Course report 2025

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 with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024:   47

Number of resulted entries in 2025:   25

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	5	20.0	20.0	126
B	14	56.0	76.0	108
C	3	12.0	88.0	90
D	3	12.0	100	72
No award	0	0	100%	Not applicable

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

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

In this report:

- 'most' means greater than or equal to 70%

- 'many' means 50% to 69%

- 'some' means 25% to 49%

- 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the statistics and information page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

The course assessment performed as intended and gave well-prepared candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

As in previous years, there was a good spread of marks within and across the three course assessment components.

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Both sections (Letters and Letter-writing and Ovid and Latin Love-poetry), provided a varied range of question types and sampled widely from the prescribed texts. Questions were accessible to candidates but carefully focused to allow for differentiation and a range of responses based on candidates' level of understanding and knowledge of the prescribed texts. The essay questions worked well and gave candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their grasp of the texts and their analysis skills.

Overall, in line with previous years, the literary appreciation paper offered an appropriate degree of stretch and challenge.

Question paper 2: translating

Both passages (prose and verse) were demanding, as is always the case.

The aspects of accidence and syntax sampled covered a broad range, from the relatively straightforward to the more complex and challenging.

The wordlist provided the intended level of assistance and did not appear to contain any English words that were unfamiliar to candidates.

Section 2 (verse) was less demanding than section 1 (prose). As a result, the verse passage gave less-confident candidates a chance to raise their overall mark.

Project-dissertation

The project-dissertation performed as expected.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Candidates with a thorough knowledge of the texts demonstrated this to good effect in questions 1(a) and 1(b) in the letters section and questions 10(a) and 10(c) in the love poetry section. Question 8 in the letters section and question 11(a) in the love poetry section also allowed candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge.

As expected, the language analysis questions (question 4 in the letters section and question 11(b) in the love poetry section) proved effective discriminators, challenging 'A' candidates and allowing other candidates to access at least 1 or 2 of the 6 marks available.

Question 5 in the letters section and question 15 in the love poetry section required candidates to think quite carefully. Although focused on texts in English, both questions contained a good degree of stretch and challenge. In the questions seeking an evaluation of evidence, (question 3(c) in the letters section and question 10(b) in the love poetry section), most candidates achieved 2 or 3 marks. Only a few candidates managed to gain all 4 marks.

Candidates performed strongly in questions from both sections. Many candidates expertly analysed Cicero's state of mind in question 7 in the letters section. Many candidates provided a lively discussion about the character of the door in response to question 16(a) in the love poetry section.

Question paper 2: translating

In section 1 (prose), most candidates coped well with block 3 and the impersonal passive it contained. Most candidates also dealt well with the use of past participles in blocks 11 and 18. Most candidates translated blocks 1, 2, 6, 16, 19 and 20 well. Most candidates handled the use of *ne* + subjunctive after verbs of fearing and the use of the infinitive after *iubeo* well. Most candidates also identified that *instituit* governed the two infinitives *cogere* and *parare*. Most candidates translated singulars and plurals accurately.

In section 2 (verse), many candidates showed skill in turning poetic language into natural English. Most candidates coped well with the zeugma in line 6: 'pulled a face and a sigh.' Only a few candidates confused singulars and plurals, which meant fewer marks than usual were missed to this type of mistake. Almost all candidates made some sense of the passage. Overall, markers awarded very few zeros for any of the blocks.

Project-dissertation

Candidate performance in the project-dissertation was strong.

Most candidates demonstrated their knowledge and skills in Latin language and literature and their capacity for research and wider reading. Nearly every candidate addressed the requirements of the task, engaged with a complex topic, and attempted to reach a reasoned conclusion.

Choice of topic plays a major role in determining candidates' performance. This year, most candidates chose topics that allowed for detailed engagement with Latin texts and titles that opened up scope for in-depth analysis and evaluation. Fewer candidates than usual chose to combine their skill in Latin with their expertise in another area of academic or personal interest such as law, medicine or music. Some familiar topics (the role of women, the collapse of The Roman Republic, and the Reforms of Augustus) were notable by their absence. Most candidates explored less well-worn themes. Many candidates who focused on literary themes performed well, but so did many candidates whose topics were philosophical, historical or cultural.

The strongest pieces were excellent and clearly reflected exhaustive research and considerable depth of thought.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Some candidates did not demonstrate a sufficiently precise knowledge of the texts, especially in their responses to questions 1(b) and 3(b) in the letters section and question 10(a) in the love poetry section, where they should have extracted information from the cited lines. Questions 10(b) and 14 in the love poetry section also required candidates to have a good grasp of the lines cited and of the mythological allusions they contained. The candidates who did not perform well in these questions demonstrated insufficient knowledge of the texts.

However, some candidates did not access marks for reasons that had more to do with their approach and technique than their content knowledge. In the language questions (question 4 in the letters section and question 11(b) in the love poetry section), some candidates focused too much on what the author said and not enough on how he said it. In the attitude question (question 12 in the love poetry section) some candidates did not infer an appropriate attitude from the wording of the text.

In the essay question (question 9 in the letters section and question 17 in the love poetry section), a few candidates fared less well because they did not include any analysis or evaluation in their responses. Their essays read like a series of separate points rather than a developed and sustained discussion.

