

Course report 2026

Advanced Higher Latin, SCQF level 7

We've written this report for teachers and lecturers. We recommend you read this with the published course assessment documents and marking instructions.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the question papers and coursework where candidates performed well and areas where they did not perform well
- has advice you might find useful when preparing candidates for assessment

We collect and prepare the statistics in course reports before we complete the appeals process.

Statistical and grade boundary information

Course entries

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 25

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 40

Distribution of course awards (including minimum mark to achieve each grade)

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	18	45.0	45.0	126
B	12	30.0	75.0	108
C	5	12.5	87.5	90
D	3	7.5	95.0	72
No award	2	5.0	100	Not applicable

We've not applied rounding to these statistics.

In this report:

- 'Most' means greater than or equal to 70%.
- 'Many' means 50% to 69%.
- 'Some' means 25% to 49%.
- 'Few' or 'a few' means less than 25%.

You can find [statistical reports](#) on our website.

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's 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 make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Senior Qualifications Scotland staff normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors use 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.

- We can adjust the grade boundaries downwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- We can adjust the grade boundaries upwards if there's evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- If levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, we maintain similar grade boundaries.

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](#).

How the course assessment performed

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Love poetry continues to prove the more popular option. There was parity between the two sections, and questions were effective in testing candidates' skills of understanding, analysis and evaluation. Both 20-mark essay questions allowed candidates of all abilities to demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of the texts they studied.

Most candidates accessed at least some of the marks in every question and demonstrated their skills and knowledge, even if, in some cases, they missed the fine detail. Overall, there was a good spread to the marks, with candidates achieving results across the range.

A few candidates struggled to complete the paper due to lack of knowledge in some areas and/or over-answering in others. A few candidates, including those whose performance was otherwise strong, made no attempt to answer the occasional question, but the incidence was low and it was difficult to discern a regular pattern.

Question paper 2: translating

Both passages — prose and verse — performed as intended in allowing candidates to demonstrate their language knowledge and translating skills. There were sections that stretched the most able, but most blocks remained accessible to candidates of all abilities. The blocks were carefully mixed, with shorter blocks in the middle of complex sections so that candidates had opportunities to get back on track when they went astray. The strong storyline in both passages also helped.

Candidates who struggled with the periodic structure of the prose passage often fared better in the verse passage and their performance here did a lot to boost their overall score. The word lists also worked well, however there were candidates who looked up the wrong word or mixed up adjacent words.

Candidates did not seem to experience any timing issues. Only a few candidates did not complete the paper and, in each case, it was clear the difficulties were caused by gaps in knowledge and understanding rather than a lack of time.

Project-dissertation

Candidates choose their own topic, so they control the nature and style of the question. Almost all candidates followed the helpful advice offered in the assessment task and additional guidance.

Overall, performance in this component was high. Candidates showed a clear understanding of the requirements for this element of the course, with the vast majority producing very competent pieces of work. Very few submissions were inadequate. Several were of the highest standard, showing mature and sophisticated levels of scholarship. It was pleasing to see that many candidates chose more unusual topics for their project-dissertation.

How candidates performed

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Candidates were well prepared and most demonstrated their knowledge and skills to good effect.

Letters and letter-writing

Candidates dealt well with the opening question 1(a)(i) and (ii), correctly identifying the author of the letter and offering detailed explanations of the humour. In question 1(b), most candidates drew general conclusions about literacy in the Roman world from the specific details in the text.

The responses to question 4 were also strong. Most candidates had reflected carefully on Seneca's advice and offered a balanced assessment of its relevance to modern life. Many candidates also discussed the issues raised in question 5, with most seeing both positives and negatives in Pliny's position. Many also handled question 6(a) effectively, providing detailed explanations of the criticisms implicit in Seneca's description of the dinner party. Question 8(a) generated spirited responses, as candidates formulated their own opinions of Pliny based on their close reading of the text.

Several candidates showed considerable skill in their responses to the language questions (questions 3 and 7). Those who did well identified specific language features and commented persuasively on their effectiveness. If candidates missed marks in these questions, it was generally because they discussed the content of the text without specific reference to language use.

A few candidates missed marks in question 6(b) because they lacked basic knowledge of the historical examples cited in the text.

Ovid and Latin love poetry

Most candidates dealt well with question 10(a). Many explored the issues at stake in questions that touched on moral and social values (questions 12 and 15). In question 12 in particular, candidates also showed a sound understanding of the mythological

references that were key to the comparisons. In question 17, most candidates realised that poem 24 was narrated from the door's perspective, and discussed the door's personality.

Many candidates handled the language questions (11 and 16) with confidence and skill, especially question 16, where many identified specific techniques and commented effectively on them. Responses to question 11 were more varied in quality, but several candidates produced very perceptive assessments of the poet's use of language. Candidates who missed marks in these questions generally commented on the content of the text without identifying or discussing any specific features of language use.

Question 18(a) produced strong answers that showed candidates' skill in drawing out conclusions from quite a complex piece of Latin.

