



# **Course report 2023**

## **Advanced Higher Latin**

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. You should read the report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics in the report were compiled before any appeals were completed.

# Grade boundary and statistical information

## Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2022: 34

Number of resulted entries in 2023: 38

## Statistical information: performance of candidates

### Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

<b>A</b>	Number of candidates	21	Percentage	55.3	Cumulative percentage	55.3	Minimum mark required	126
<b>B</b>	Number of candidates	9	Percentage	23.7	Cumulative percentage	78.9	Minimum mark required	108
<b>C</b>	Number of candidates	4	Percentage	10.5	Cumulative percentage	89.5	Minimum mark required	90
<b>D</b>	Number of candidates	4	Percentage	10.5	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	72
<b>No award</b>	Number of candidates	0	Percentage	0	Cumulative percentage	100	Minimum mark required	N/A

Please note that rounding has not been applied to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

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 and information](#) page of SQA's website.

## **Section 1: comments on the assessment**

The assessment components all performed as expected. Questions performed as intended and most candidates seemed aware of what was expected, even if they did not always have the knowledge to answer as fully as they might have wished. There were a few candidates who found the question papers challenging, especially the translating paper, this was offset to some extent by strong performances across the board in the project-dissertation.

### **Question paper 1: Literary appreciation**

Candidates were generally well prepared and ready to answer every type of question. The modifications ensured that candidates were able to demonstrate their knowledge and skill as fully as their pre-covid predecessors. As a consequence, however, the range of reference in candidates' essays tended to be narrower than in previous years, more so even than in 2022. Nonetheless, many responded to the essay question with great mental agility to produce well-argued and highly entertaining essays. Only a very few candidates mis-managed their time, which had an impact on quality of their performance.

None of this year's candidates selected the Letters and letter-writing option.

### **Question paper 2: Translating**

The passage was demanding, but the aspects of accident and syntax sampled were entirely appropriate for the level. Amendments to the text ensured it was accessible to candidates of differing abilities, but many of the features of authentic Latin were retained, such as the prevalent use of participles, connecting relatives and complex sentence structure. There were some very strong performances here and only a very few poor responses. Most candidates were able to make some sense of the passage, or at least of some sections of the passage, and very few candidates left their translations unfinished.

### **Project-dissertation**

The standard of work was high and there were many strong performances, with several candidates achieving marks in the 55-60 range. Candidates seemed to have a clear understanding of what was required and nearly all were able to produce a competent piece of work that fulfilled the basic criteria and met genre expectations.

Most candidates had selected appropriate and interesting topics that allowed them to take an analytical approach and develop a strong line of argument. The range of topics was particularly varied and included more philosophical titles than in the previous years.

Almost without exception, candidates had done a considerable amount of work and taken pride in presenting a properly independent piece of work that demonstrated their knowledge and skills in research and analysis.

## **Section 2: comments on candidate performance**

### **Areas that candidates performed well in**

#### **Question paper 1: Literary appreciation**

Candidates dealt well with questions 9(a) and 9(b). Most had a good grasp of Ovid poem 4 and clearly enjoyed answering question 9(a), which they were able to do very effectively and in considerable detail. Many candidates also made the most of the opportunity provided by question 9(b) to demonstrate their knowledge of Roman cultural attitudes, with many making perceptive points about gender expectations.

Candidates' close familiarity with the poems of Catullus also shone through their answers to questions 10 and 11. Most handled question 10(a) very effectively and many also did well in 10(b), although a few did falter here, and struggled to comment on an appropriate attitude. Many also handled question 11 very well and were able to use their detailed knowledge of the text to offer a well-argued analysis of the poem's structure. The successful candidates here included several who had previously struggled with textual analysis in question 8(b).

Most candidates also responded well to question 12 on Propertius, where again they were able to demonstrate their insight into Roman culture as well as their knowledge of the text.

Although, candidates' range of reference in question 14 generally lacked breadth, many candidates none the less produced thoughtful essays that made the most of the texts they cited and demonstrated considerable skill in the way they marshalled their knowledge to meet the demands of the question.

#### **Question paper 2: Translating**

Candidates generally dealt well with the opening and closing sections of the passage. Most took the relative 'quorum' in their stride, and many were able to recognise the result clause in lines 10–11 and to translate it effectively. Most also coped well with the accusative and infinitive construction in line 10, even if they had struggled with similar constructions in lines 2 and 7. The gerundive of obligation caused some problems, but generally gerunds were handled well.

#### **Project–dissertation**

Choice of topic — candidates clearly chose topics that reflected their own interests and academic strengths. Candidates who picked unusual topics seemed to do so from genuine interest and were generally able to achieve a high level of success. This produced very readable and engaging pieces of writing. Candidates also formulated their titles with care, setting themselves questions that could be answered and framing them in a way that opened avenues for analysis and argument.

Use of Latin — candidates quoted judiciously. Quotations were generally relevant and of an appropriate length. The nature of the topic often determined the number of Roman writers cited but generally candidates included a broad range of texts, and both the quantity and

quality of their source material was strong. Large chunks of Latin texts were wisely avoided, and fewer passages gave the impression of having been shoehorned in at the last moment.

Argument and analysis — most candidates were able to articulate a clear line of argument and to offer some reasoning in support of their conclusions. Candidates generally structured their material in a way that was logical and coherent and allowed their discussion to flourish.

Written English — the standard was good. Most candidates adopted a lucid style that allowed their points to emerge clearly. Most also conducted their discussion in an appropriately formal register.

## **Areas that candidates found demanding**

### **Question paper 1: Literary appreciation**

Question 8(b) on Ovid poem 2 was not handled particularly well. Although most candidates were able to access one or two marks here, many seemed to have a rather shaky grasp of the text, and some of those who knew it focused too much on content and not enough on analysis. When referring to the Latin text, several used quotations containing significant ellipses so that the particular Latin term under discussion was not included.

