at the same time as another.

Section 3: Advice for the preparation of future candidates

Component 1: question paper: Literary Appreciation

♦ Candidates should be encouraged to develop their points in order to gain a second mark, and to be aware that they do not necessarily need to produce a second separate point for the second mark.

♦ Candidates should be aware that culture questions can ask for judgement/analysis, as well as knowledge.

♦ Candidates can expect to be asked to base their culture answers on the text alone or on the text **and** their wider knowledge. Both question formats may be used.

♦ Candidates should answer each question carefully to make sure they understand what is being asked. It is not enough to make a general comment about a particular set of lines of text.

♦ Candidates are free to argue positively or negatively in response to an open question. However, they should consider how much they are able to say for the available marks, when deciding which stance to take.

Component 2: question paper: Translating

♦ Candidates should follow the punctuation of the passage carefully.
♦ Candidates should also be aware that their use of punctuation can alter the sense of their translation.
♦ Candidates should be familiar with the common usage of tenses, active and passive voice, participles and superlative adjectives and adverbs.
♦ It is important that translations are put into fluent English.
♦ There is clear evidence that, if time allows, redrafting responses is a worthwhile task.
♦ Candidates should be careful not to omit words or phrases. They should check the passage through at the end, if time allows, for any omissions.

Grade Boundary and Statistical information:

Statistical information: update on Courses

Number of resulted entries in 2015	454

Number of resulted entries in 2016	445

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	93.3%	93.3%	415	42
B	4.3%	97.5%	19	36
C	1.3%	98.9%	6	30
D	0.9%	99.8%	4	27
No award	0.2%	-	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.