Question paper 2: translating

The more challenging blocks in prose tended to be those that featured future participles (blocks 5, 6 and 15), personal pronouns, particularly the reflexive pronoun (blocks 10, 14 and 15) and the use of the ablative after perfect passive participles (blocks 8 and 9). These were the blocks that proved most discriminating.

In verse, the most challenging blocks featured the use of the ablative after an adjective. Few candidates gained the full 2 marks for block 5. Block 2 was also a good discriminator. Many candidates conveyed the essential idea, but only a few candidates achieved a completely correct translation.

In block 7 in prose, some candidates dealt well with the ablative absolute but treated the plural as singular. In blocks 2 and 8 in verse, some candidates sacrificed literal accuracy for fluent English.

Project-dissertation

There were no areas in the project-dissertation where candidate performance was consistently weak.

A few candidates chose topics that offered little scope for meaningful discussion or asked questions that were unlikely to yield interesting answers. Among the candidates who chose fruitful topics, there were a few whose dissertations might have achieved a higher mark if they had framed their research question more precisely or pursued their line of thought a little further. For instance, some candidates tackling comparative topics identified interesting differences between their chosen texts but did not explore the significance of those differences.

Some candidates did not seem to have done enough secondary reading. Many candidates who did seem to have done enough secondary reading did not cite their secondary sources in the course of their discussion.

A few candidates did not make effective use of their Latin sources. Their quotations were not necessarily irrelevant, but they inserted them into the discussion with little or no introduction and left them to speak for themselves, without explanation or analysis. Commenting on a single instance of word choice is unlikely to qualify as engagement with Latin, particularly if the word in question is not especially significant.

A few candidates did not present their Latin texts accurately. They cut and pasted Latin quotations without noticing that they had disrupted word divisions.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

The most reliable predictor of success in the literary appreciation paper is a sound knowledge and understanding of the prescribed texts. Candidates who thoroughly learn the material are very likely to do well.

All the usual advice still applies: candidates should read the question, focus on the lines cited and answer based on the number of marks available. However, a few specific question types are also worth highlighting.

Candidates can find questions on language use (usually worth 6 marks) challenging. In this type of question, 1 mark is available for identifying and exemplifying a specific use of language and another for commenting on its effectiveness. Candidates are expected to quote their examples in Latin and to make the meaning clear either implicitly or *via* an explicit translation. However, simply quoting and translating words or phrases will not necessarily gain a mark for identifying a relevant use of language. To gain this mark, candidates need to refer to a specific way that the author uses language to make his point effectively, for example word choice, repetition or alliteration.

Candidates can also find attitude questions quite challenging. These questions expect candidates to infer an attitude from the words of the text, so it is not enough for them to simply reiterate what the text says. Candidates should try to identify at least one attitude that they can then support with examples from the text. Having a checklist of possible attitude adjectives in mind when tackling these questions can help candidates to specify an appropriate attitude in context.

The essay questions give candidates a degree of autonomy in selecting texts to discuss. Candidates who might struggle with shorter questions can focus on the texts they know well. Candidates should produce a properly rounded discussion rather than a long list of disjointed points. Candidates should include some analysis

and evaluation of their own into their discussion, by, for example, teasing out different aspects or comparing and contrasting different authors.

Question paper 2: translating

In general, practice is the best form of preparation for the translating paper.

Candidates should follow this general advice:

- Pay attention to the parts in English.
- Take care when looking up words in the wordlist and make full use of all the grammatical information the wordlist contains.
- The Latin passages are often punctuated in a way that is intended to be helpful, so make the most of this clue when parsing a sentence.

Prose

In more specific terms, candidates can find personal pronouns particularly challenging. Candidates could find some targeted practice with personal pronouns helpful. Indirect statements using the accusative and infinitive can also cause candidates difficulty. While subjunctive constructions often feature an obvious trigger word, such as *ut*, indirect statements can be much harder for candidates to disentangle in context. Candidates would benefit from practice in recognising and dealing with this construction, especially where the verb of saying is implied or expressed using a deponent verb.

Candidates generally find participles, in all their tenses and uses, problematic. Candidates would benefit from practice targeting this aspect.

Verse

Candidates can struggle with the so-called *ablative of respect or specification*. Teachers and lecturers should highlight this area to candidates when they are preparing for the translating paper.

Project-dissertation

Teachers, lecturers and candidates may find the following advice about the project-dissertation helpful.

Choice of topic

Candidates do not have to frame titles as a question, but they should start out with some sort of research question in mind to help them map out their research and provide potential for later analysis and evaluation. If candidates want their title to ask a question, teachers and lecturers should nudge them towards one that will elicit more than a yes or no answer.

Sources

In historical or cultural topics, engagement with Latin does not need to involve analysis of literary techniques. Elucidating a Latin quotation and/or drawing out its implications is likely to be more relevant than a comment on word choice.

Weaker dissertations tend to be under-researched. Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to read widely and deeply. Candidates must acknowledge their sources of information in their bibliography and in their footnotes. Artificial intelligence means citing sources is more important than ever.

Proofreading

Candidates should proofread their Latin quotations thoroughly to ensure that they have not inappropriately divided Latin words or inadvertently modified them using spellcheck.

Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

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

For most National Courses, we aim 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, we hold 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 our 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. We 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.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).