



Course report 2025

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: 146

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 158

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	106	67.1	67.1	91
B	27	17.1	84.2	78
C	21	13.3	97.5	65
D	4	2.5	100	52
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

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

The literary appreciation paper performed as expected, with no invalid or inaccessible questions. There was a good spread of marks, which demonstrated that the questions were accessible to all candidates and allowed for differentiation.

Feedback indicated that this question paper was fair and reasonable, although it suggested that there was a slight imbalance in the types of question. This question paper sampled all parts of the course and all types of question.

Virgil was the most popular author, attracting 89.2% of candidates, followed by Cicero (47.8%), Ovid (31.2%), Pliny (24.8%), and Catullus (7%). These distributions are in line with previous years, although Catullus gained a few more candidates in 2025.

Question paper 2: translating

The translating paper performed as expected, with a spread of marks from 24 out of 50 to 49 out of 50, suggesting a suitable level of challenge.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas where candidates performed well

Candidate performance in 2025 showed a slight improvement on 2024.

Most candidates engaged well with the questions. All questions were accessible and none of the questions appeared to present barriers to most candidates. Many candidates demonstrated their knowledge of the texts and material to a satisfactory level.

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Many candidates performed well in the following questions:

- Section 1: questions 1(b), 2(b), 4(b)(i), 4(b)(ii), and 6
- Section 2: question 13(b)
- Section 3: questions 18(b) and 21(a)
- Section 4: questions 25, 26(a), 29(a), and 29(b)
- Section 5: questions 33 and 36

Question paper 2: translating

Most candidates engaged well with the paper and followed the narrative to produce satisfactory English versions of the text.

There were a number of shorter blocks, which enabled less-able candidates to demonstrate their understanding. Almost all candidates finished the paper.

Many candidates achieved high scores in blocks 2, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21, 22, and 25.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

As in previous years, candidates performed less well in questions requiring evaluation of language techniques:

- Section 2, question 16: some candidates missed elements of the description.
- Section 3, question 21(b): many candidates did not draw a clear comparison between Dido's behaviour and that of the Bacchantes.
- Section 4:
 - Question 28(b): some candidates interpreted the word 'amazing' in a positive sense, for example, 'marvellous' and gained credit if their argument was valid. However, many candidates did not refer to the text, supplying neither content nor language evidence to support their assessment of Pliny's technique.
 - Question 30(a): many candidates answered on the other simile, which referred to a light being extinguished.
- Section 5:
 - Question 35: many candidates did not analyse Cicero's use of language to create effects.
 - Question 41: many candidates did not separate the two strands of Cicero's argument, entertaining his audience and providing solid evidence against the accused.

Question paper 2: translating

Candidates performed less well in the following blocks:

Block 1: some candidates omitted *quidam* and some candidates did not translate the deponent verb *profectus est*.

Block 3: some candidates did not translate the present participle. A few candidates omitted *secum*.

Block 4: *ut fere fit* — some candidates did not translate *fit* correctly. A few candidates confused *contulit* with *constituit*.

Block 7: some candidates translated *cum* as ‘with’ instead of ‘when’.

novi — some candidates omitted this or introduced a different new friend.

eandem — a few candidates omitted this and did not gain any marks for block 7.

Block 8: some candidates did not seem to realise that *constituerunt* governed both infinitives; however, stronger candidates coped well with this.

Block 9: some candidates missed out on all marks for the block by translating *in eodem loco dormire constituerunt* as ‘they decided to find a place to sleep’.

Block 16: very few candidates translated *alterius* correctly. Most candidates wrote ‘the other bedroom’.

Block 24: many candidates missed the superlative adjective. Some candidates missed the perfect passive.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Candidates should expect the literary appreciation paper to sample all parts of the prescribed text. This paper will always have a range of different types of questions, a range of command words, and a range of questions worth varying marks.

Candidates should gain experience and practice in understanding the meaning of command words and question types. Questions on Roman culture and Latin literary techniques, including the use of language for literary effect, will appear at least once in every section. There will be questions assessing candidates' knowledge of the text and questions assessing skills of analysis, argument and evaluation.

For Roman culture questions, candidates do not have to include information beyond what they have learnt specifically from the text. However, they can gain credit for correct information from their own knowledge.

Candidates need to ensure that they do not stray beyond the line references given in the question. Candidates frequently miss out on marks for referring to the wrong section of text. Teachers and lecturers should make sure candidates are aware of this potential hazard. Candidates should also be aware of the exam requirements.

Bullet points are appropriate in extended responses, as long as candidates expand them sufficiently. Single words are not normally enough to demonstrate knowledge.

Matching the length of answer to the number of marks available is a useful skill for candidates to practise. Candidates should avoid giving overly long and repetitive answers, which are unnecessary and not a good use of their time.

Where appropriate, candidates can answer both 'yes' and 'no' to questions, and they can gain credit for making any valid point. Teachers and lecturers should give candidates opportunities to practise writing 'yes' and 'no' answers to the same

question. This is one way that candidates can achieve marks in high-value questions.

Question paper 2: translating

Candidates should be prepared to demonstrate their skills in handling a wide range of accidence and syntax. The list of prescribed accidence and syntax is available on page 5 of the Higher Latin Course Specification, on the [Latin subject page](#) of our website. Candidates will gain marks for accurately applying accidence and syntax. Deponent verbs and irregular verbs, comparative and superlative adjectives, and a range of participles, can appear at this level, together with other complex accidence and syntax. Candidates should prepare for this.

Candidates should use the wordlist effectively. They must take care to find the correct meaning in the wordlist and to review the sense of the translation. The wordlist supplies meanings for the Latin words in the context of the passage, so even if candidates believe they know the meaning of a Latin word, they should still take a few moments to check the specific meaning, particularly as a word that is repeated in a passage can have multiple meanings listed in the wordlist. Some candidates go wrong by assuming they know a word and not checking the specific meaning in the wordlist. It is very important for candidates to read the words in the passage carefully and accurately. (In the 2025 assessment, some candidates confused *cum*, 'with' with *cum*, 'when'.) Candidates should practise using wordlists in this way and using context to determine the correct choice, rather than taking the first meaning listed. Candidates should pay close attention to the spelling of words to avoid confusing superficially similar words like *contulit* and *constituit*.

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to check that they have not omitted any small words, for example pronouns like *ei* or conjunctions like *–que*, which are important for the narrative. Candidates can find it helpful to read the passage two or three times before attempting to translate it. Candidates should thoroughly read through their translation when they have finished to check for errors and omissions.

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](#).