Course report 2022

Subject	Classical Studies
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 appeals.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022	550

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

A	Percentage	30.7	Cumulative percentage	30.7	Number of candidates	170	Minimum mark required	52
B	Percentage	22.2	Cumulative percentage	52.9	Number of candidates	120	Minimum mark required	42
C	Percentage	21.6	Cumulative percentage	74.5	Number of candidates	120	Minimum mark required	32
D	Percentage	15.1	Cumulative percentage	89.6	Number of candidates	85	Minimum mark required	22
No award	Percentage	10.4	Cumulative percentage	N/A	Number of candidates	55	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 1 — Classical literature

The paper performed as expected. Both the essays and the modern comparison question were answered using a range of texts. Most candidates opted to answer question 1(a). Antigone was the most popular choice of text in answering either essay, but there were responses that referred to Oedipus the king, Medea, Agamemnon, the Iliad, the Odyssey and the Aeneid. Overall candidate performance in each essay was very similar.

Question 1 essays were generally well done, but some candidates failed to gain full marks for introductions and conclusions. Some candidates did not score well in analysis and evaluation as they found it challenging to generate different interpretations. Successful candidates did this, for example in question 1(b), by showing that Oedipus might be seen as heroic in the way that he strives to relieve his city of the plague, but as arrogant in his treatment of some characters in the play.

Some candidates found question 2, the modern comparison, challenging and were still adopting approaches that involved source interpretation. This is no longer a requirement.

Question paper 2 — Classical society

Many candidates chose the 'power and freedom' option. Some candidates took a mixed approach, answering on 'power and freedom' in one section and 'religion and belief' in the other.

Most candidates approached questions well and structured their answers appropriately.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Question paper 1 — Classical literature

There were many very well-answered essays. Most candidates had a good knowledge of the text(s) they chose and responded to the specific aspects of each essay. In question 1(a) candidates were able to identify a wide range of different conflicts within texts and often gave balanced views on whether the conflicts brought out the worst in people. There were some excellent responses to question 1(b) where candidates interpreted the phrase 'far from perfect' in a number of ways.

In question 2, the modern comparison, some candidates struggled to do well. A few candidates forgot that the question was about literature, not society. For example, some candidates discussed marriage and childbirth from a social point of view or discussed oracles and omens in the classical world but without reference to a text. Most candidates structured their answer well, but some failed to give enough information and text-based comparisons with the classical world to gain full marks. Candidates who referred to more than one text tended to score more highly.

Question paper 2 — Classical society

Section 1 — Life in Classical Greece

In question 1, the three-source 'how fully' question, some candidates failed to identify that the vase (Source A) showed an educational scene, or the use of music. However, as up to 4 marks can be awarded for each source, many candidates were able to compensate by detailed use of the other two sources. This also occurred in question 3 with Source B, which discussed an aspect of the Panathenaia. A few candidates made evaluative comments on the sources in these questions, but there are no marks for this.

In question 2(a), the 'to what extent' question, candidates showed very good knowledge of Athenian democracy. However, a few candidates chose to discuss which parts of Athenian society were excluded from the democratic process. This was not relevant to the question and gained no marks. In question 2(b) candidates showed a very good knowledge of the Delian League. Candidates showed good knowledge in their responses to question 4(a) on the Eleusinian mysteries, and to question 4(b) on ideas about life after death. Some candidates did not consider the point that carrying out traditional rituals did not necessarily mean a genuine belief in an afterlife of a particular kind.

Section 2 — Life in the Roman World

In the source evaluation questions, question 5 and question 8, candidates found it challenging to gain marks for provenance. For example, in question 5, very few candidates identified that the source came from the 3rd century AD, which was after the period studied, and so missed an opportunity to challenge the usefulness of the source. More spotted that the source might be less useful as it gave an idealised or male view of how a Roman wife should behave. A few candidates were still stating that both sources were useful because they were 'primary' which gains no marks without further explanation. In question 8, many candidates' knowledge of Roman philosophy was weak or inaccurate.

