

Ancient History subject report

2023 cohort

January 2024





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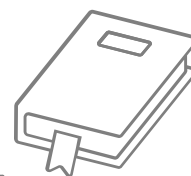
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Contents

Introduction	1
Audience and use.....	1
Report preparation.....	2
Subject highlights.....	2
Subject data summary	3
Subject completion.....	3
Units 1 and 2 results.....	3
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results.....	3
Total marks for IA.....	3
IA1 marks.....	4
IA2 marks.....	5
IA3 marks.....	6
External assessment (EA) marks.....	7
Final subject results.....	7
Final marks for IA and EA.....	7
Grade boundaries.....	8
Distribution of standards.....	8
Internal assessment	9
Endorsement.....	9
Confirmation.....	9
Internal assessment 1 (IA1)	10
Examination — essay in response to historical sources (25%).....	10
Assessment design.....	10
Assessment decisions.....	11
Internal assessment 2 (IA2)	16
Investigation — independent source investigation (25%).....	16
Assessment design.....	16
Assessment decisions.....	17
Internal assessment 3 (IA3)	21
Investigation — historical essay based on research (25%).....	21
Assessment design.....	21
Assessment decisions.....	22
External assessment	26
Examination — short responses to historical sources (25%).....	26
Assessment design.....	26
Assessment decisions.....	26

Introduction



Throughout 2023, schools and the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) continued to improve outcomes for students in the Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) system. These efforts were consolidated by the cumulative experience in teaching, learning and assessment of the current General and General (Extension) senior syllabuses, and school engagement in QCAA endorsement and confirmation processes and external assessment marking. The current evaluation of the QCE system will further enhance understanding of the summative assessment cycle and will inform future QCAA subject reports.

The annual subject reports seek to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement of internal and external assessment processes for all Queensland schools. The 2023 subject report is the culmination of the partnership between schools and the QCAA. It addresses school-based assessment design and judgments, and student responses to external assessment for this subject. In acknowledging effective practices and areas for refinement, it offers schools timely and evidence-based guidance to further develop student learning and assessment experiences for 2024.

The report also includes information about:

- how schools have applied syllabus objectives in the design and marking of internal assessments
- how syllabus objectives have been applied in the marking of external assessments
- patterns of student achievement.

The report promotes continuous improvement by:

- identifying effective practices in the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessments
- recommending where and how to enhance the design and marking of valid, accessible and reliable assessment instruments
- providing examples that demonstrate best practice.

Schools are encouraged to reflect on the effective practices identified for each assessment, consider the recommendations to strengthen assessment design and explore the authentic student work samples provided.

Audience and use

This report should be read by school leaders, subject leaders and teachers to:

- inform teaching and learning and assessment preparation
- assist in assessment design practice
- assist in making assessment decisions
- help prepare students for internal and external assessment.

The report is publicly available to promote transparency and accountability. Students, parents, community members and other education stakeholders can use it to learn about the assessment practices and outcomes for senior subjects.

Report preparation

The report includes analyses of data and other information from endorsement, confirmation and external assessment processes. It also includes advice from the chief confirmer, chief endorser and chief marker, developed in consultation with and support from QCAA subject matter experts.

Subject highlights

82.33%
of students
completed
4 units



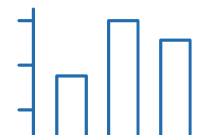
94%
of IA3 endorsed
at Application 1



97.04%
of students
received a C
or higher



Subject data summary



Subject completion

The following data includes students who completed the General subject or Alternative Sequence (AS).

Note: All data is correct as at January 2024. Where percentages are provided, these are rounded to two decimal places and, therefore, may not add up to 100%.

Number of schools that offered Ancient History: 205.

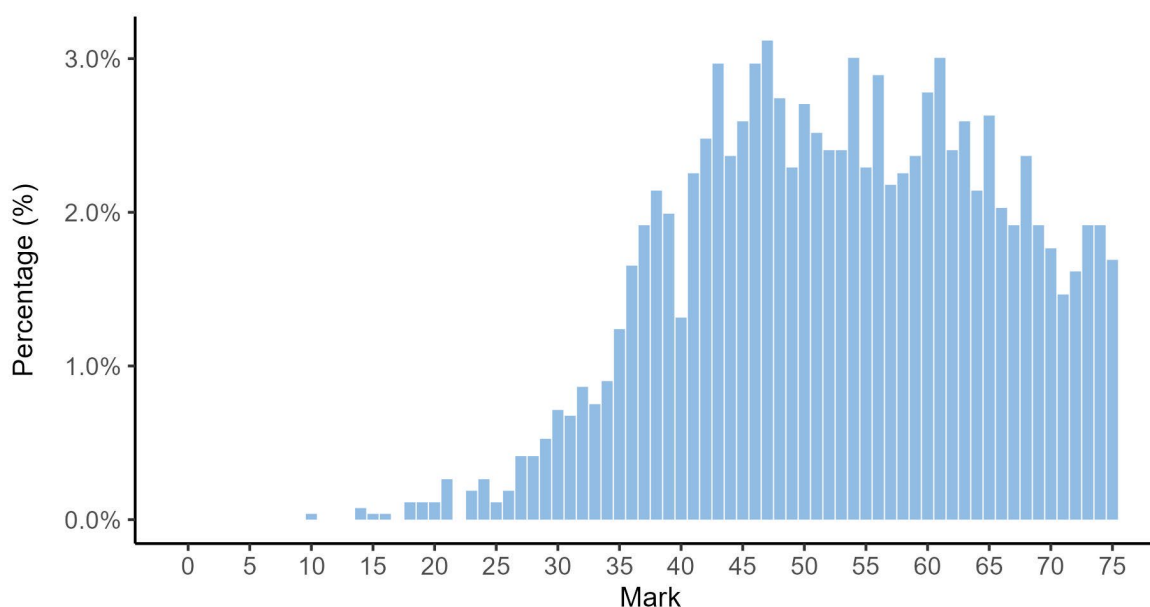
Completion of units	Unit 1	Unit 2	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	3,204	3,007	2,638

Units 1 and 2 results

Number of students	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Unit 1	2,875	329
Unit 2	2,736	271

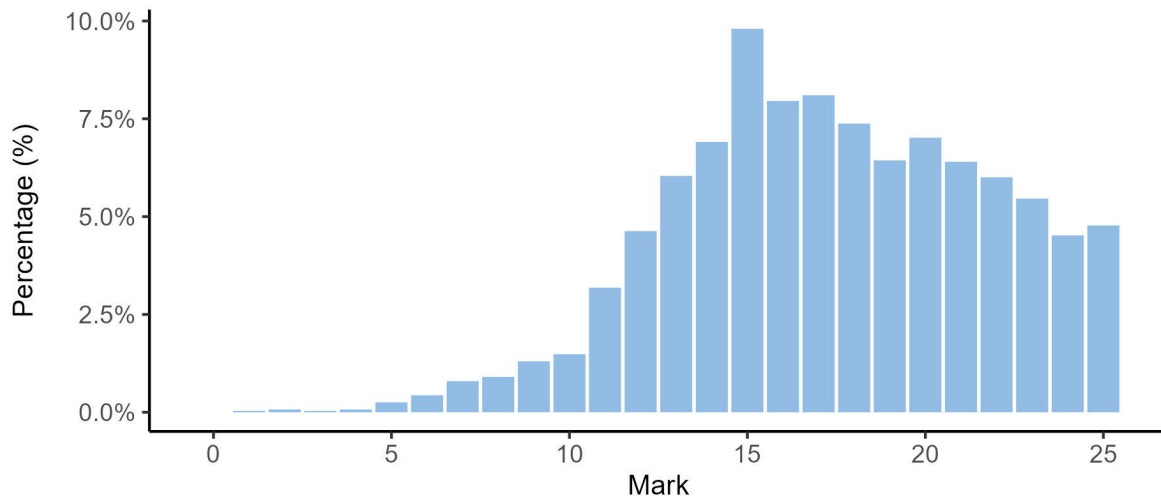
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

