

Ancient History subject report

2024 cohort

January 2025



 © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2025

Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0> | **Copyright notice:** www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright — lists the full terms and conditions, which specify certain exceptions to the licence. |

Attribution (include the link): © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2025 www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/copyright.

Other copyright material in this publication is listed below.

1. With the exception of any third-party material contained within a student response, student responses in this report are licensed under the CC BY 4.0 licence.

Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority
PO Box 307 Spring Hill QLD 4004 Australia

Phone: (07) 3864 0299

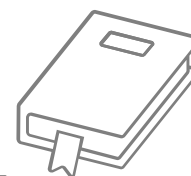
Email: office@qcaa.qld.edu.au

Website: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au

Contents

Introduction	1
Audience and use.....	1
Subject highlights.....	1
Subject data summary	2
Subject completion	2
Units 1 and 2 results	2
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results	2
Total marks for IA.....	2
IA1 marks.....	3
IA2 marks.....	4
IA3 marks.....	5
External assessment (EA) marks	6
Final subject results	6
Final marks for IA and EA	6
Grade boundaries	7
Distribution of standards	7
Internal assessment	8
Endorsement.....	8
Confirmation.....	8
Internal assessment 1 (IA1)	9
Examination — essay in response to historical sources (25%)	9
Assessment design.....	9
Assessment decisions	11
Internal assessment 2 (IA2)	15
Investigation — independent source investigation (25%).....	15
Assessment design.....	15
Assessment decisions	16
Internal assessment 3 (IA3)	21
Investigation — historical essay based on research (25%).....	21
Assessment design.....	21
Assessment decisions	22
External assessment	25
External assessment — short responses to historical sources (25%).....	25
Assessment design.....	25
Assessment decisions	25

Introduction



The annual subject reports seek to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement of internal and external assessment processes for all Queensland schools. The 2024 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 General and General (Extension) subjects. 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 2025.

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.

Subject highlights

218
schools offered
Ancient History



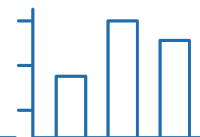
96.87%
of students
received a
C or higher



11.37%
increase in enrolment
since 2023



Subject data summary



Subject completion

The following data includes students who completed the General subject or Alternative sequence.

Note: All data is correct as at January 2025. 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: 218.

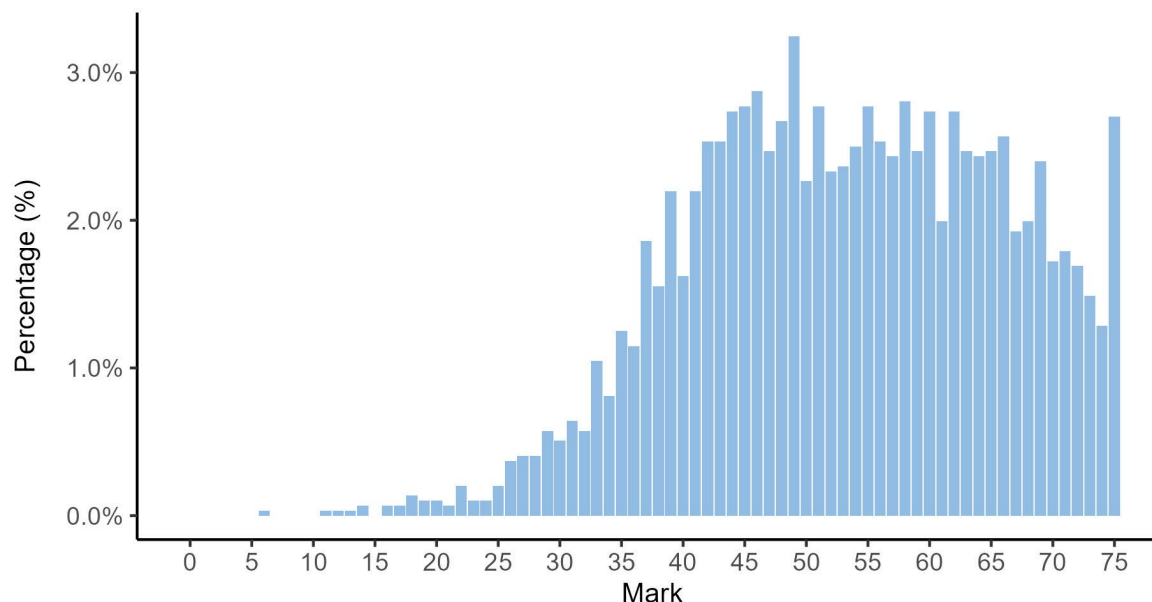
Completion of units	Unit 1	Unit 2	Units 3 and 4
Number of students completed	3,525	3,342	2,938