A few candidates struggled with question 13, which was not complex, but required a more detailed knowledge of the middle of the poem. Some candidates who understood the mythological references in question 10(b) still missed marks because they did not fully understand the point the poet was making.

Essay questions (20 marks)

The openness of the essay questions (in letters and love poetry) gave candidates scope to explore the texts they knew well and had particularly enjoyed. This was especially beneficial for those who had struggled with the shorter questions. Some of the essays were extremely good, with candidates — especially on the love poetry side — developing and sustaining remarkably sophisticated lines of argument, given that they were writing under exam conditions. Of the candidates who did less well here, some simply did not include enough material, while a few struggled to develop their discussion beyond a long list of points.

Question paper 2: translating

Candidates' performance in both prose and verse showed a good degree of competence. Performance was slightly stronger in verse than prose, boosting the overall score of several candidates who had struggled with the prose passage.

The first block of the prose passage was quite complex, and only a few candidates handled the genitive of the relative pronoun. However, most candidates scored at least 1 mark for the essential idea. This was true of most blocks, so that 0 marks were rare and very few candidates ended up with a string of 0 marks in one block after another. Most candidates performed strongly in blocks 7, 9 and 12, where almost all candidates achieved the full 2 marks. Most candidates also dealt confidently with the ablatives in the opening blocks, including the ablative absolute. Singulars and plurals were handled well and most candidates distinguished between subject and object, especially in blocks 2 to 3, where identification required more thought.

Candidates did not handle implied indirect statements particularly well (blocks 5 to 6 and 14 to 20) although most picked up some marks. Treatment of deponent verbs was variable, and some candidates struggled with the grammar of longer sentences.

The verse section allowed several weaker candidates to improve their overall score. Blocks 1 to 3 provided every candidate with a manageable start, and most candidates dealt confidently with the first six blocks. However, all but the strongest missed marks in the final blocks because they struggled to match up the nouns and adjectives. Some candidates missed marks in the verse section because of mixed singulars and plurals.

Project-dissertation

Most candidates showcased their knowledge and skills in this component. They chose excellent and varied topics, and candidates' interest and engagement with their chosen subject was evident in every case, even where the end-product did not quite reach its intended goal. The quality of written expression was high, with very few instances of poor spelling, weak grammar, or a lack of clarity.

Most candidates had clearly been well advised on selecting an appropriate title and size of topic for the demands of the task. Candidates produced some very sophisticated analyses, often exploring aspects of Latin writing that intersected with their other exam subjects and/or their future career plans. Prospective medics did well in investigating the work of Roman medical writers, while intending lawyers researched topics within Roman law to develop strong arguments of their own.

The level of candidates' engagement with Latin was noticeably high. It was a pleasure to see candidates regularly making effective use of Latin sources and successfully adapting the skills of textual analysis that they had learned in literary appreciation to meet the demands of their research. Sometimes they went a little too far, commenting on the significance of every single word quoted, but this is a minor quibble compared to having no comment at all on their Latin sources.

Almost every candidate made a clear and significant effort to find appropriate secondary sources of an academic nature to support their argument. Most did a very good job of incorporating these into their discussion.

The best projects were exceptional, and the work that went into them from candidates will be superb preparation for academic research and writing in further education.

The weakest pieces tended to be those where the candidate's title was overly complicated and where their aims remained ill-defined. This compromised the candidates' chances of producing analysis and evaluation of sufficient depth. Citing of secondary sources remained a bit patchy and the quality of the secondary sources cited varied from candidate to candidate. Some otherwise strong candidates struggled to set out their bibliography in an appropriate way. In footnoting their sources, very few remembered to include page numbers or chapter and line numbers for their quotations.

Preparing candidates for assessment

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Candidates who miss marks in this paper do so because their knowledge of the prescribed texts lacks the required degree of detail. 'Content' questions test candidates' ability to extract information from the text with clarity and precision, so close familiarity with the text is essential. Remind candidates to learn all the texts as thoroughly as possible. This includes learning the middle and end of each individual text in as much detail as the beginning, since the need to sample the full range of the prescribed texts means questions cannot always focus on the opening lines.

In language questions, we want candidates to analyse ways in which authors use language to emphasise particular points. Candidates must identify specific uses of language and comment on their effectiveness. Marks are awarded in pairs: 1 mark for identifying and exemplifying a relevant use of language and 1 mark for an appropriate comment. Uses of language in this context can include, for example, word choice, word order, repetition, balanced phrases, paired phrases, similes, metaphors, direct speech, rhetorical questions, exclamations and sound effects.

Candidates will not gain marks for quoting and translating a phrase without pinpointing a specific use of language. An appropriate comment on such a phrase may gain 1 mark. In the same way, a relevant example of language use without any accompanying comment may gain 1 mark. However, the number of marks candidates can gain in this way is limited to a maximum of 50% of the total available (3 out of 6 or 2 out of 4). It is not possible for candidates to achieve full marks by making a series of single points, as an answer of this type would not demonstrate sufficient analytical skill. We recommend quotation in Latin with an accompanying translation. This is essential if a candidate is commenting on alliteration and other sound effects.

