

Course report 2026

National 5 Latin, SCQF level 5

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

Note: we've made changes to the course assessment from session 2026–27.

Check your [subject page](#) for more information.

The report:

- provides a summary of how each course component performed
- highlights areas of the question papers 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: 421

Number of resulted entries in 2026: 339

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

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	285	84.1	84.1	70
B	30	8.8	92.9	60
C	18	5.3	98.2	50
D	5	1.5	99.7	40
No award	1	0.3	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

All questions functioned as intended. Most candidates managed their time well.

Most candidates gave responses to questions in each of their chosen sections equally well. Each section has a similar range of different types of questions, and each section contains questions that allow for differentiation. Each section also contains a range of questions on knowledge of specific lines of text, Roman culture and Latin literary techniques. In addition, each section includes questions designed to assess skills of analysis, argument and evaluation.

No grade boundary adjustments were made.

Question paper 2: translating

The translating passage, called 'Crowd Trouble at Pompeii', was from Tacitus *Annals* 14.17.

The passage featured a real historical event describing crowd violence at a Roman sports event in the first Century AD, which provided contemporary relevance to candidates.

The passage was adapted to give candidates opportunities to demonstrate their skills in handling a wide range of prescribed grammar. This provided the required differentiation.

The passage sampled the following grammar:

- nouns: declensions 1 to 5 (all common case usages)
- adjectives: regular (positive and superlative)
- adjectives: irregular — *bonus* (good), *malus* (bad), *multus* (many), *magnus* (big)
- pronoun: *ego* (I)
- possessive adjective: *is*, *ea*, *id* (he, she, it)
- verbs: active, regular, indicative, perfect, imperfect, pluperfect
- verbs: passive, regular, indicative, perfect

- irregular verb: *sum* (to be)
- subjunctive mood: present, imperfect and pluperfect active and passive
- infinitive: present active
- participles: present active, perfect passive
- embedded clauses
- relative clauses
- indirect statement
- indirect command
- direct speech
- causal clause

The passage provided the right level of challenge and functioned as intended.

No grade boundary adjustments were made.

How candidates performed

Areas where candidates performed well

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Most candidates answered every type of question. Many gave full and detailed answers, showing that they had prepared and had a good knowledge of the texts. Unexpected, yet valid, responses demonstrated candidate engagement with the prescribed Latin literature. Some candidates gave full answers that went beyond the marks allocated.

Many candidates performed well in answering the culture questions, often giving imaginative responses.

Many candidates responded enthusiastically to questions requiring a personal response.

Candidates performed well in the following questions in each section:

Section 1 — Catullus

- Question 1(a): most candidates gained the full 3 marks for this opening question, giving them a strong and confident start.
- Question 3: this question, about Catullus' confused emotions, elicited a wide range of interesting and valid responses.
- Question 4: many candidates handled this demanding question well, about Lesbia's predicted miserable future, and achieved the full 4 marks.
- Questions 5(a) and 5(b): both parts of this question about Catullus visiting his brother's grave were well done.

Section 2 — Ovid

- Question 11: many candidates discussed the 'spoiler' in this part of the story, which hinted at the tragedy to come. They made many interesting points specifically based on their close reading of the text and not just the idea of a 'spoiler' in general terms.

- Question 14: many candidates identified details in the text that make Icarus' flying sound dangerous.
- Question 16: most candidates discussed the 'technology appeal' of this story to Roman readers with excellent analysis and gained the full 4 marks.

Section 3 — Virgil

- Question 19: many candidates answered this language question particularly well and gained the full 4 marks.
- Questions 21(a), 21(b), 21(c): most candidates gave strong answers to all three parts of this question, demonstrating that they knew the Laocoon episode thoroughly.
- Questions 22(a) and 22(b): most candidates gave excellent answers to both parts of the question about Aeneas' pride in the Trojans on one hand, and his lack of pride on the other hand.
- Question 24: many candidates drew from a wide range of evidence within the text itself to show their knowledge of the goddess Minerva.

Section 4 — Pliny

- Question 26: most candidates gave very full and imaginative answers about the Roman property market in this culture question.
- Question 27(b): most candidates displayed original thinking in their suggestions as to why people had been sent to another part of the house, all of which were valid.
- Questions 28(a) and 28(b): many candidates achieved full marks for both questions by showing thorough knowledge of the text at this point in the story, when Athenodorus follows the ghost into the garden.
- Question 31(c): most candidates handled this language choice question well and discussed how 'amazing' the appearance of a second dolphin was, with most saying that it was not particularly amazing. These observations were imaginative and accurate.

Section 5 — Cicero

- Question 33(c): most candidates discussed the advantages of making an attack at night well.
- Questions 35(b) and 35(c): many candidates gave strong answers when discussing Cicero's choice of words and explained the effect that Cicero was trying to achieve.
- Question 38: many candidates clearly understood the complicated twists in the tale at this point in the narrative and could explain the senate's sudden change of mind.

Question paper 2: translating

Most candidates were successful in accessing the whole passage.

Many candidates distinguished between tenses with a good degree of accuracy.

Most candidates were strong in handling irregular verbs and identifying the correct subject of the sentence, even when it was not obvious.

Most candidates handled direct and indirect speech well.

Most candidates were good at identifying singular and plural nouns.

Many candidates produced very good translations of the concluding part of the story.

Candidates performed well in the following blocks:

- Block 1: most candidates recognised the imperfect tense of the verb *erat* ('to be') and this provided a smooth start to their responses.
- Block 2: most candidates correctly identified that the subject of the main verb *constituit* ('he decided') was Regulus.
- Block 5: most candidates spotted that *gladiatores* ('gladiators') was a plural noun.
- Block 9: many candidates handled the present participle *clamantes* ('shouting') well.
- Blocks 12 and 13: most candidates handled the direct speech well.
- Block 16: many candidates translated the pronoun *ei* ('him') correctly.