Units 1 and 2 results

Number of students	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Unit 1	3,182	343
Unit 2	3,064	278

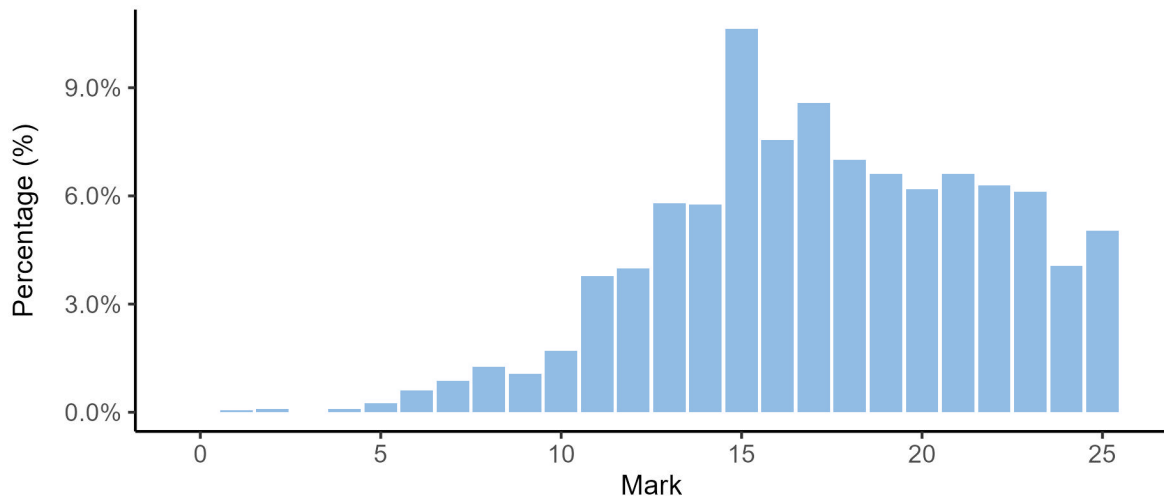
Units 3 and 4 internal assessment (IA) results