As 6-mark language questions are a regular feature in both sections of this paper, centres should aim to include such questions when devising prelims or mock examinations.

Remind candidates that, in comparison questions, identifying a similarity between two texts usually attracts 1 mark, whereas explaining a difference is worth 2 marks, if they exemplify the difference with detailed reference to both texts. In questions that ask 'what feelings' or 'what attitude' a passage shows or 'what impression' it creates, we want candidates to draw out aspects of the text that are implied but not explicitly stated. Simply detailing what the text says may attract some marks, but not all of them. The easiest way for candidates to achieve full marks is to identify at least one implicit feeling, attitude or impression and to use details from the text to explain and substantiate their thinking. A 3-mark 'attitude' question requires three detailed references to the text in support of at least one specific attitude. Three references to the text without mention of a specific attitude will only achieve a maximum of 2 marks. Attitudes listed without any substantiating evidence are not likely to achieve any marks.

The 20-mark essay question tests candidates' ability to manipulate their knowledge to meet the demands of a specific question. The question itself is open so candidates can draw on the widest possible range of material. This means that even candidates whose knowledge is uneven should find some relevant examples from within the material they know well. The essay question also offers candidates an opportunity to use their skills of analysis and evaluation to develop a line of argument and reach a reasoned conclusion. The open nature of the question often means candidates must find their own way of approaching it analytically. Reassure candidates that they can do this by considering the different approaches taken by the authors themselves. A series of relevant and substantiated points will gain marks, but to access the upper mark range, candidates should work their points into a developed and rounded discussion. As 3 marks are available for structure, candidates should set out their aims in an introduction, present their material in a coherent order, and sum up their thinking in a conclusion that also offers a final judgement. Candidates must refer to at least three authors. They should aim to have an introduction and a conclusion, to discuss four or five examples by each of their three chosen authors, and to make their points in a clear and organised way.

Question paper 2: translating

Practice is the best preparation for this paper. This means practising unseen passages by a variety of prose authors, and passages from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* for verse. Training in the use of the word list is also helpful, and you should remind candidates to pay attention to the title and the sections in English.

In terms of accidence, some targeted work on pronoun endings would be useful. By convention, word lists provide slightly less information for pronouns than for nouns and verbs, so you should encourage candidates to learn the endings for different types of pronouns, including relatives and demonstratives. In verse, candidates should practise applying knowledge of accidence and the rules of agreement when trying to match up nouns and adjectives.

As for syntax, candidates deal well with constructions featuring the subjunctive. Many candidates find indirect statements hard to recognise, especially where the introductory verb is not an obvious verb of 'saying' or where the indirect statement is extended to include several infinitive clauses. As such constructions are a standard feature of authentic Latin, targeted practice in this area is helpful. Overall, however, it is not so much individual constructions that candidates find difficult as the complex way in which they are combined within the periodic structure of authentic Latin sentences. Practice in unpacking complex sentences is therefore an invaluable preparation, especially for the prose section.

Project-dissertation

Candidates usually have a firm grasp of what the project-dissertation requires. They should choose a topic with a clear focus that they can develop in depth within the 4000-word limit, and which allows them to access primary source material in Latin. They should quote primary sources in Latin, with an accompanying translation either within the text or in the footnotes. Candidates have been engaging enthusiastically with the Latin, to an almost excessive extent. Reassure candidates that they do not need to comment on every word. Explaining the significance of a quotation or drawing out its implications also counts as engaging with the Latin. The key aim is that the Latin sources should form an integral part of a candidate's argument.

Secondary reading is also important, as this will form a major part of candidates' research. Generic works and websites can be useful in providing candidates with an initial overview, but as they become more familiar with their topic, they should try to consult material of a more academic or specialised nature. Candidates should also cite their secondary sources in their discussion. Listing them in their bibliography is good, but not enough. Artificial intelligence (AI) has made it more important than ever that candidates show where their information came from. Footnotes are preferable to endnotes for practical reasons, as markers find them less disruptive and easier to access.

When citing sources in their footnotes, candidates should include page numbers for secondary sources and line references for their Latin quotations. They should also indicate which translation they used and reference it appropriately. In the bibliography they should handle primary and secondary sources separately. They should list primary sources alphabetically by author, title and the publication details of the edition used or, if accessed online, the website details. Likewise, the listing for secondary sources should include author, title, date and place of publication or the website or journal name and URL. For further guidance, direct candidates to one of the many library websites that offer specific advice. It does not matter which of the conventional systems candidates use, if they are consistent. Although a little time consuming, referencing skills are worth mastering, as they are readily transferable and will help candidates when they go on to study at tertiary level.

A coherent argument is built paragraph by paragraph, so advise candidates to think carefully about the way they structure their material. There should be a clear rationale to the order in which they make their points, as this will constitute their argument. Candidates should set out their aims in their introduction and if they want to indicate their line argument, they should do it in a way that avoids drawing a definitive conclusion. They should save that for the actual conclusion, which is meant to sum up the key points and reach a reasoned judgement.