Total marks for IA

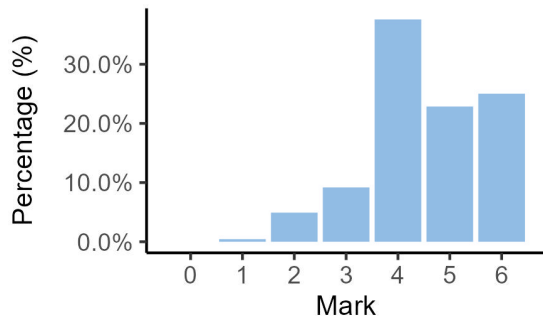


IA1 marks

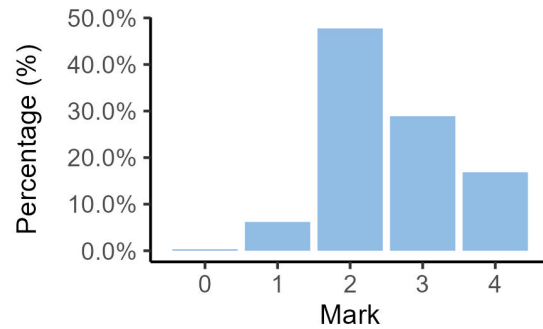
IA1 total



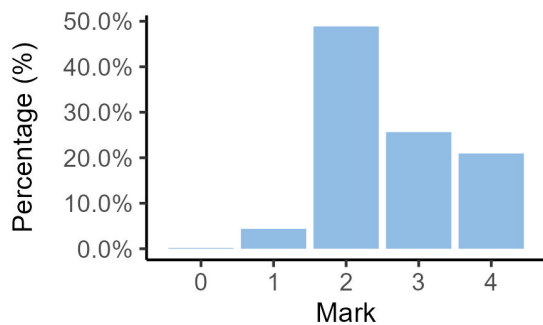
IA1 Criterion: Comprehending



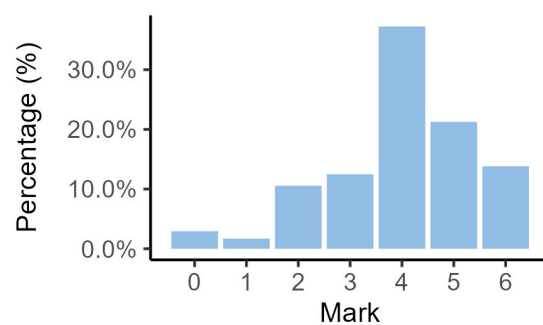
IA1 Criterion: Analysing



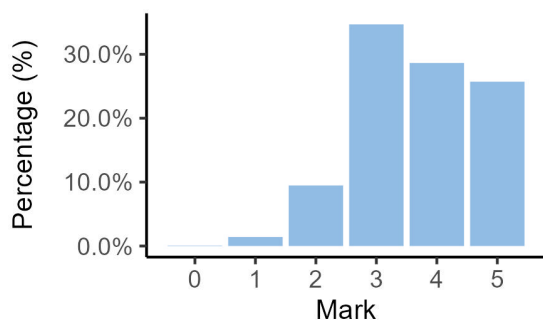
IA1 Criterion: Synthesising



IA1 Criterion: Evaluating

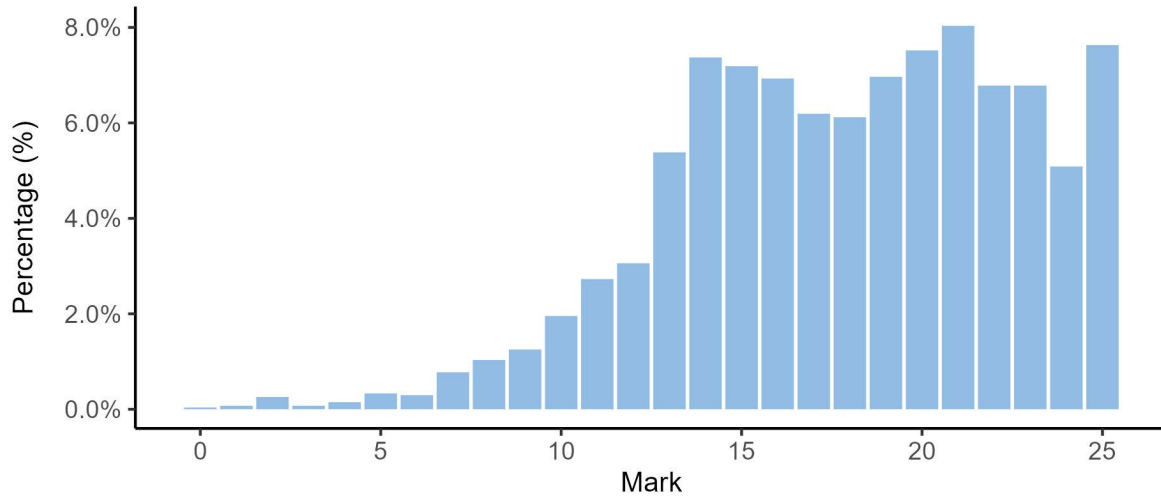


IA1 Criterion: Creating and communicating

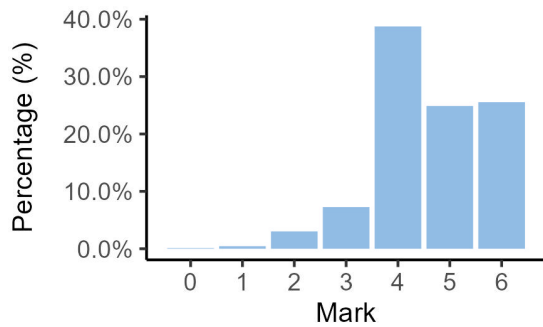


IA2 marks

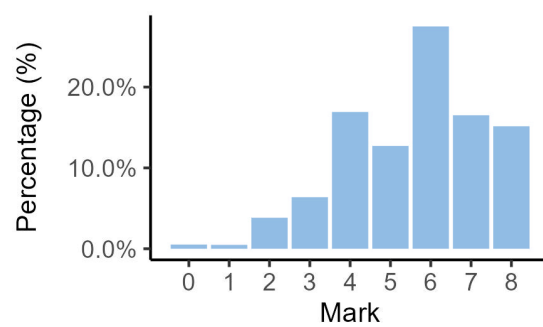
IA2 total



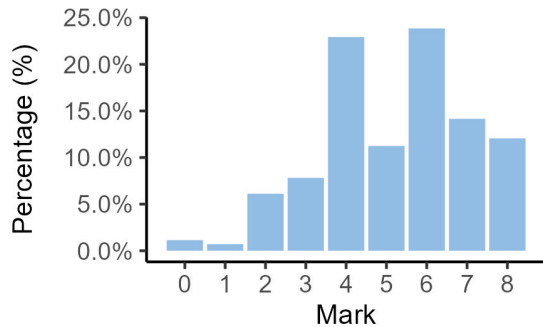
IA2 Criterion: Devising and conducting



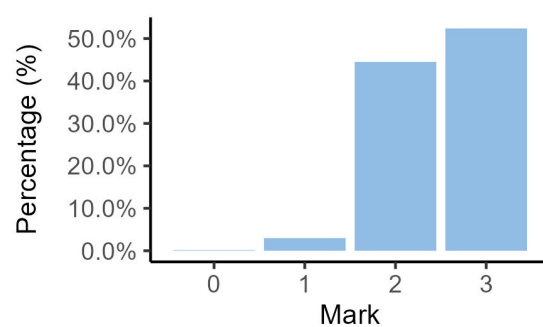
IA2 Criterion: Analysing



IA2 Criterion: Evaluating

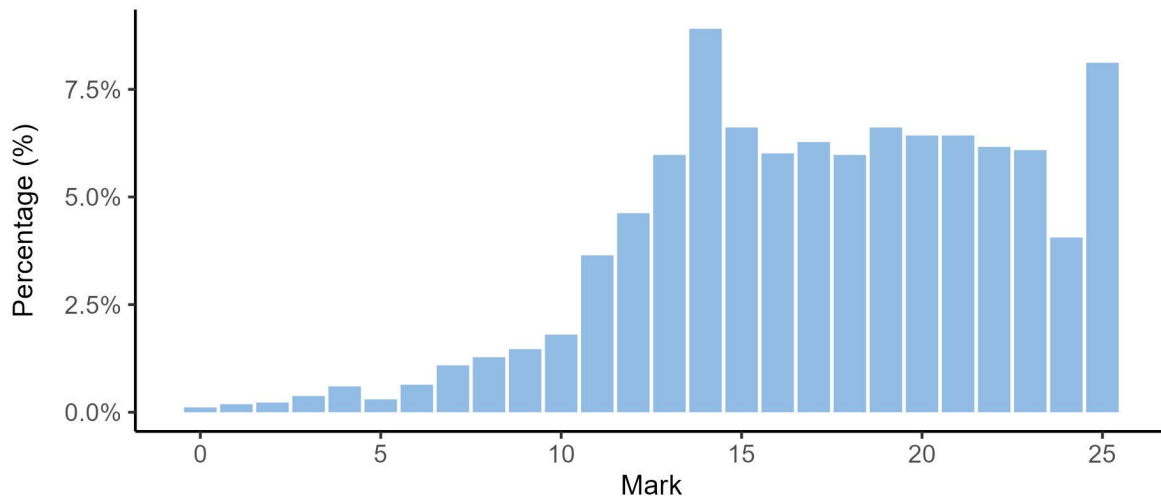


IA2 Criterion: Creating and communicating

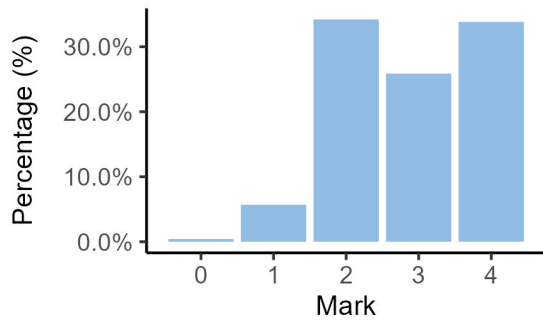


IA3 marks

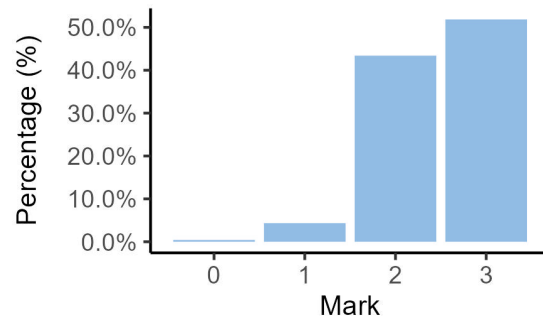
IA3 total



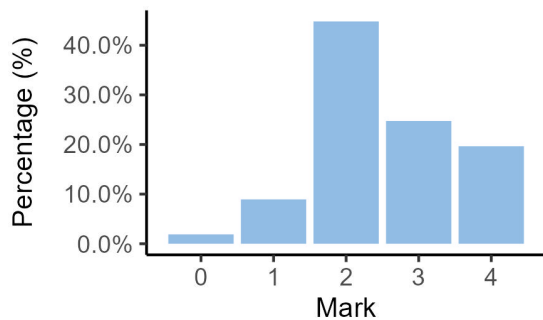
IA3 Criterion: Comprehending



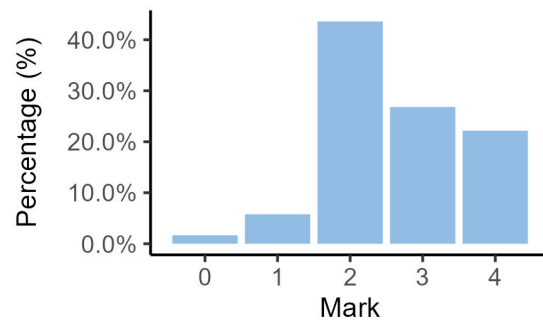
IA3 Criterion: Devising and conducting



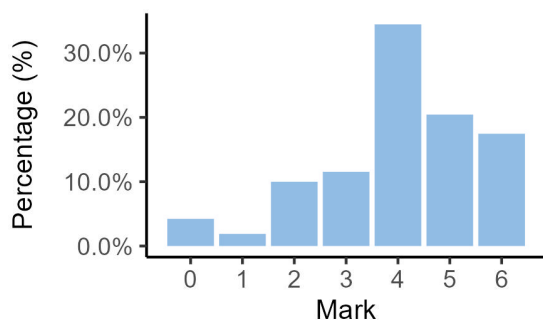
IA3 Criterion: Analysing



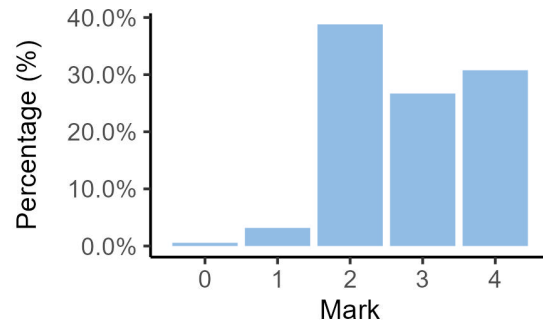
IA3 Criterion: Synthesising



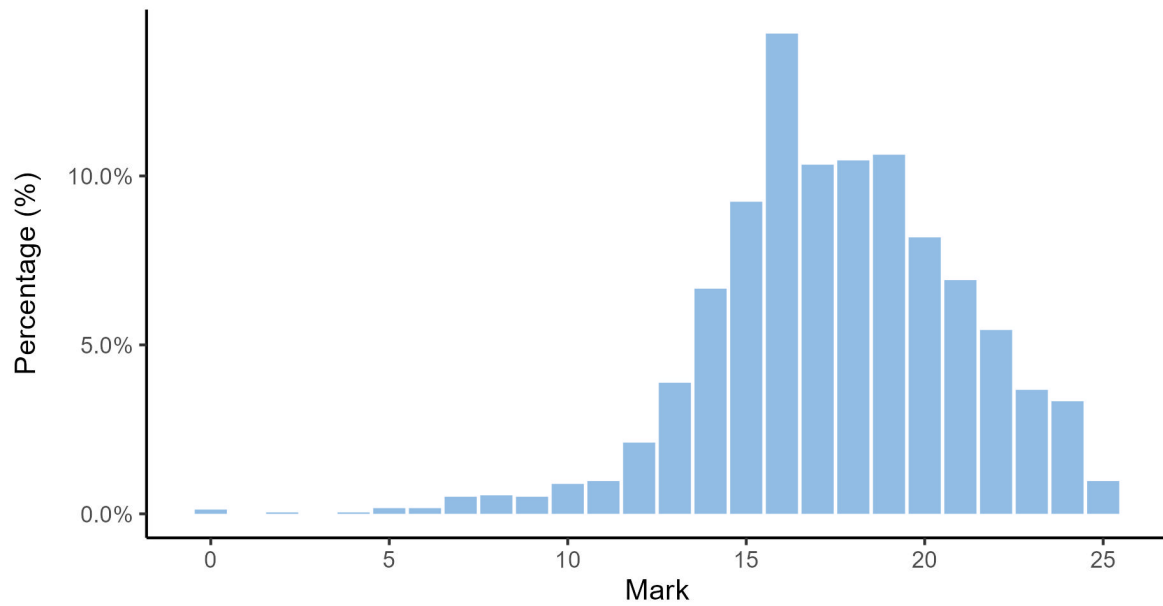
IA3 Criterion: Evaluating



IA3 Criterion: Creating and communicating

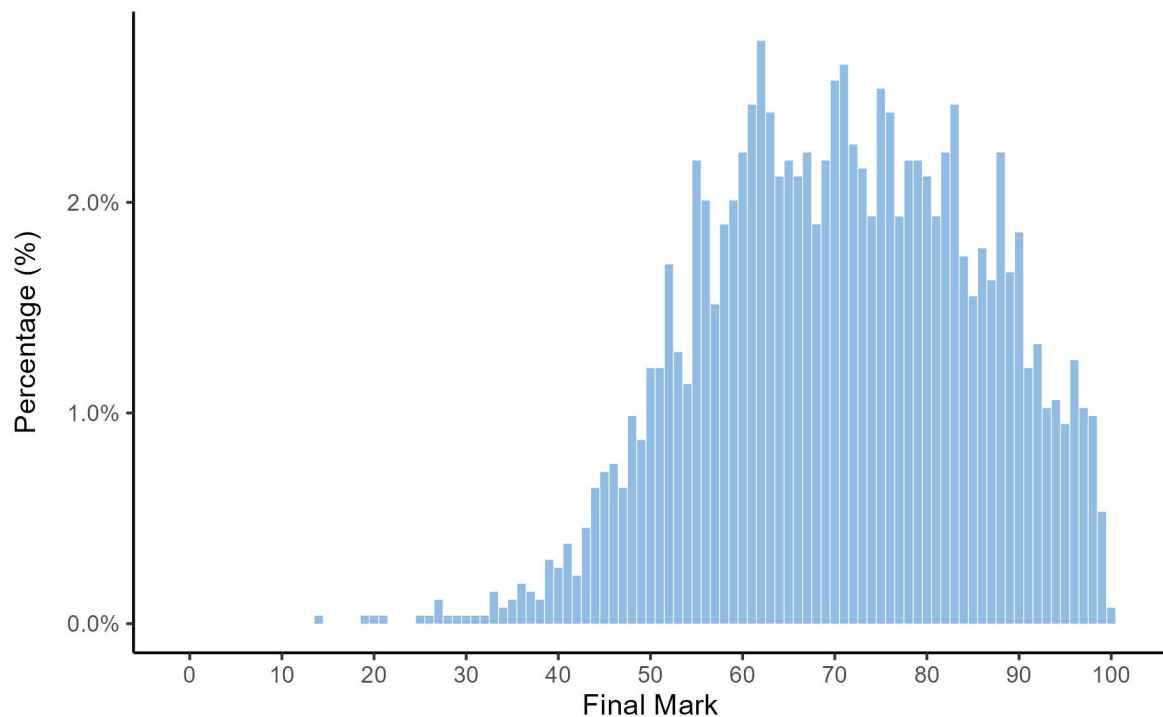


External assessment (EA) marks



Final subject results

Final marks for IA and EA



Grade boundaries

The grade boundaries are determined using a process to compare results on a numeric scale to the reporting standards.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Marks achieved	100–83	82–67	66–44	43–18	17–0

Distribution of standards

The number of students who achieved each standard across the state is as follows.

Standard	A	B	C	D	E
Number of students	643	937	980	77	1

Internal assessment



The following information and advice relate to the assessment design and assessment decisions for each IA in Units 3 and 4. These instruments have undergone quality assurance processes informed by the attributes of quality assessment (validity, accessibility and reliability).

Endorsement

Endorsement is the quality assurance process based on the attributes of validity and accessibility. These attributes are categorised further as priorities for assessment, and each priority can be further broken down into assessment practices.

Data presented in the Assessment design section identifies the reasons why IA instruments were not endorsed at Application 1, by the priority for assessments. An IA may have been identified more than once for a priority for assessment, e.g. it may have demonstrated a misalignment to both the subject matter and the assessment objective/s.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 9.6.

Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Number of instruments submitted	IA1	IA2	IA3
Total number of instruments	205	205	205
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	80%	80%	94%

Confirmation

Confirmation is the quality assurance process based on the attribute of reliability. The QCAA uses provisional criterion marks determined by teachers to identify the samples of student responses that schools are required to submit for confirmation.

