



Course report 2019

Subject	Latin
Level	Higher

This report provides information on candidates' performance. 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

Question paper: Literary appreciation

The question paper performed as expected, with evidence of candidates preparing well and engaging in the assessment. Performance appeared consistent across all authors.

External feedback indicated that all questions were generally fair and reasonable. The increase in the number of marks and questions used in the new assessment format did not appear to present any additional difficulty to candidates, but enabled a broader sampling of texts and skills. The grade boundary was set at the notional figure.

Question paper: Translating

The question paper performed to standard, and the grade boundary was set at the notional figure. The increase in the number of available marks preserved the length of the translating passage under the new assessment format, and enabled a finer and more nuanced approach to the marking process.

A full range of marks was achieved, with a majority in the upper ranges. The mark distribution appears to be slightly wider than in previous years, with fewer candidates scoring maximum marks. External feedback assessed the translating question paper as challenging but fair.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper: Literary appreciation

Questions 1(a), 2, 3(a), and 8 (Catullus) all evidenced strong performance, although only by a small number of candidates.

Question 9 (Catullus), the extended response question, achieved a higher than average score.

Question 14 (Ovid) and 26(b) (Pliny) received a very high average mark.

Question paper: Translating

Most candidates performed well in most blocks of the question paper. In most cases candidates handled the inflections of nouns, adjectives and verbs competently, making intelligent use of the wordlist and producing fluent translations.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper: Literary appreciation

Responses for most of the questions gained average marks but 12(a) (Ovid) and 31 (Pliny) fell below average. Consideration of the scope and structure of these questions will inform future question construction. Both questions were intentionally open-ended in structure, which may have challenged some candidates.

Question paper: Translating

Evidence from the marking process suggested that the final paragraph of the passage was particularly challenging, containing dependent clauses, verbs not understood and a grotesque and unfamiliar storyline. However, a sufficient number of candidates translated the paragraph accurately, justifying the intentional inclusion of the paragraph to ensure differentiation.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper: Literary appreciation

Most candidates seemed well prepared, knowledgeable and engaged.

Centres should ensure candidates:

- ◆ debate around the cultural and literary dimensions of the texts
- ◆ analyse past paper questions in order to develop examination response techniques
- ◆ gain experience and practice in understanding the meaning of command words and question types — particularly in relation to the open-ended type of question, that seeks to encourage candidates to demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of the texts
- ◆ refer to the correct section of text in order to achieve the marks available

Question paper: Translating

Most candidates seemed very well prepared for the translating question paper, and most achieved highly confident translations, with evidence of careful use of the wordlist. Very few candidates failed to complete the passage.

Centres should ensure candidates:

- ◆ recognise the accident and syntax, as well as the basic vocabulary meaning of words
- ◆ carefully pre-read the Latin passage and the English linking passages to help them get a feel for the narrative. Some candidates wrote that Antony's hands had been cut off, although the linking passage made clear that it was Antony who had punished Cicero
- ◆ practice breaking down complex sentences and analysing clauses

Grade boundary and statistical information:

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2018	226
Number of resulted entries in 2019	253

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	65.6%	65.6%	166	91
B	15.8%	81.4%	40	78
C	10.7%	92.1%	27	65
D	4.7%	96.8%	12	52
No award	3.2%	-	8	-

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 that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary)
- ◆ 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 head of service and statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. Members of the SQA management team chair these meetings. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper has been more, or less, challenging than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper is more challenging than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from question 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 question papers set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the question papers that they set themselves.