In question 6, the 'compare' question, candidates showed very good knowledge of both Boudica's rebellion and the Judean revolt, which they related to the source. The best answers used knowledge of both revolts. Responses to question 9 showed a good knowledge in particular of the perils of childbirth in the Roman world. However some candidates failed to give enough information to score very highly.

In responses to question 7(b), the 'analyse' question, in general, candidates were able to show good knowledge of the ways a governor and provincials interacted. Many candidates were able to give examples of positive and negative relationships. In responses to question 10(a), some candidates wrote about how individuals contacted or tried to influence the gods, which was irrelevant to the question. The best responses to question 10(b) showed how attitudes to Isis changed over time or were different in various parts of the Roman empire.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Certain key examination skills such as writing introductions and conclusions, and discussing different interpretations and changes over time, were enhanced by preparation for the assignment. Centres may, therefore, wish to provide candidates with other opportunities to reinforce these skills during the session. The most up-to-date guide on assessment in the question paper is given in the specimen question paper published on SQA's website.

Question paper 1 — Classical literature

In their essay, teachers and lecturers should ensure that candidates pay attention to the marks for the introduction and the conclusion. For example, in the introduction the candidate gains 2 marks for giving a brief context, signposting and/or giving an indication of their argument.

Candidates must show different interpretations in their essay to access the top marks for analysis and evaluation. Two ways of gaining these marks would be:

♦ assessing different interpretations of the motivations or actions of a character
♦ discussing how a classical audience or reader might judge the actions and motivations of a character differently to a modern audience or reader

Candidates would not be judged as fulfilling the criteria by contrasting the attitudes of characters within a text. For example, contrasting the views of Antigone and Ismene to challenging authority as set out within the play Antigone, or discussing the change in the attitude of a character such as Creon within the same play, would be assessed as knowledge.

In the modern comparison question, centres are reminded that no marks are awarded for interpreting source content. Candidates should identify points from the source, by quoting or paraphrasing, and then compare them to the classical world using relevant knowledge of an appropriate classical text or texts. For each point from the source up to 2 marks are awarded for similarities or differences. The 8 marks can be gained by making two comparisons about each of the four points from the source, by making one comparison about eight points, or a combination of these. Candidates will not be awarded marks for general comparisons, for example about the lives of women, only for ones made specifically from their chosen classical text(s). '

Question paper 2 — Classical society

Centres should encourage candidates to read the questions carefully. If a candidate looks at the overall topic and writes as much information as possible without focusing on exactly what the question demands, they will not gain many marks. Examples from this year's question paper are outlined as follows:

♦ question 1 was about slavery in Athens, but specifically about the relationship between Athenians and their slaves
♦ question 2(a) was about Athenian citizens but not about who was excluded from citizenship

- question 2(b) was about the benefits Athenians gained from the Delian League, not about the treatment of the members of the Delian League
- question 4(a) was about the Eleusinian mysteries, but specifically about their meaning to their followers
- question 10(a) was about how the Romans believed their gods communicated with them, not about how they communicated with their gods

Centres should reinforce that knowledge marks are not allocated as a mark per accurate point made, but as an overall judgement on the quality of discussion and on how well a candidate uses their knowledge in answer to the question. In 12-mark analysis or evaluation questions, candidates should avoid answering the question in an unstructured way, listing relevant points of knowledge in a haphazard fashion. The best approach for candidates to take is to give a one sentence introduction to their answer, stating which three or four aspects they will look at, showing a good structure. Candidates should be reminded that there are no marks allocated for conclusions in the 12-mark questions.

In the three-source 'how fully' questions, candidates should be encouraged to discuss relevant information omitted from the sources at the end, after they have dealt with all the information in the sources. Sometimes candidates who fail to do this give omitted information that does actually appear in a later source they have not yet discussed.

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.