Confirmation samples are representative of the school's decisions about the quality of student work in relation to the instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG), and are used to make decisions about the cohort's results.

Refer to *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 9.7.

The following table includes the percentage agreement between the provisional marks and confirmed marks by assessment instrument. The Assessment decisions section of this report for each assessment instrument identifies the agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks by criterion.

Number of samples reviewed and percentage agreement

IA	Number of schools	Number of samples requested	Number of additional samples requested	Percentage agreement with provisional marks
1	203	1,341	75	83.74%
2	203	1,340	43	85.71%
3	203	1,328	16	85.71%

Internal assessment 1 (IA1)



Examination — essay in response to historical sources (25%)

The examination assesses the application of a range of cognitions to an unseen question.

Student responses must be completed individually, under supervised conditions, and in a set timeframe.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	30
Authentication	0
Authenticity	4
Item construction	0
Scope and scale	2

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 205.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided a task question or statement that allowed students to develop their own hypothesis and a unique response, e.g. 'To what extent ...' was used extensively in endorsed tasks as it required each of the students to take a particular position in response to the question. 'What does the evidence reveal about ...' was effective for the AS U1 IA1 as it enabled students to develop their argument around particular aspects of the stimulus
- provided an unseen question and stimulus that allowed students to demonstrate the upper performance levels of the ISMG, e.g. for the Synthesising criterion, students needed to be provided with a question and stimulus that enabled them to combine information to demonstrate a sophisticated historical argument and to justify insightful decisions
- provided a range of seen and unseen sources (e.g. archaeological, primary, secondary, written and visual) that offered different perspectives. For instance, in an IA1 on Fifth century Athens that was focused on Athenian women, excerpts from Athenian historians (e.g. Xenophon), Athenian plays (e.g. Aristophanes and Euripides), archaeological evidence (e.g. Athenian lekythos, reliefs, statues) and modern historical interpretations on Athenian women (e.g. Pomeroy, Cohen) may have been provided.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- align with the relevant syllabus assessment objectives. The AS U1 IA1 assessment objectives differ from the General syllabus assessment objectives. The AS assessment objectives required students to focus on archaeology and an ancient society, while the General assessment objectives required a focus on the topic chosen from Unit 3.
- provide context statements that allow students to analyse and evaluate the evidence in sources, e.g. a context statement for the epic poet Homer on the Trojan War might include information about his style of writing, the works he produced and an approximate time period in which he produced his work. A context statement for Manfred Korfmann, an archaeologist who contributed to our understanding of the Trojan War, might include information about his qualifications, details about his excavations and dates for his excavations at Troy.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	4
