



Course report 2022

Subject	Classical Studies
Level	Advanced 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 appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	45
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Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	38.6	Cumulative percentage	38.6	Number of candidates	15	Minimum mark required	105
B	Percentage	34.1	Cumulative percentage	72.7	Number of candidates	15	Minimum mark required	87
C	Percentage	13.7	Cumulative percentage	86.4	Number of candidates	10	Minimum mark required	70
D	Percentage	13.6	Cumulative percentage	100.0	Number of candidates	5	Minimum mark required	52
No award	Percentage	0.0	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	0	Minimum mark required	N/A

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in appendix 1 of this report.

In this report:

- ◆ 'most' means greater than 70%
- ◆ 'many' means 50% to 69%
- ◆ 'some' means 25% to 49%
- ◆ 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find more statistical reports on the statistics page of [SQA's website](#).

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

Most candidates chose to answer on Heroes and heroism, with a few opting for History and historiography or for Comedy, satire and society. No candidates chose the Individual and community option.

The question paper performed as expected.

Project–dissertation

The project–dissertation performed as expected, with a good range of topics covered. Some candidates chose thought-provoking titles and handled issues which are very resonant in the contemporary world, such as discrimination based on gender, race, or sexuality.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper

The vast majority of candidates chose to answer on Heroes and heroism, although candidate performance was better in History and historiography, and in Comedy, satire and society.

Section 1: History and historiography

Only a few candidates chose to answer on this option, but the quality of responses to all questions was very strong.

Part A — Classical literature

Candidates were very well prepared and showed a very good knowledge of the texts.

In the source analysis and evaluation questions (questions 1 and 2), answers were generally well focused on the material in the sources, although a few candidates used material from recall rather than directly given in the source. As long as the material used from recall is relevant to the tight parameters of the question, this is acceptable.

Source comparison responses in this option (questions 3 and 4) were particularly strong. Responses were very well focused on the points of information given in the sources.

Part B — Classical society

All candidates answered the correct number of questions. All questions were answered very well, displaying the appropriate skills. Essays on Herodotus and Polybius were especially good, with candidates showing a sound grasp of the content of the texts.

Section 2: Individual and community

No candidates offered answers to this option.

Section 3: Heroes and heroism

Most candidates chose to answer on this option. Answers were of variable quality.

Part A — Classical literature

Candidates were well prepared and showed a very good knowledge of the texts.

Question 17 — Source analysis

Candidates answered this question well, showing sound knowledge of the text of the *Odyssey*. Candidates focused answers well on the text, basing their responses on four points drawn from the extract of the source given. Awareness of the expectations for women was more significant in answers than awareness of how Telemachus exhibited expectations for heroes.

Question 18 — Source evaluation

Most candidates who attempted this question answered it well, although a few responses failed to show significant knowledge of *Heroides*, which made it difficult to fully address examples of Dido's behaviour as a role model. Candidates did not have any trouble identifying heroic aspects of Dido's character and also unheroic ones. A few candidates did not attempt this compulsory question.

Question 19 — Source comparison

This question was generally well done, although there were responses that suggested a few candidates were unaware how to answer this question type. Most candidates managed to identify at least three aspects of comparison between the sources. However, some candidates did not illustrate their comparisons with enough detail explained from the extracts or from recall. A few candidates did not attempt this compulsory question.

Question 20 — Modern source comparison

Although most candidates answered this question well, identifying at least three aspects of comparison from the modern extract, some responses showed limited knowledge about the actions and words of Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. A few candidates did not attempt this compulsory question.

Part B — Classical society

Most responses to the essay questions were done well with candidates showing an understanding of which skills they needed to exhibit in this type of question. Weaker responses tended to make too many points of basic analysis and evaluation rather than focusing on a smaller quantity of points to analyse or evaluate in greater depth.

Question 21

Most responses to this question were good. However, answers that failed to discuss the nature of morality in heroic and/or classical society tended to gain lower marks. This was the most popular question with candidates.

Question 22

Some candidates answered this question very well, although a number of weaker responses did not address a wide enough range of actions by Odysseus and coherently discuss their motivation.

Question 23

This question was answered well, with candidates displaying a very solid understanding of what happens to each of the key characters in *Trojan Women*.

Question 24

This question was done well by almost all candidates who selected it.

Section 4: Comedy, satire, and society

Only a few candidates chose to answer on this option, but the quality of responses to all questions was very strong.

Part A — Classical literature

Candidates were very well prepared and showed a very good knowledge of the texts.

In the source analysis and evaluation questions (questions 25 and 26), answers were generally well focused on the material in the sources.

Source comparison responses in this option (questions 27 and 28) were particularly strong. Responses were very well focused on the points of information given in the sources.

Part B — Classical society

All candidates answered the correct number of questions. Questions were answered very well, displaying the appropriate skills. Candidates answered questions 31 and 32: essays on Aristophanes' *Clouds*, and on Juvenal and Horace. Candidates showed a very sound grasp of the content of the texts.

