



## Course Report 2018

Subject	History
Level	Higher

This report provides information on the performance of candidates. 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. It would be helpful to read this report in conjunction with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

The statistics used in this report have been compiled before the completion of any Post Results Services.

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

## **Summary of the course assessment**

### **Component 1: question paper**

The Higher History question paper performed as expected. Feedback from centres suggests the question paper was fair and accessible. Many candidates chose to complete the essays first, although some candidates followed the order of the question paper as presented.

In the Scottish section, three of the four issues from the mandatory content were sampled: issues 2, 3 and 4. The issues and question stems were the same across each of the five parts.

In the British section and the European and World section, three of the six issues were sampled: issues 2, 3 and 4. The same issues were sampled in each part in both sections. A minor concern was raised in the Scottish section (Part E – The Impact of the Great War, 1914-1928, Issue 3 question 14). There was a limited response to the fact there was no Issue 5 or 6, in particular, in the European and World section, Part D – Germany, 1815-1939. However, there was no real evidence to suggest this caused candidates to underperform. Overall, question paper marks were balanced by the response to the British section, Part D – Britain, 1851-1951. A significant number of candidates answered Issue 3, question 26.

### **Component 2: assignment**

Most candidates submitted what could be considered their best work. A disproportionate number of candidates wrote their assignment on 'Women and the vote'. Some candidates did not perform well because they either did not select an issue that was appropriate, or the question stem did not provide a basis for analysis or evaluation. Most centres applied the principles established for the assignment resource sheet.

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

### **Areas in which candidates performed well**

#### **Component 1: question paper**

In the Scottish section, most candidates applied detailed knowledge to answer the 'How fully' question. This allowed them to access a wide range of knowledge from the illustrative areas appropriate to Issue 3. Those candidates who performed well included a judgement and linked their knowledge to the question within a Scottish context. There was an increase in uptake for Part D – Migration and Empire, 1830-1939 and Part A – The Wars of Independence, 1249-1328.

In the British section, the majority of candidates answered Part D – Britain 1851-1951, Issue 3, question 26 '... votes for some women by 1918'. In most cases, candidates completed a well-structured response, demonstrating relevant knowledge and good use of analysis which addressed the issue.

In the European and World section, the majority of candidates answered Part D – Germany, 1815-1939 or Part G – USA, 1918-1968, question 49 (Issue 2). Other sections of note include: Part F – Russia, 1881-1921, question 46 (Issue 2); Part H – Appeasement and the Road to War, to 1939, question 53 (Issue 3); and Part I – The Cold War, 1945-1989. Candidates were usually consistent in both essays.

#### **Component 2: assignment**

Candidates successfully followed the requirements to place the issue in its historical context (introduction), and to provide detailed and relevant knowledge with good use of analysis. Some candidates also used evaluation. The most effective candidate responses used an assessment or evaluation type question, such as 'How successful' or 'How important' or 'To what extent'. A significant number of candidates answered a question on 'Women and the vote'.

Many candidates used the resource sheet as required. The most effective use was by candidates who used it as an essay plan, for example summarising key factors, knowledge points and references (clearly noting in full the author, textbook and quote).

## **Areas which candidates found demanding**

### **Component 1: question paper**

In the Scottish section, many candidates did not use the source comparison points in detail when responding to the first source question 'Compare the views'. Candidates should use full illustrative quotes from the sources in order to access each comparison mark. Some candidates selected two or three words as points of comparison, rather than a detailed quote.

Some candidates did not make a meaningful comment in support of the source points selected when responding to the second source question 'How fully'. Candidates should quote in full, explain the point and link their answer to the question. A few candidates chose to paraphrase, which often led to a misinterpretation of the source point. Centres should note that the use of knowledge should relate to the Scottish topic studied, and that generic statements are not usually good answers.

Many candidates gave generic responses to both the origin and purpose of the source when responding to the third source question 'Evaluate the usefulness'. Candidates should explain the source in relation to the specific question and issue, focusing on the author, type of source, purpose and timing, linked to the question, with reference to the particular Scottish topic of study.

In the British section and the European and World section, many candidates were unable to access the full range of marks. In many cases, the introduction did not have a line of argument. Candidates can use their own line of argument but they must address the question in the question paper. There is evidence of effective use of a counter-argument or limitation for developed analysis, but many candidates did not compare the factors or issues. There were some excellent isolated evaluative comments, but few allowed the candidate to build a line of argument.

In the conclusion, many candidates simply summarised. Candidates should provide a relative judgement between the different factors, outlining which factor is the most important in answering the historical issue. Listing the factors in order of importance in a conclusion is not good practice.

### **Component 2: assignment**

Some candidates had difficulty accessing the full range of marks available because they selected an inappropriate question, for example a 'Describe' question. This resulted in a significant loss of marks for analysis and evaluation. Poor use of the resource sheet was also a key issue in many cases. There were a few cases in which candidates copied paragraphs from the resource sheet to the assignment. However, the main issue is referencing. References should be short quotes, primary or secondary, with clear evidence of the provenance of the quote. There was a lot of evidence where candidates had not provided author, textbook and quote on the resource sheet.

## **Section 3: advice for the preparation of future candidates**

### **Components 1 and 2: question papers**

The question paper will be revised from 2018-19 to become: British, European and World history (worth 44 marks; time 1 hour and 30 minutes); Scottish history (worth 36 marks; time 1 hour and 30 minutes).