Language	5
Layout	6
Transparency	3

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 205.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- presented sources logically, in alphabetical or numerical order
- formatted sources so they were legible and clear for students to engage with.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- be edited carefully for accessibility, e.g. format the instrument so there is clear distinction between the context statement, written source and reference details; check for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Comprehending	96.55%	0.49%	2.46%	0.49%
2	Analysing	96.55%	1.97%	1.48%	0%
3	Synthesising	96.06%	1.48%	2.46%	0%
4	Evaluating	89.66%	8.37%	1.48%	0.49%
5	Creating and communicating	97.54%	0.99%	1.48%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Comprehending criterion, discrete decisions were made about the
 - use of terms in their historical context, e.g. the term ‘proskynesis’ might be used when discussing Alexander’s adoption of Persian customs following the defeat of Darius
 - explanation of issues in relation to the unseen question, e.g. the availability of primary sources for Alexander the Great
 - understanding of the relationship between concepts and ideas developed in response to the unseen question, e.g. in a response to a question about whether Alexander deserves the title ‘the Great’, a student might consider the relationship between greatness and different perspectives on this (such as Western and Persian)
- for the Analysing criterion, features of evidence from historical sources were identified and examined throughout the response. Not all features of evidence are required to achieve the upper performance level. Rather, students should focus on addressing the fine points of those most pertinent for developing their hypothesis, e.g.
 - when analysing the evidence from Homer’s *Iliad* on the Trojan War, a student may identify and examine the historical context in which the *Iliad* was written, the audience, motive, explicit and implicit meanings. However, when analysing Herodotus and Thucydides, students might focus on their perspectives of Homer’s myth and implicit meanings and use these to develop their hypothesis
- for the Synthesising criterion
 - information was combined to justify decisions that supported the development of a historical argument. At the upper performance level, students often signposted their argument in the topic sentence of a paragraph, before combining evidence from sources to prove their hypothesis. Insightful decisions require students to understand the complexities in the evidence and the relationships between sources
 - decisions were used to strengthen a historical argument. A sophisticated argument contains intellectual complexity. It is highly developed and sustained throughout the response. This may be evident through the use of nuance in the hypothesis, signposting in topic sentences, the way in which information is combined throughout the body of the essay to support the historical argument, and the way the argument is summarised in the conclusion