Total marks for IA

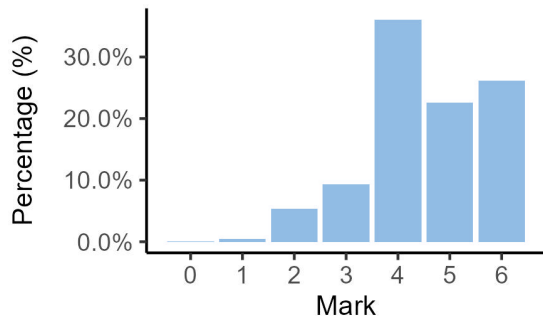


IA1 marks

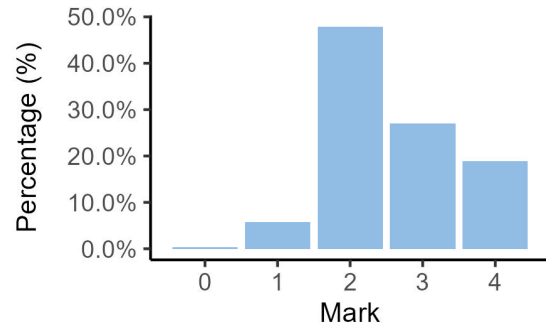
IA1 total



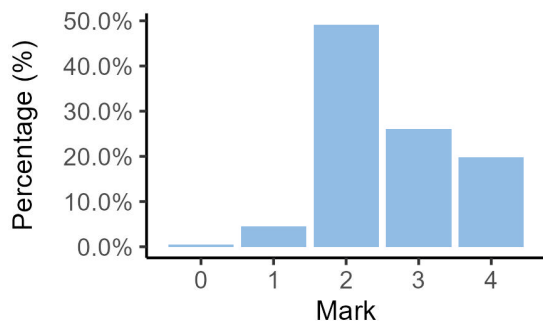
IA1 Criterion: Comprehending



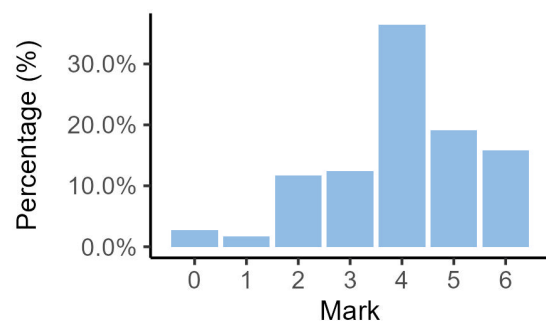
IA1 Criterion: Analysing



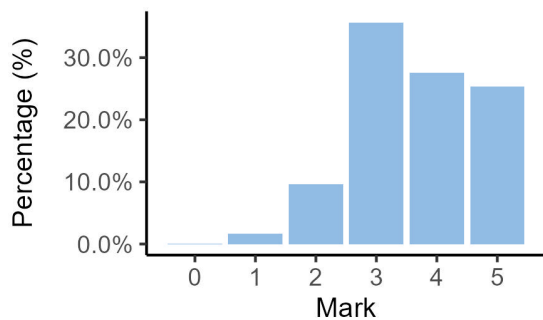
IA1 Criterion: Synthesising



IA1 Criterion: Evaluating

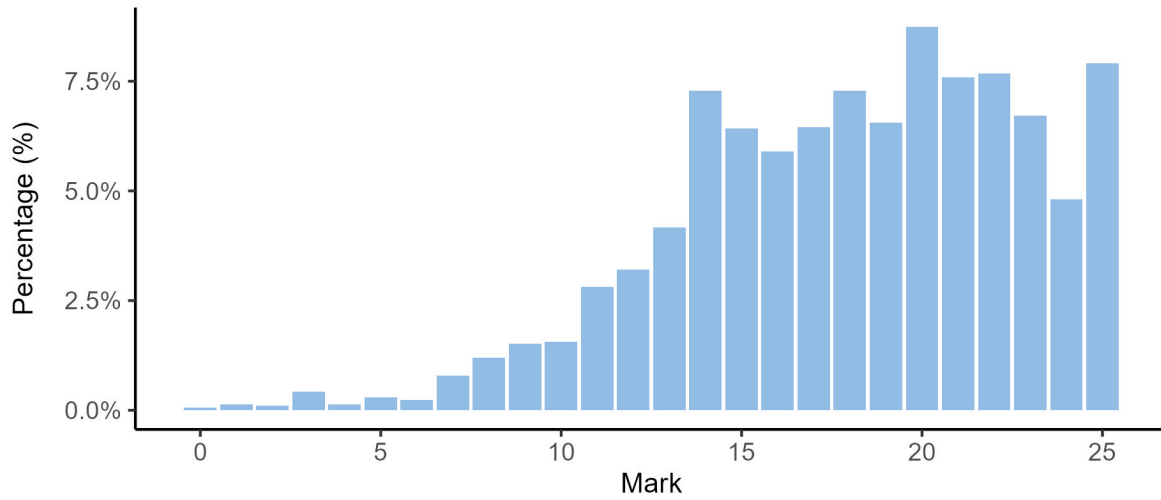


IA1 Criterion: Creating and communicating