Project–dissertation

The standard of project–dissertations was generally high, although there were a few that showed significant weakness in some areas.

A Justify an appropriate complex classical studies issue for research

Most candidates showed that they understood the requirements for this criterion, although a significant number did not and, therefore, did not gain more than 3 marks out of 6.

B Research the issue using a wide range of sources of information

Most candidates used the correct number of sources of appropriate types, and the vast majority gained full marks for this criterion.

C Analyse the issue

Most candidates included good quality analysis in their dissertations, though a few were dominated by narrative, which gains no marks. Only a few dissertations engaged with secondary sources in their analysis to enable them to access marks in the 7–8 mark range.

D Compare the classical world and later times

Almost half of all candidates did not achieve more than 4 out of 8 marks for this criterion. A few candidates made comparisons that were either not relevant or not developed beyond basic statements.

E Evaluate the classical world

Most candidates included good quality evaluation in their dissertations, although in general, there were too many evaluative points made in a superficial way. Only a few dissertations engaged with secondary sources in their analysis to enable them to access marks in the 7–8 mark range.

F Synthesise evidence to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument

Most dissertations were well constructed and coherent, following a recognisable line of argument. However, only some dissertations had conclusions that exhibited any of the skills highlighted for assessment of this criterion. A few candidates gained very low marks in this criterion because their dissertation lacked any clear argument.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates are aware of the following.

Knowledge of the texts

Candidates must know what happens in the texts that they are studying and be able to refer to any parts of these texts to illustrate any specific points they are making about the themes. Candidates should not rely solely on notes, which focus on a thematic approach to all the texts in general. These are very useful aids to teaching and learning, but candidates must be able to apply knowledge of the themes to any parts of any of the texts they study.

Knowledge of the themes

When preparing for assessment, candidates should be able to discuss the themes in an abstract way in order to be able to analyse and evaluate where these themes are illustrated at any point in the texts for study. Candidates should continually consider how the themes are being illustrated as they work through the texts.

Understanding question types

It is essential for candidates to know how each question is assessed in the question paper and what skills are looked for in each question type. Candidates should practise answering exam-type questions throughout the course.

Project–dissertation

Teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates are aware of the following.

The dissertation is about skills

The dissertation provides candidates with an opportunity to show how well they can analyse, evaluate, compare, use sources and synthesise a sustained argument. It is not marked on mere knowledge of the subject matter but on what is done with it.

A good topic for a dissertation

Any topic that has lots of resources is a good topic because candidates can achieve depth by analysing and evaluating a range of material. Any topic that they find genuinely interesting is a good topic.

Beginning a dissertation project

Do not begin with a title. Candidates should be encouraged to find an area of interest and read generally about it. Once they know something about the topic, it should be easier to decide on a specific title.

Write the introduction last

Candidates should be reminded that the introduction to an academic dissertation explains to the reader what you have done in your dissertation: it describes your question, why it matters, what you hope your dissertation argues, and how you researched it. It does not simply introduce the topic you are studying like the introduction to an essay.

Base work on primary sources

Books by modern scholars about a topic are essential to give ideas and understand the topic, but the focus for the dissertation must be the analysis and evaluation of what primary sources say. Refer to primary sources regularly and explain what they tell us.

Pay close attention to marking instructions

These explain exactly what skills are required in order to gain marks.

How to get good marks

The expectation is that candidates will spend time throughout the full course gaining knowledge about their topic and will analyse and evaluate a significant number of important sources relevant to it. They will, having spent time getting to know the topic, identify an interesting focus for an argument, which will form their dissertation title. They will steadily craft a presentation of their findings, following a coherent focused argument that illustrates what they have discovered by analysing and evaluating primary and secondary sources. This research will be synthesised into a dissertation in which they exhibit the skills of analysis, evaluation, and comparison in a coherent argument. There are no marks at all for narrative. All information should be given to support analysis, evaluation, or comparison.

Appendix 1: general commentary on grade boundaries

SQA's main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, SQA aims to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- ◆ a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- ◆ a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade 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 for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of SQA's Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. SQA can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- ◆ The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- ◆ Where levels of difficulty 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 on year. This is because the specific questions, and the mix of questions, are different and this has an impact on candidate performance.

This year, a package of support measures including assessment modifications and revision support, was introduced to support candidates as they returned to formal national exams and other forms of external assessment. This was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, SQA adopted a more generous approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses than it would do in a normal exam year, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams have done so in very different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019.

The key difference this year is that decisions about where the grade boundaries have been set have also been influenced, where necessary and where appropriate, by the unique circumstances in 2022. On a course-by-course basis, SQA has determined grade boundaries in a way that is fair to candidates, taking into account how the assessment (exams and coursework) has functioned and the impact of assessment modifications and revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2022 relate to the specific experience of this year's cohort and should not be used by centres if these assessments are used in the future for exam preparation.

For full details of the approach please refer to the [National Qualifications 2022 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).