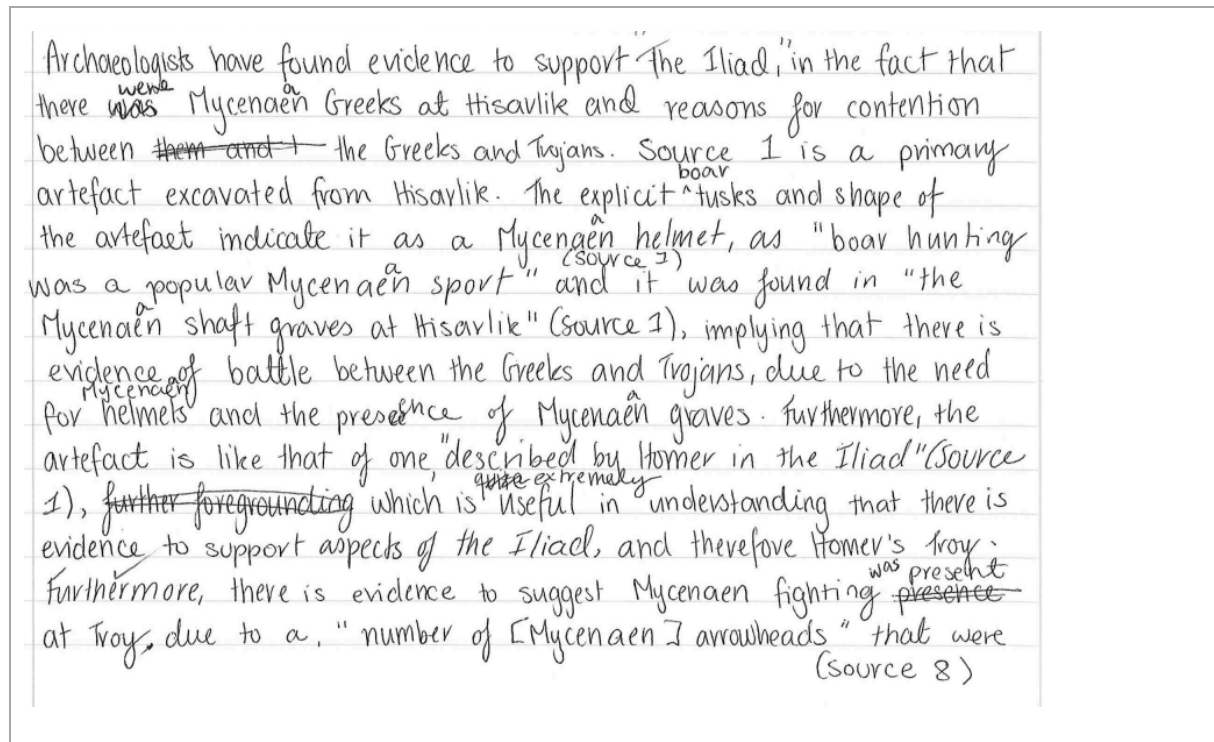
- evidence from a range of sources was used. This can include a combination of different types of sources, such as written, visual, primary, secondary, ancient, modern, and sources that show different perspectives.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpt has been included to:

- demonstrate how information from sources can be combined to justify insightful decisions. In this body paragraph from an AS U1 IA1, evidence is combined from Sources 1, 3, 8 and 10 to develop the historical argument about the Trojan War. This paragraph makes connections between Homer's *Iliad* and the archaeological evidence discovered at Hisarlik. It begins by analysing an artefact, which is believed to be a Mycenaean helmet. The student builds on this using relevant evidence from other sources, such as an archaeological report, to provide further justification for the decisions they have made in relation to the historical argument. The student's justification can be considered insightful as they clearly show an understanding of the relationship between the evidence in the sources and are able to use this to justify the decision made that there is evidence to suggest a conflict between Troy and Mycenae during this time.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.



excavated by William Dörpfeld, and evidence to suggest interaction such as trade between the Greeks and Trojans, with the "discovery of Mycenaean pottery in Troy VI" (Source 10).

~~Source 10~~ J. D. Hawkins, an extremely reliable ^{secondary} perspective due to his expert knowledge ^{use of} as a professor of ancient Anatolian languages and objective language, summarises the findings from primary Hittite records. Hawkins states that there, "is every likelihood that the Iliad and the traditions of the Trojan War... preserve a memory of actual events of the Late Bronze Age" (Source 3), because Wilusa, the Hittite name for Troy, was a point of conflict between the Hittites and the Ahhiyawa [Mycenaean Greeks] (Source 3). The conflict and "contention between the two [Mycenaean Greeks and Trojans]" (Source 3), provides a basis of justification for Homer's Troy, as there is evidence to suggest a large-scale war ~~may have taken~~ was likely to have taken place between the Trojans and Mycenaean Greeks. The excavated evidence such as the boar's helmet, Mycenaean arrowheads and pottery, as well as the conflict between the Trojans and Mycenaean Greeks, ~~so made~~ lay the foundations for a Trojan War of Homer's Troy to have taken place.

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- for the Evaluating criterion
 - judgments are distinguished from statements, i.e.
 - a statement will provide an opinion that a source is reliable and/or useful, e.g. Ernst Badian, professor at Harvard University, is a useful source for understanding Alexander the Great
 - a judgment explains why a source may be reliable and/or useful, e.g. Determined by his peers to be the most influential Alexander historian, Ernst Badian, through his research as a professor at Harvard University, provides a useful opposing viewpoint that reshaped the scholarly perception of Alexander the Great
 - judgments at the upper performance level are well-reasoned and corroborated, e.g. Tarn presents an idealistic interpretation of Alexander the Great. As a classical scholar and prolific author whose focus was on the Hellenistic period, Tarn's ideals have been perpetuated by fellow British classical scholar and academic Robin Lane Fox, who supports the portrayal of Alexander as an inspirational hero. Badian, who is considered by his peers to be one of the most influential historians on Alexander, refutes the arguments of Tarn and Fox, comparing Alexander to a 20th century despot. This scholarly interpretation of Alexander the Great presents a more contemporary perspective, which questions the nature of what it means to be great

- for the Creating and Communicating criterion
 - ideas related to the question should be logically conveyed to support the development of the argument
 - the features of an essay prescribed by the syllabus are consistently demonstrated, i.e. an introduction (which sets context and includes a hypothesis and outline of the argument), body paragraphs with topic sentences, and a conclusion (which draws together the main ideas and arguments)
 - ethical scholarship is maintained throughout the response, e.g. Source 1, Smith (Source 1) or Smith (S1). This is particularly important to consider when there is more than one source from a particular author.

Additional advice

- Highlighting or annotating the ISMG for each of the performance-level descriptors will support teachers to make accurate judgments, particularly where there is a two-mark range.
- Teachers can refer to *Module 3 — Making reliable judgments* in the Assessment Literacy application in the QCAA Portal and the *History ISMG webinar* available in the Syllabus application to clarify their understanding of the best-fit approach.
- Schools should ensure that students are aware of their assessment policy regarding managing response lengths. Responses that exceed 1000 words require the application of the school's academic assessment policy. Evidence of this should be annotated on the response in accordance with the strategies outlined in *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 8.2.6.

Internal assessment 2 (IA2)



Investigation — independent source investigation (25%)

An independent source investigation uses research and investigative practices to assess a range of cognitions in a particular context. It is an opportunity for students to demonstrate the application of the historical concepts and historical skills — by selecting and analysing a range of historical sources and considering different perspectives — to the investigation.