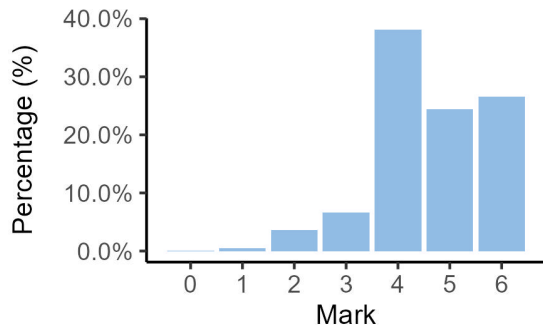


IA2 marks

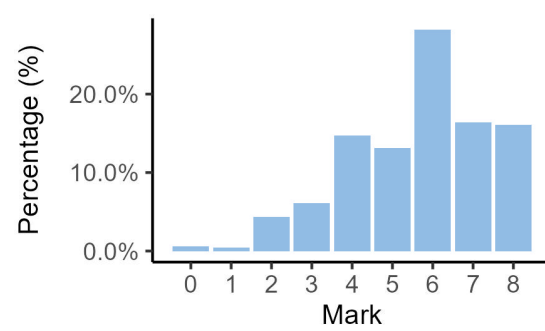
IA2 total



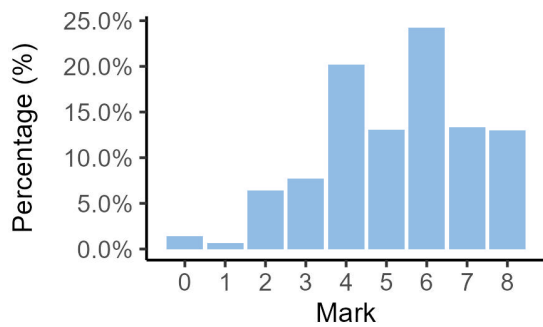
IA2 Criterion: Devising and conducting



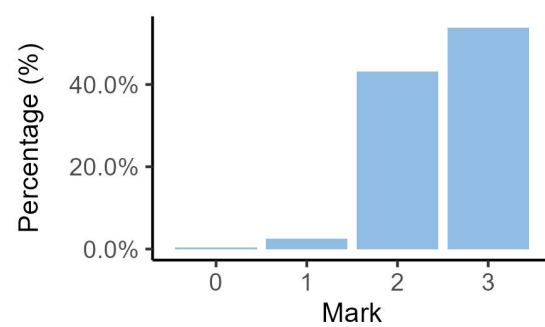
IA2 Criterion: Analysing



IA2 Criterion: Evaluating

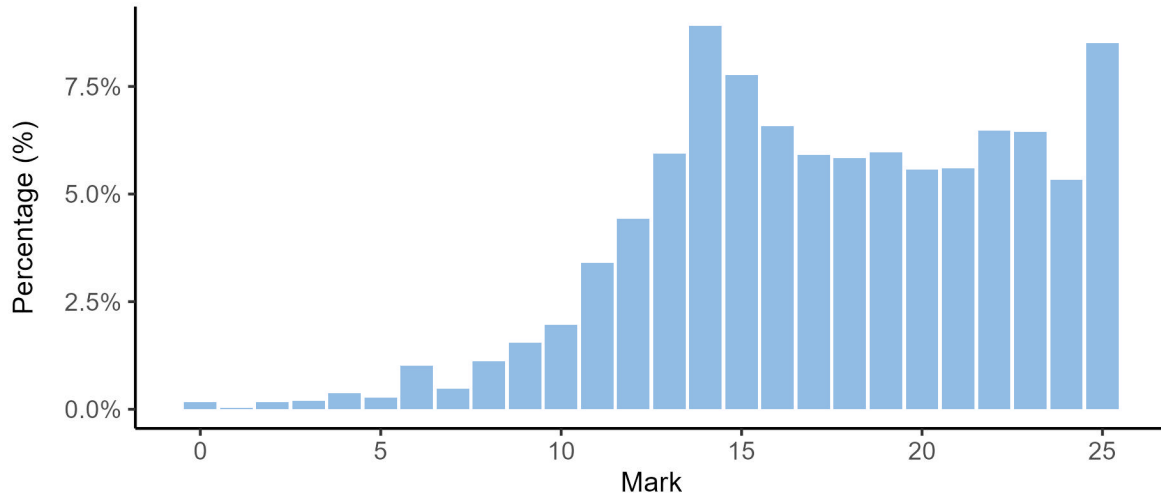


IA2 Criterion: Creating and communicating

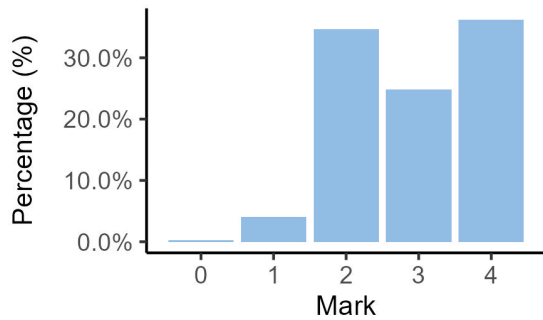


IA3 marks

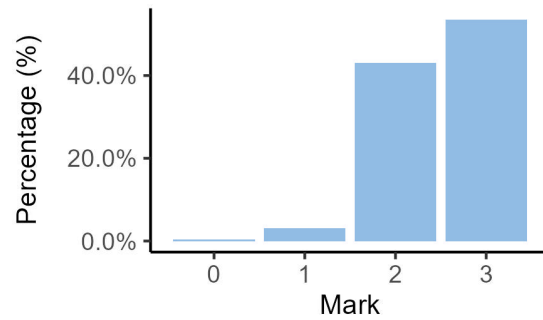
IA3 total