#### **British, European and World history**

Teachers and lecturers should encourage candidates to read the essay questions to avoid answering the wrong question or issue. Candidates must answer the question as it appears in the question paper and not write a pre-prepared answer. Those who exemplify best practice focus on the issue in the question, not on the topic. Candidates need to be aware that a conclusion is not a summary. A relative judgement between the different factors is essential to access full marks in the conclusion.

From 2019 a change to the introduction and conclusion means they will be worth 3 marks for both sections. This is in line with the assignment introduction and conclusion. There are no other changes. Therefore, from 2019 the essays will be worth 22 marks each.

In the British, European and World history paper any three from six issues will be examined. This will remain the same across both sections. Candidates must be prepared for a minimum of four issues in both the British and European and World sections (although many centres teach all six issues).

#### **Scottish history**

The 'Compare the views' question has been replaced by a two-source comparative question which requires candidates to identify the main views of two sources. Candidates should carefully select the relevant points from the sources and explain why the selected points are important to the issue being discussed. Quotes must be linked to the question. Candidates should also introduce recalled knowledge to develop the source point and/or contextualise the content of the source. Recalled knowledge should be linked to the question. This question will be worth 10 marks from 2019.

The 'How fully' question requires a clear judgement, for example 'Source ... partly explains or explains to an extent'. The judgement can be included at any point in the answer. It is good practice to quote from the source. Candidates should support their selected source points with a detailed explanation that is clearly linked to the question. Developed knowledge should also be linked to the question. This question, previously worth 9 marks, will be worth 10 marks from 2019.

Most candidates used the content of the source correctly in the 'Evaluate the usefulness' question. Candidates should quote from the source, ensure they explain the source point fully, and link it to the question. Developed knowledge should also be linked to the question. However, purpose and origin remain a weakness for many candidates. Focus should be on the author, type of source, purpose and timing, linked directly to the particular Scottish topic of study. Generic statements are not usually good answers. Candidates should focus on the question and the Scottish issue. The question, previously worth 6 marks, will be worth 8 marks from 2019.

'Explain' is a new question at Higher level in 2019 (the 'Explain' question is used at National 5). The 'Explain' question requires candidates to identify a key point from a historical issue and provide a relevant explanation in answer to the question. There will be no source. The question will be worth 8 marks from 2019.

Centres should note that all areas of the syllabus will be sampled from 2019. All four key issues will be examined from four questions. The question types can be asked in any order. They will remain the same across the five Scottish topics.

## **Component 2: assignment**

The most effective candidate responses used an assessment or evaluation-type question, for example 'How successful' or 'How important' or 'To what extent'. Using these assessment or evaluation questions allows candidates to access the analysis and evaluation marks.

Most candidates chose a question from a Higher History past paper. Changing an isolated factor allows candidates from the same centre to answer different questions on the same issue. Candidates must give at least two sentences of historical context in their introduction, ensuring that the context is relevant to the question. In the conclusion, candidates should focus on the issue in answering the question. A relative judgement between the factors/issue is essential to access the 3 marks available.

Overall, candidates performed well in the assignment write-up, reflecting good support from teachers and lecturers. However, the resource sheet remains an issue, especially the use of references. References should not include factual evidence. References should support the analysis and/or evaluation.

Candidates who used the resource sheet as an essay plan followed best practice by providing a summary of the factors/issues, key knowledge points and detailed referencing, for example author – textbook – quote.

For a primary source the reference should list the author, date and quote. For a secondary source the reference should list the author's name, book title and quote. Some website references demonstrated poor practice. Good practice for website references is to list the website address (the full website address counts as one word) with the quote, showing the author/text.

The resource sheet must have no more than 250 words, and must only be one side of A4 paper or on SQA's template.

Centres should submit all relevant supporting documentation for candidates, including the completed resource sheet. The assignment must have the candidate's name and the full question being answered noted on both the flyleaf and the first page. Each page must be numbered and the flyleaf signed with the marking sheet overleaf.

Candidates are expected to use the resource sheet to generate the evidence under controlled conditions, and they **must** submit it with their evidence. The resource sheet is not assessed formally. However it is important that teachers/lecturers ensure that candidates know how to use and submit resource sheet(s) which are reviewed during the marking process.

## Grade boundary and statistical information:

### Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2017	10760
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Number of resulted entries in 2018	10296
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### Statistical information: performance of candidates

#### Distribution of course awards including grade boundaries

Distribution of course awards	Percentage	Cumulative %	Number of candidates	Lowest mark
Maximum mark				
A	30.9%	30.9%	3177	64
B	29.7%	60.6%	3058	55
C	22.1%	82.6%	2271	46
D	7.0%	89.6%	717	41
No award	10.4%	-	1073	-

## **General commentary on grade boundaries**

SQA's main aim is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and all levels and maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

SQA aims to set examinations and create marking instructions which allow a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional C boundary) and a well prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional 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 every year for each subject at each level to bring together all the information available (statistical and judgemental). The Principal Assessor and SQA Qualifications Manager meet with the relevant SQA Business Manager and Statistician to discuss the evidence and make decisions. The meetings are chaired by members of SQA's management team.

- ◆ Grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the exam is more challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the exam is less challenging than usual, allowing the pass rate to be unaffected by this circumstance.
- ◆ Where standards are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Grade boundaries from exam papers in the same subject at the same level tend to be marginally different year to year. This is because the particular questions, and the mix of questions, are different. This is also the case for exams set by centres. If SQA alters a boundary, this does not mean that centres should necessarily alter their boundary in the corresponding practice exam paper.