Investigative practices and research include locating and using evidence from historical sources and information that goes beyond what has been provided to the student in class. Research conventions including citations and reference list must be adhered to. Responses are completed individually, under process writing conditions, over a number of hours.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions *
Alignment	31
Authentication	3
Authenticity	6
Item construction	6
Scope and scale	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 205.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided a statement/question that allowed for students to generate their own key inquiry question and unique response, e.g. Investigate an aspect of ... (the topic)
- narrowed the scope of the task without impeding the ability of students to generate their own key inquiry question and unique response, e.g. Investigate the nature of governance and political developments in Fifth century Athens.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- include the syllabus specification for students to provide a reference list as part of ethical scholarship

- be edited carefully to ensure that the syllabus specifications in the task, checkpoints and/or scaffolding relate to IA2 not IA3.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	1
Layout	0
Transparency	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 205.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- included clear instructions about the task and used language that aligned with the syllabus specifications.

Practices to strengthen

There were no significant issues identified for improvement.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Devising and conducting	94.09%	3.94%	1.48%	0.49%
2	Analysing	90.64%	6.9%	2.46%	0%
3	Evaluating	90.64%	6.9%	2.46%	0%
4	Creating and communicating	98.03%	0%	1.97%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for Devising and conducting
 - consideration was given to the specificity of the key inquiry question. The first descriptor at the upper performance level requires a nuanced key inquiry question. A nuanced key inquiry question narrows the focus of the investigation by specifying, e.g. the time, issue, event, individual, group, city, society
 - the use of historical questions at the upper performance level was discerning. Links were made to the key inquiry question and sub-questions throughout the task
 - evidence was selected from primary and secondary sources that offered different perspectives, i.e. two or more sources that offer different views and/or viewpoints
- for the Creating and communicating criterion, responses at the upper performance level demonstrated consistent application of the features of an independent source investigation and ethical scholarship.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpts (AS U2 IA2) demonstrate the upper performance levels of the:

- Devising and conducting criterion. These excerpts illustrate the discerning use of historical questions with clear links to the key inquiry question and sub-questions in both excerpts, particularly when they examine explicit and implicit meanings. They also demonstrate the detailed use of historical research by using evidence from primary (the ship) and secondary (journal) sources
- Creating and communicating criterion. The responses are succinct, with ideas related to the key inquiry question and sub-questions logically conveyed. These excerpts illustrate one way that the source analysis section can be written. These excerpts seamlessly organise the identification and examination of the features of evidence and judgments about usefulness and reliability in response to the key inquiry question and sub-questions.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

Excerpt 1

The Ladby ship is an ancient Viking ship burial, constructed prior to the introduction of Christianity in 965 CE. The Ladby ship was discovered on Funen, by Archaeologist Poul Mikkelsen in 1934; furthermore fragments of preserved burial goods date the erection of the ship to around 900 CE. However, the source may be skewed due to grave robbing in the late Viking Age, which caused damage to the corpse and burial goods, indicating an external act of grave desecration.

However, this source provides valuable evidence of pagan ship-burials and practises in Denmark, confirming its reliability and usefulness as evidence of Viking beliefs **(SUB1)**. The layout of the ship-mound; include Norwegian iron high anchor, iron spirals of a dragon's head and tail, harness of a riding horse, textile remains, feather, animal bones, weaponry and cooking utensils imply that the huge collection of grave assortment is a testimony to an important buried individual. Additionally, the excursion of weaponry and horse bones imply that the deceased was a powerful male. The clear dates of artefacts from the ship, along with its well-preserved structure, make it a reliable source for investigating archaeological evidence into Viking age. Therefore, it can be seen that the abundance of grave goods left after decontextualization support the notion that this practice was most commonly used prior to Christian influence **(SUB1)**.

Excerpt 2

The source is a Field Archaeological Journal, regarding important results from an excavation of four large burial grounds on the Danish Island of Langland. This evidence provides a useful source for analysing the transition (965 CE) between pagan and Christian burial customs in Denmark, dating the burial grounds (CE 900-1050) to being in use during the transition period **(SUB3)**. As the academic article was co-written by Dr Caroline Arcini who has a Doctorate in Medical history from the University of Lund and Prof. Bertil Helgesson from Lund's Institute of Archaeology, the qualification and expertise of the authors make the source reliable in its conclusions about Christian influence on Danish Viking burial culture.

As a literary academic journal, the authors subscribe to the notion that grave goods and skeleton orientation provide insight into the beliefs and social life transition between Danish Vikings and Christians- "Changeable body orientations and burial traditions in other respects may give clues to the chronology of the transition from pagan to Christian religion". Dr Arcini and Prof. Helgesson write that Christian grave evidently "have body orientation according to Christian burial customs..... were devoid of grave goods", whereas pagan graves contained "bronze jewellery and glass beads.....skull to the west".

The clear dates of skeletal remains and artefacts from the grave mounds, along with well-preserved remains, make it a reliable source for investigating Christian influence in Danish culture. Therefore, the graves show the transition period between Paganism and Christianity, as can be seen in the heterogeneous burial positioning and presence or absence of grave goods **(SUB2)**.

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- 4–6 sources are selected, analysed and evaluated across the response. Additional sources should only be used if context is required, e.g. the translation of Latin text on a coin
- careful consideration is given to whether each source is primary or secondary in relation to the key inquiry question. At least one primary source and one secondary source must be selected, analysed and evaluated
- for the Evaluating criterion, judgments are
 - well-reasoned, i.e. they provide highly relevant support for the judgment being made that is directly linked to the focus of the inquiry
 - corroborated using the 4–6 sources selected. When information is corroborated, it must be linked to a judgment about reliability and usefulness.

Additional advice

- The excerpt of the source being analysed and evaluated must be provided for authentication purposes. This does not contribute to the word limit, as outlined in the task conditions, and enables more accurate decisions to be made about the quality of analysis and evaluation.
- Consideration should also be given to the templates provided for students to assist them in preparing their responses. The *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v5.0*, Section 8.2.6 provides guidelines for managing response length. Additional headings and subheadings are included in the response length. The table *Determining word length and page count of a written response* states that ‘all words in the text of the response’ are included. This includes titles, headings and subheadings.
- Teachers should engage with the modules within the Assessment Literacy application in the QCAA Portal, in particular *Module 3 — Making reliable judgments* as it provides guidance on the correct application of best-fit.

Internal assessment 3 (IA3)



Investigation — historical essay based on research (25%)

This assessment requires students to research a historical topic through the collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and secondary sources. A historical essay based on research uses investigative practices and research to assess a range of cognitions in a particular context. Investigative practices and research include locating and using evidence from historical sources and information that goes beyond what has been provided to the student in class. Responses are completed individually, under process writing conditions, over a number of hours.

Assessment design

Validity

Validity in assessment design considers the extent to which an assessment item accurately measures what it is intended to measure and that the evidence of student learning collected from an assessment can be legitimately used for the purpose specified in the syllabus.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Validity priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Alignment	6
Authentication	1
Authenticity	3
Item construction	0
Scope and scale	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 205.

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided a question or statement that allowed students to generate their own key inquiry question and hypothesis, e.g. Create a historical essay, based on research, that investigates an aspect of New Kingdom Imperialism
- narrowed the scope of the task without impeding a student's ability to generate their own key inquiry question or hypothesis, e.g. Investigate a key event in the Peloponnesian War and create a historical essay based on research
- included all the assessment specifications for a historical essay based on research (Syllabus section 5.15.1).

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- include the syllabus specification for students to provide a reference list to demonstrate ethical scholarship
- do not include an instruction for sub-questions as they are not an IA3 specification.

Accessibility

Accessibility in assessment design ensures that no student or group of students is disadvantaged in their capacity to access an assessment.

Reasons for non-endorsement by priority of assessment

Accessibility priority	Number of times priority was identified in decisions*
Bias avoidance	0
Language	2
Layout	0
Transparency	0

*Each priority might contain up to four assessment practices.

Total number of submissions: 205.

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used succinct, unambiguous language and clearly stated that students were to create a historical essay based on research
- were carefully edited and proofread for spelling mistakes of key historical terms, e.g. Pharaoh and Tiberius Gracchus.

Practices to strengthen

There were no significant issues identified for improvement.

Assessment decisions

Reliability

Reliability is a judgment about the measurements of assessment. It refers to the extent to which the results of assessments are consistent, replicable and free from error.