- Block 20: most candidates translated the indirect statement *putaverunt* ('they thought that ...') correctly.

Areas where candidates did not perform well

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

We did not detect any areas of especial weakness. However, markers did identify a problem that some candidates had over mis-reading the actual questions. Some candidates were answering questions that they thought they were being asked, or that had been asked in previous years, rather than answering the questions that were presented. Some candidates did not read the questions with sufficient care and missed out parts of the question. Some candidates did not read the line references with sufficient care.

Candidates performed less well in the following questions:

Section 1 — Catullus

- Question 2: in responding to this culture question about Roman superstition and religious beliefs, some candidates focused too much on curses, and they did need to discuss other aspects to gain the full 4 marks.
- Question 6(a): some candidates missed marks by not referring to both the funny and the serious aspects of stealing napkins at a party.

Section 2 — Ovid

- Question 9: some candidates restricted their responses to discussing if the act of flying was 'amazing' rather than discussing if Daedalus' invention was 'amazing'.
- Question 13: a few candidates did not offer suggestions as to why naming the islands might add interest to the story.

Section 3 — Virgil

- Question 18: this question asked candidates for knowledge of specific lines and some missed marks because they were not familiar enough with the text at this point in the narrative.

- Question 23: this question asked candidates to suggest what might have been 'pitiful horrors'. Some wrote about the content of these lines without answering the question directly.

Section 4 — Pliny

- Question 25: some candidates summarised the content of extract 1, rather than identifying details that were particularly scary.
- Question 29: a few candidates discussed who the chained-up skeleton in the garden might have been. Instead, they needed to explain why the ghost's behaviour linked to the chained-up skeleton in the garden.
- Question 31(a): a few candidates discussed events at an earlier stage of the story, rather than the dolphin's behaviour at the point the question required.

Section 5 — Cicero

- Question 34: some candidates retold the content of extract 2 about an attack on a temple, without answering the point of the question, which asked which details might have especially shocked the jury.
- Question 37: some candidates did not extract enough information about the Marcelli family from the lines given to gain the full 3 marks.

Question paper 2: translating

Some candidates confused similar words on the word list in translations of certain blocks.

Some candidates missed marks when handling the passive voice.

Some candidates missed the superlative adjective.

Candidates frequently missed marks in the following blocks:

- Block 3: many candidates missed marks by translating the passive voice *invitati sunt* ('were invited') inaccurately.
- Block 6: some candidates mistranslated the adjective *mala* ('bad') as an adverb 'badly'.
- Block 6: some candidates mistranslated the imperfect tense *fiebat* ('developed') as the pluperfect 'had developed'.
- Block 10: this was the most challenging block in the whole passage. Few candidates successfully translated the combination of two neuter plural nouns *saxa* ('stones') and *arma* ('weapons') with a verb in the passive voice *iacta sunt* ('were thrown').
- Block 11: some candidates mistranslated *perierunt* ('died') as 'were dead'.
- Block 13: some candidates mistranslated *est* ('is') as past tense 'was'.
- Block 15: some candidates missed that the verb *punire* ('to punish') was an infinitive.
- Block 17: few candidates translated the pluperfect *incitaverant* ('had started') correctly.
- Block 18: few candidates spotted that the neuter noun *spectacula* ('shows') was plural.
- Block 19: some candidates missed that the adjective *iratissimi* was superlative ('very angry').

Preparing candidates for assessment

Changes have been made to this course following feedback:

Literary appreciation question paper:

- Reduced the number of questions, and the marks available from 60 to 40 — removed scaling to this paper.
- Reduced the marks allocated for each author from 30 to 20.
- Reduced the duration of the question paper from 1 hours and 45 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Translating question paper:

- Removed scaling — paper still has 40 marks.

We've amended the question paper details in the course specification. There's no change to teaching and learning. Please ensure learners are aware of the changes and that they are using the most up-to-date version of this document.

Question paper 1: literary appreciation

Candidates must prepare to answer questions on every part of the prescribed text. They should expect a range of command words and question types worth varying marks, including any number of questions on the use of language and on Roman culture. There is no set template.

It is useful exam preparation for candidates to practise writing answers that match the number of marks available. We do accept bullet points, if candidates expand them sufficiently. Single words are not normally enough to gain a mark.

Encourage candidates to read every question carefully and to identify key words in the question. They can then base their responses around the key words.

Encourage candidates to mark off the specified line references, so their responses do not stray beyond them. This helps to avoid confusion over specific lines that have similar episodes.

Candidates always gain marks for a valid developed point. They do not need, for example, to make three separate points in an answer to a question worth 3 marks. A valid developed point must include something new and not be a rewording of a point already made.

Candidates can answer a combination of 'yes' and 'no' in response to questions with the stem 'do you agree ...?', 'do you think ... or not?', or similar wording. This is acceptable and, in responses to questions carrying a lot of marks, is a useful approach for gaining more marks.

We always ask candidates to offer some analysis to questions based on the English extracts, rather than to retell the story.

Question paper 2: translating

The list of prescribed accidents and syntax is available in the National 5 Latin Course Specification on our website. Every year, we sample a range of grammar from this list and gloss any other grammar not on this list. Candidates will gain marks if they apply grammar rules accurately.

Encourage candidates to use a ruler to avoid mistakes when referring to the word list.

Encourage candidates to read the English title and the English links carefully, as these direct them through the passage and can give helpful clues to the action in the narrative. Candidates do not need to copy out these English links.