In the essay question, some candidates struggled to express themselves succinctly. They made relevant points but did so in such a laboured and longwinded way that they were unable to cover the range and variety of points needed to access higher marks. Candidates who drew predominantly on the texts cited in the earlier questions were still able to produce a strong essay, so long as they tailored their approach to meet the specific demands of the question. A few candidates, however, not only used the same texts but made the same points as they had done in response to the earlier questions, which severely limited the number of marks they were able to access.

### **Question paper 2: Translating**

Many candidates relied heavily on the meaning of their words and did not give sufficient thought to the grammatical structure. This was compounded in the case of some candidates who struggled when looking up the meanings of words and frequently confused words that began in a similar way. Words beginning *con* or *com* were regularly mixed up. A few candidates did not seem to be familiar with the English term 'pretence'.

Most candidates did not recognise the comparative adjective in line 9 and only a few knew what to do with the connecting relative in line 5. Some did not handle the suffix *-que* appropriately and many struggled with the gerundive of obligation in line 2. Indirect statements were generally either ignored or expressed awkwardly but above all, it was participles that posed the most widespread problems. Many candidates struggled to distinguish between active and passive, with *comprehensi* (line 4), *conlaudati* and *onerati* (line 6) regularly treated as active. Many also seemed unfamiliar with the way the future participle is used with *esse* to form the future infinitive.

## **Project–dissertation**

Secondary sources — several candidates did not seem to have read either a sufficient amount of secondary material or material of sufficient quality. Many candidates were overly reliant on generic websites or sites of dubious reliability.

Referencing and citation — Citation of both primary and secondary sources was often inconsistent or missing, especially in weaker candidates' work. Some candidates who had listed quite a full bibliography did not manage to cite any of their secondary sources in the course of their dissertation.

## **Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment**

### **Question paper 1: Literary appreciation**

Candidates who do well here have usually learned the texts thoroughly, so they can take content-based questions in their stride and have at their fingertips the range of specific examples needed for success in literary analysis questions and the 20-mark essay.

Centres can support candidates by encouraging them to learn the texts as thoroughly as they can.

For literary analysis questions, centres can encourage candidates to begin by identifying the literary technique or use of language that they are about to exemplify and comment on. Word choice is fine, but it should be identified in order to keep candidates' answers on an analytical footing. As far as possible however, candidates should avoid over reliance on word choice as a technique. Such answers usually attract a maximum of 4 out of 6 marks. When quoting their Latin examples, candidates should seek to pinpoint the key term(s) and not simply quote the first and last words of a sentence with an ellipsis ('...') in between.

Candidates generally seem to know what is expected of them in the essay question. If they struggle here, it is either because their knowledge of the texts is too general or their style of writing is too longwinded, leaving them short of time to cover the amount of material needed for a well-developed argument.

### **Question paper 2: Translating**

Centres can support candidates by encouraging them to make full use of all the verbal and grammatical information contained in the word list. A few terms that tend to cause problems, such as neuter nouns, deponent verbs, words that look similar and words which carry a line reference, can help candidates cope when they encounter these features in context. Where a second meaning is offered, candidates should always give it a glance, even if they do not intend to use it, since it may help refine their understanding of the Latin term in the context of the passage.

It is also worth reminding candidates of the clues and pointers to be found in the English linking passages. Time spent reading these sections is well worth another look, especially if candidates start to feel they are struggling.

In terms of grammar and syntax, it might be worth suggesting to candidates that they focus on ways in which participles are used in Latin especially, but not exclusively, the perfect passive participle. Participles are such a standard feature of authentic Latin that they are almost bound to feature in any future passage, so that familiarity with the way they operate should boost candidates' performance. The same is true of the accusative and infinitive constructive and the connecting relative, which also tend to feature regularly in unseen translating passages.

Candidates could also be encouraged to revise the rules governing the agreement of adjectives, and indeed participles, since this should help them cope with the more flexible word order found in unseen verse translation, which is due to make its debut in the 2024 paper.

The re-introduction of verse also means that from 2024 candidates will have two passages and two word lists, to manage. Under the old arrangements (pre-2016), candidates often seemed more comfortable translating the verse than the prose, provided they managed their time effectively. Opportunities to practise translating verse and prose under timed conditions should help current candidates to develop their own time management strategies.

## **Project–dissertation**

Candidates should be encouraged to follow the examples of this year's cohort by choosing a topic that appeals to their interests, but which also invites analysis and evaluation and for which both primary and secondary sources are available. In particular, there should be scope for interaction with passages of Latin.

Secondary sources: encourage candidates to read around their topic and not to rely too heavily on generic books or websites. They should try to consult at least one or two more academic texts relating to their specific topic. The advent of AI makes it more important than ever that candidates cite their sources to protect themselves from the suspicion of plagiarism. As long as candidates are consistent, they can use any conventional system, but endnotes are not an ideal fit with onscreen marking.



## Appendix: 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 was developed to support learners and centres. This included modifications to course assessment, retained from the 2021–22 session. This support was designed to address the ongoing disruption to learning and teaching that young people have experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic while recognising a lessening of the impact of disruption to learning and teaching as a result of the pandemic. The revision support that was available for the 2021–22 session was not offered to learners in 2022–23.

In addition, SQA adopted a sensitive approach to grading for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses, to help ensure fairness for candidates while maintaining

standards. This is in recognition of the fact that those preparing for and sitting exams continue to do so in different circumstances from those who sat exams in 2019 and 2022.

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 2023 and the ongoing impact the disruption from the pandemic has had on learners. 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 the removal of revision support.

The grade boundaries used in 2023 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 2023 Awarding — Methodology Report](#).