Agreement trends between provisional and confirmed marks

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
1	Comprehending	96.06%	2.46%	1.48%	0%
2	Devising and conducting	96.55%	1.48%	1.97%	0%

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
3	Analysing	95.07%	3.94%	0.99%	0%
4	Synthesising	95.57%	3.94%	0.49%	0%
5	Evaluating	91.13%	6.9%	1.97%	0%
6	Creating and communicating	98.52%	0%	1.48%	0%

Effective practices

Accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA was most effective when:

- for the Comprehending criterion, decisions about the match of evidence to the ISMG were considered in relation to the key inquiry question, e.g. terms were used in historical context when they were used appropriately in relation to the key inquiry question
- for the Devising and conducting criterion, responses at the upper performance level included the nuanced key inquiry question as part of the response to allow students to demonstrate application of both the key inquiry question and hypothesis
- for the Analysing criterion, responses at the upper performance level demonstrated informed explanations of how the evidence from primary and secondary sources contributed to the development of the key inquiry question. Informed explanations drew conclusions about how evidence from a source related to the key inquiry question and the hypothesis
- for the Creating and communicating criterion, responses at the upper performance level were conveyed logically when the
 - introduction included a hypothesis that directly responded to the key inquiry question and established the historical argument
 - relationship between ideas presented and the historical argument was carefully considered when developing the response.

Samples of effective practices

The following excerpt demonstrates the upper performance levels of the Analysing criterion by:

- illustrating the discerning use of features of evidence from primary and secondary sources. The origin, context, explicit meanings and implicit meanings have been used to develop the historical argument for both primary (e.g. coin minted during the time of Tiberius Gracchus) and secondary sources (e.g. Plutarch, who was an ancient source writing outside the time of the investigation)
- demonstrating an informed explanation of how primary and secondary sources contributed to the development of the key inquiry question. The student analyses the features of evidence to explain how Tiberius Gracchus's land reform and role as Tribune contributed to the unrest in Rome because the patricians feared losing power. This relates to the overall historical argument about the use of force and political violence to maintain power.

Note: The characteristic/s identified may not be the only time the characteristic/s has occurred throughout a response.

The Roman Republic, once a beacon of political stability and democratic governance, faced a tumultuous period between 133 BCE and 44 BCE that ultimately led to its disintegration. The Gracchi Brothers played a prominent role in this by advocating for changes in the Republic to address the unbalance between the wealthy elite and the impoverished masses (Rich, 2006). Tiberius Gracchus, serving as tribune of the Plebs in 133 BCE, spearheaded the first wave of reforms aimed at curbing the power of the Patricians and alleviating the plight of the Plebians. His most significant reform is the *Lex Agraria* which sought to reclaim public land (Latin trans. *Ager Publicus*) from wealthy landowners who had unlawfully amassed estates (Beggio, 2019). Tiberius' agrarian reform would provide Plebians with the means to support themselves through agriculture and alleviate Rome's increasing problem of rural unemployment. By breaking up the large estates of the patrician class, Tiberius intended to restore a more equitable distribution of resources and diminish the political and economic dominance held by the wealthy elite (De Ligt, 2008). However, the Gracchi Brothers' reforms were met with fierce resistance from the Senate and the Optimates, who felt that their privilege and influence was being threatened. They leveraged their political power and influence within the Senate to obstruct Tiberius' proposed *Lex Agraria* reforms, creating a climate of hostility and contention within the Republic. The main ancient source on the Gracchi is Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (see appendix). A Greek, Platonist philosopher writing in the 2nd century AD, Plutarch remains a reliable source to a high extent due to his substantial amount of detail in his publications. Source 1, an extract from *Parallel Lives* (see appendix), explicitly reveals the increase in poverty and how that led to a moral and structural instability in Roman society. Furthermore, this secondary source implies how Tiberius' *Lex Agraria* reform was formulated to accommodate the needs of the plebians and therefore one can identify how this would intimidate the Patricians in the Senate. The extract from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* is corroborated by source 3; a Roman denarius (trans. Coin) from 113 BCE (see appendix). The coin explicitly illustrates the referendum on the *Lex Agraria* and is a primary archaeological source therefore it is reliable to a significant extent. This denarius was minted under the authority of the Gracchi Brothers and implies the strong influence they had as tribunes, therefore this implicitly reveals how that would intimidate the Patricians. Tiberius' attempt to stand for re-election as Tribune of the Plebs in 132 BCE, against the traditional Roman norm of one-term tenure, escalated tensions further (Briscoe, 1974). The Senate, fearing his reappointment, instigated riots between his political supporters and opponents, which ultimately led to the assassination of Tiberius Gracchus in the following year.

Practices to strengthen

To further ensure accuracy and consistency of the application of the ISMG for this IA, it is recommended that:

- one or more primary sources are used to meet the descriptors in the upper performance level for Devising and conducting, Analysing, Synthesising and Evaluating. Primary sources are created or written during the time being investigated. To determine whether a source is primary, it is important for students to consider the scope of their key inquiry question
- for the Synthesising criterion, responses at the upper performance level were required to combine information to develop a sophisticated historical argument and to justify insightful decisions. A sophisticated historical argument is characterised by intellectual complexity. Students are required to consider the available evidence and to synthesise this to develop a coherent and clear historical argument that is sustained throughout the response
- for the Evaluating criterion
 - discerning judgments are distinguished from adequate judgments, e.g. a discerning judgment about reliability will generally identify specific features of evidence (such as the

historical context in which a source was produced) and will weigh up the strengths, weaknesses and limitations to support the historical argument being developed. An adequate judgment about reliability is simplistic and not linked to the development of the historical argument

- judgments at the upper performance level are well-reasoned, i.e. they provide highly relevant justification for the judgment made.

Additional advice

- Highlighting or annotating the ISMG for each of the performance-level descriptors will assist teachers to make accurate judgments, particularly where there is a two-mark range.
- When considering the application of best-fit judgments, teachers can refer to *Module 3 — Making reliable judgments* in the Assessment Literacy application in the QCAA Portal.
- Responses that exceed 2000 words require the application of the school's assessment policy for managing response lengths. Evidence of this should be annotated on the student response.

External assessment



External assessment (EA) is developed and marked by the QCAA. The external assessment for a subject is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day.

Examination — short responses to historical sources (25%)

Assessment design

The assessment instrument was designed using the specifications, conditions and assessment objectives described in the summative external assessment section of the relevant syllabus. The examination consisted of four questions (47 marks).

General syllabus examination

The examination assessed subject matter from Unit 4. Questions were derived from the context of Topic 12: Augustus.

The assessment required students to respond in paragraphs to short response questions using evidence from the historical sources provided in the stimulus book.

The stimulus included excerpts from a range of ancient and modern sources. Context statements were supplied for each source.

Alternative Sequence (AS) examination

The AS examination assessed subject matter from AS U2. Questions were derived from the context of Topic 4: Perikles.

The AS assessment required students to respond in paragraphs to short response questions using evidence from the historical sources provided in the stimulus book.

The AS stimulus included excerpts from a range of ancient and modern sources. Context statements were supplied for each source.

Assessment decisions

Assessment decisions are made by markers by matching student responses to the external assessment marking guide (EAMG). The external assessment papers and the EAMG are published in the year after they are administered.

Effective practices

Overall, students responded well when they:

- addressed all parts of the question/s, e.g. explained all three implicit meanings
- understood the requirements of each cognition, e.g. that synthesising required them to develop a historical argument and combine evidence to support this
- demonstrated that they could appropriately use terms and concepts in historical context
- demonstrated an informed understanding of issues in the stimulus related to the question/s.

Samples of effective practices

Short response

The following excerpt is from Question 2 in the General paper. It required students to analyse evidence to explain three implicit meanings about Augustus as a military leader.

Effective student responses:

- explained each implicit meaning using well-chosen evidence from the source.

This excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate three possible implicit meanings that could have been derived from the source, i.e. that Augustus was diligent and experienced, that he valued his soldiers and relied on his army for his power
- to demonstrate how well-chosen evidence from the source has been used to support the assertions made by the students. Evidence has been directly quoted and paraphrased to explain each implicit meaning.