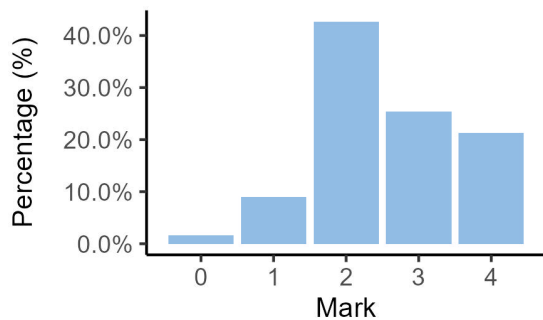
IA3 Criterion: Comprehending



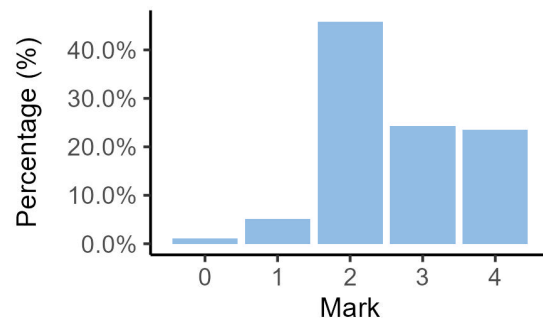
IA3 Criterion: Devising and conducting



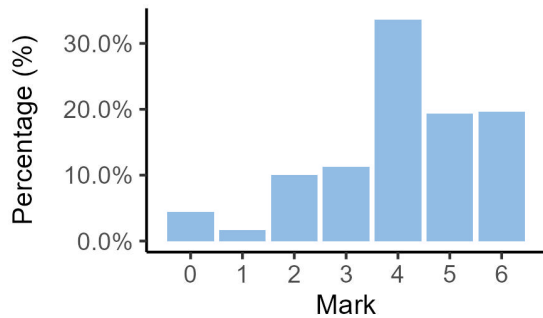
IA3 Criterion: Analysing



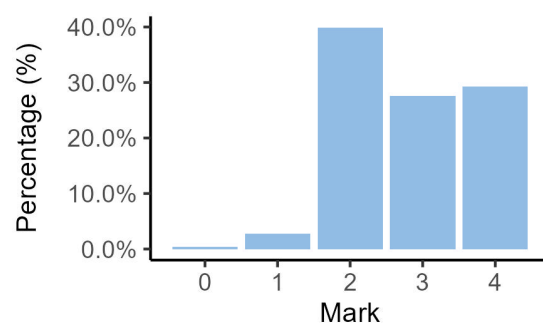
IA3 Criterion: Synthesising



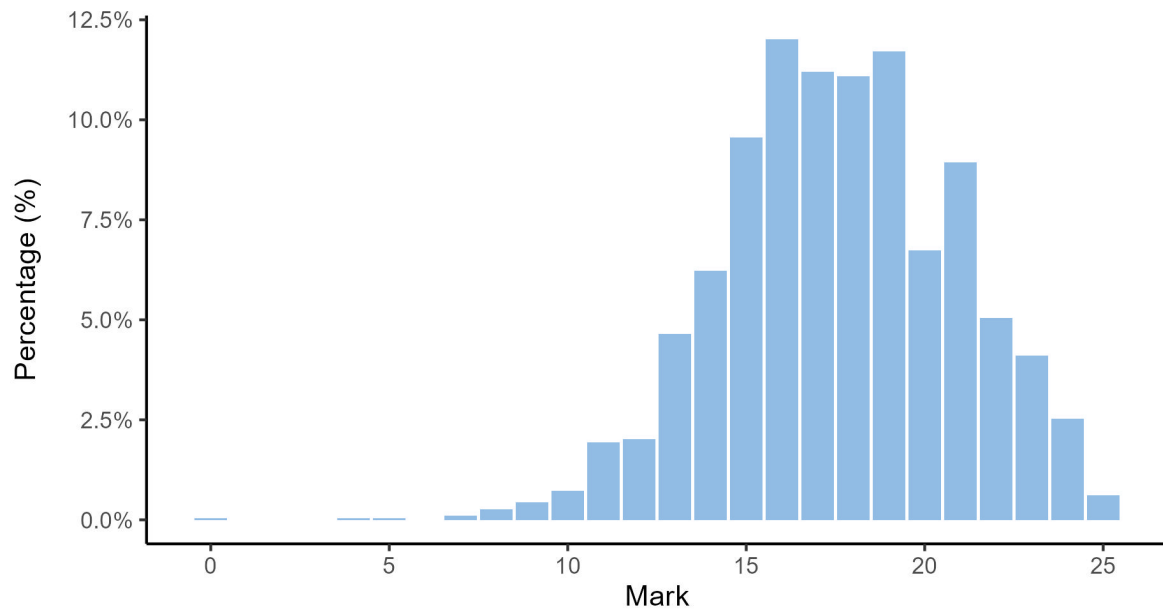
IA3 Criterion: Evaluating



IA3 Criterion: Creating and communicating

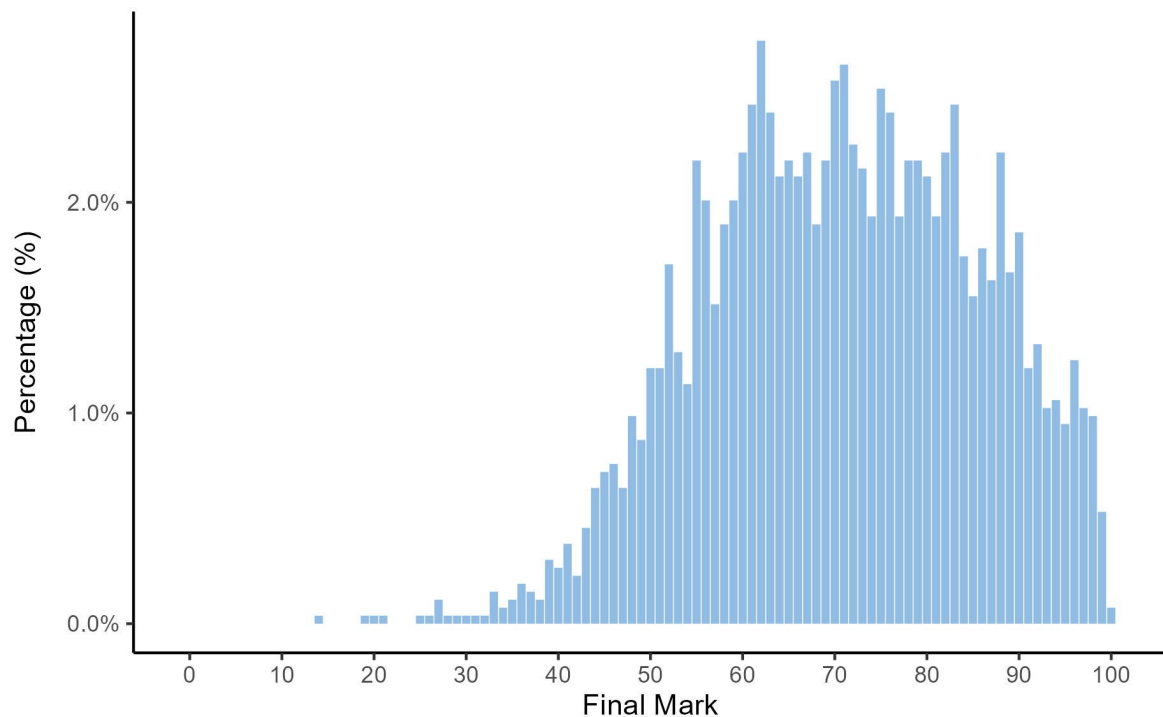


External assessment (EA) marks



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	745	1,030	1,071	91	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 assessment. 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 v6.0*, Section 9.5.

Percentage of instruments endorsed in Application 1

Instruments submitted	IA1	IA2	IA3
Total number of instruments	217	217	217
Percentage endorsed in Application 1	89	95	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 v6.0*, Section 9.6.