Suetonius ^{implies} ~~shows~~ in his writing 'The Lives of the Twelve Caesars' (Suetonius), that Augustus was a diligent and experienced military leader. It is described that he immediately ordered for watch to be taken throughout the city as a defensive measure and prolonged the terms of governors in the provinces as a way to begin a process of damage control. This shows that he was adept at managing a military and diligent when it came to the safety of Rome. Additionally, Suetonius implies that Augustus greatly valued his military and cared for his soldiers. Suetonius describes that Augustus "cut neither his beard nor his hair" (Suetonius, The Lives of the Twelve Caesars), wept and begged for his legion back, and observed the date of the defeat each year as a day of mourning. These measures of grieving were common following the death of a family member in ancient Roman culture and show that he cared for his army and its soldiers immensely. Finally, Suetonius implies that, as a military leader, Augustus relied on his armies for his power. Suetonius describes the brutal and strict discipline imposed on his armies, such as death for leaving their posts and immediate dismissal. This shows that Augustus knew his armies were valuable as they made his rule more powerful,

and his immediate dismissal of "the entire tenth legion" (Suetonius) for (Severus, The Lies of the Twelve Caesars) for insubordination shows that he ruled with an iron fist in order to ensure that his military could not become a threat to him. This is also illustrated by the rewards granted upon retirement from the military and Augustus' refusal to let his generals see their wives; these actions aimed to ensure the loyalty of the military and ex-soldiers to Augustus over other leaders or even their own ~~own~~ families.

The following excerpt is from Question 2 in the AS paper. It required students to analyse evidence to explain the way Perikles is portrayed by Plutarch and Duris the Samian, and to explain why Plutarch might have included Duris the Samian's description of Perikles.

Effective student responses:

- explained how Perikles is portrayed by Plutarch and Duris the Samian using well-chosen evidence from the source
- included purposefully organised paragraph/s to succinctly and fluently convey ideas relating to the question, acknowledging sources used.

This excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate how students could respond to the first part of the question about how Perikles was portrayed by Plutarch (i.e. fair and moral despite his punishment of the Samians) and Duris the Samian (i.e. cruel and torturous). This has been explained using well-chosen evidence from the source to support the claim.

Perikles is portrayed by Plutarch as being harsh in his punishment of the Samians including the tearing down of the Samos walls, confiscation of their ships and a 'heavy fine' (Source 2). However, Plutarch also portrays Perikles as a fair ^{and moral} ruler as he 'gave honorable burial to those who had fallen in the war' and delivered an oration over their tombs which won him the 'greatest admiration' (Source 2).

Duris the Samian contested this viewpoint and portrays Perikles as cruel and torturous. According to Plutarch, Duris added 'stuff for tragedy' such as that Perikles had the Samian marines crucified, and 'gave orders to break their heads in with clubs' and 'cast their bodies forth without burial rites'.^(Source 2) However, this portrayal of Perikles' great brutality is not recorded by trusted primary source 'Thucydides, nor Ephorus, nor Aristotle' and it is thought by Plutarch that Duris did not hold his narratives down to the 'fundamental truth'. Duris (Source 2).

The following excerpt is from Question 3 in the General paper. It required students to evaluate the extent to which evidence from two sources was useful and reliable for understanding Augustus's relationship with the people of the Roman Empire. For each source, students were instructed to explain one judgment of usefulness and one judgment of reliability.

Effective student responses:

- provided discerning explanations about the usefulness and reliability about each source using well-chosen evidence
- demonstrated an informed understanding of issues related to the question
- used paragraph/s purposefully to succinctly and fluently convey ideas relating to the question, acknowledging sources used.

This excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate an example of a discerning judgment about usefulness. The response
 - used the evidence from the source provided (title, excerpt, reference and context statement)
 - included a clear judgment that stated how useful the source was, with reasons provided to support this
 - made clear links between their judgment about the usefulness of the source and the question, i.e. Perikles' reputation within Athens
 - used well-chosen evidence, i.e. evidence that clearly supported the judgment made about usefulness.

Both Appian's 'The Illyrian Wars' (source 3) and the Pergamon inscription (source 4) are useful to understand Augustus's relationship with the people of the Roman Empire. Appian depicts Augustus as ~~the ruler~~ holding complete control of the people of the Roman Empire, acting as a saviour to the empire ~~by forcing his will~~. Appian calls Augustus the 'master of everything', describing how Augustus 'freed Italy from the savage tribes... in one campaign', 'put the young men to death [that] practiced' piracy, and that his image alone sent ~~the~~ 'warlike' Arrepieni fleeing 'to the woods'. With these descriptions, Appian portrays Augustus as the saviour of the Roman Empire's inhabitants, while also ~~showing~~ ^{capturing} the gravitas of Augustus. By recounting how he could free Italy in one campaign and ~~make warlike~~ ^{make warlike} people flee at his sheer presence, Appian implies Augustus was revered, loved, and respected by the people of the Roman Empire while feared by Rome's potential enemies.

The following excerpts are from Question 4 in the General paper and Question 4 in the AS paper. In both the General and AS papers, students were required to synthesise evidence from four sources to develop a historical argument in response to the relevant statement:

- General paper: 'For the truth was that Augustus had not restored the republic, but had achieved just the opposite' (Source 5)
- AS paper: 'Perikles presented the greatest obstacle to maintaining peace' (Source 5).

In their responses, students were also asked to include an explanation of how evidence from two sources corroborated a point being made in their historical argument.

Effective student responses:

- used evidence from the sources to develop a sophisticated historical argument that directly answered the question
- skilfully combined evidence from all four sources to develop the historical argument
- demonstrated appropriate use of relevant terms and concepts in historical context
- demonstrated an informed understanding of issues associated with Augustus's rule
- explained how evidence from two sources corroborates a point being made in the argument
- used purposefully organised paragraph/s to succinctly and fluently convey ideas relating to the question, acknowledging sources used.

These excerpts have been included:

- to illustrate how students skilfully combined evidence from all four sources to develop a sophisticated historical argument that directly responded to the question.
 - In Excerpt 1 (from the General paper), the student has recognised the key evidence from all four sources, arguing that although Augustus restored some aspects of the Roman Republic, he centralised power under his leadership, which did not reflect republican values. The response is sophisticated as the student has picked up on the nuances in all four sources and explored the relationship between the ideas in each of the sources throughout the response.
 - In Excerpt 2 (from the AS paper), the student directly responds to the statement arguing that Perikles was an obstacle to peace and was in part to blame for the war. However, they have also recognised the involvement of Sparta in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and have clearly considered the key ideas from all four sources. Excerpt 2 is the first paragraph where the hypothesis is stated. Evidence from each of the sources was skilfully combined in the subsequent paragraphs to develop this historical argument.

Excerpt 1

The statement that Augustus "had not restored the republic, but had achieved just the opposite" from Source 5 is highly contentious, with Augustus restoring many aspects of the republic however maintaining a centralised power structure that contradicted much of the ideals of the ~~the~~ republic.

Excerpt 2

Evidence from sources 5-8 can be used to moderately support the statements that 'Pericles presented the greatest obstacle to maintaining peace. Firstly, Pericles can be portrayed as wanting war against Sparta and the Peloponnesians, resulting in the diminishment of Peace. Additionally, Pericles ~~feared~~^{worried} about the fear and revolt that may ~~arise~~^{have arisen} in the empire of Athens, resulting in the destruction of Peace and war. However, the Spartans can also be presented as an obstacle in maintaining peace as they feared Athens and Pericles, causing tension between the two city-states.

Practices to strengthen

When preparing students for external assessment, it is recommended that teachers:

- emphasise the importance of carefully reading each question to determine which cognition/s are being assessed, e.g. when students are asked to make judgments about usefulness or reliability, they are not required to synthesise evidence to develop a historical argument
- ensure that students have many opportunities to practise making judgments about the reliability of evidence from historical sources for different circumstances. A discerning judgment about reliability weighs up strengths, implications and limitations of evidence and must be considered in relation to the question, e.g. for Augustus's relationship with the people of the Roman Empire or Pericles' reputation within Athens. Generic judgments that lack specificity and links to the question are not discerning.