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	215	1,437	13	86.98
2	215	1,437	47	73.49
3	215	1,430	29	87.44

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	19
Authentication	0
Authenticity	1
Item construction	2
Scope and scale	3

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided a question or statement that allowed for a student-generated hypothesis, e.g. 'to what extent ...' questions were used to provide students with the opportunity to respond in a variety of ways by taking their own stance on the question posed. Similarly, quotes from historians were often provided, with students being asked to assess the validity of the perspective presented in the quote, using the provided sources to do so
- provided a range of sources that allowed students to address the upper performance levels of the ISMG in Analysing, Synthesising and Evaluating. This included different types of sources (e.g. artefacts, histories, biographies, journal articles, epigraphy), sources from different time periods and/or sources that presented differing perspectives on the topic.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- meet syllabus specifications by providing the correct number of seen sources (6–7) and not seen sources (3–5). Selection of sources should take into consideration what constitutes a singular source and what might be considered multiple sources. For instance, an image of an artefact with an accompanying article constitutes two sources, whereas images of the same artefact, taken from multiple angles to show more fine-grained detail, can be considered a single source

- provide context statements for sources that allow students the opportunity to demonstrate the assessment objectives of analysis and evaluation. When constructing context statements, consideration should be given to the author, time of production and the circumstances in which a source was produced. For instance, a context statement for an ancient artefact (e.g. a statue) might include its time of production and location, as well as who commissioned it and its purpose. A context statement for a modern-day historian might include the time period in which they wrote, their qualifications and/or publications and any viewpoints they sought to foreground or challenge through their work. Information in a context statement should not provide analysis or evaluation of the source as this impedes students from demonstrating these assessment objectives themselves
- include all specifications in the syllabus in the task instructions, e.g. 'an essay in response to historical sources requires sustained analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the stimulus material in order to fully support a student-generated hypothesis' should be included on the task sheet
- provide a question/statement that aligns with the time period of the topic being studied, e.g. 'first century CE' rather than 'first century BCE'.

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	1
Transparency	0

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- used consistent formatting, layout, font and font size across attachments for both seen and not seen sources in the stimulus package
- provided high-quality images of visual sources and included explanatory information in the context statement where an aspect of an image might not have been clearly identifiable.

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- clearly signpost context statements using consistent headings, font and layout to ensure context statements are distinguishable from the source itself
- include a consistent and chronological method for labelling sources, e.g. seen sources labelled 1–7 in order, and not seen sources labelled 8–12 in order. Using a mixture of numbers and letters or numbers out of sequence decreases the accessibility of the stimulus.

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	97.21	0.00	2.79	0
2	Analysing	97.67	1.86	0.47	0
3	Synthesising	97.21	1.86	0.93	0
4	Evaluating	90.70	6.05	3.26	0
5	Creating and communicating	98.14	0.00	1.86	0

Effective practices

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

- for the Comprehending criterion
 - terms were used thoroughly, mostly accurately and placed in historical context, e.g. *queen regnant*, *maat* and *patriarchal* are terms that may have been used when considering evidence about Hatshepsut
 - issues were explained in relation to the unseen question, e.g. in an essay about representations of Hatshepsut, the issue of the defacement of her statues and monuments by Thutmose III may have been explained
 - an understanding of the relationship between concepts and ideas was developed in response to the question, e.g. an essay about Hatshepsut's use of male iconography may have demonstrated an understanding of the relationship between the concept of power and symbols
- for the Analysing criterion, identification and examination of the features of evidence from a range of sources was evident across the response. At the upper performance level, there was discernment in the features chosen for examination. Thoughtful and astute choices were evident when responses identified the most relevant feature/s of evidence to examine for each source, e.g. in a response about representations of Hatshepsut, the implicit meanings and motive of the Temple of Hatshepsut might be identified. However, when considering the work of Dr Joyce Tyldesley, the context and perspective of the source might be most relevant.

Practices to strengthen

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

- for the Creating and communicating criterion
 - responses at the upper performance level incorporate all features from the specifications in the syllabus, including
 - a clear introduction that sets context, contains a hypothesis and includes an outline of the argument to be made
 - body paragraphs that each begin with a topic sentence
 - a conclusion that draws together the main ideas and arguments made
 - ethical scholarship is applied across the response. Under exam conditions, the use of parentheses, e.g. (Source 1) or (S1) is acceptable
 - at the upper performance level, responses should be succinct with ideas related to the unseen question and hypothesis conveyed logically. Excessive analysis and evaluation may impede a student’s ability to create a concise response that logically conveys their argument
- for the Evaluating criterion
 - judgments are present at the upper two performance levels. A judgment includes a clear opinion about usefulness or reliability supported by evidence from the source and/or its context statement. Simply noting an author and their credentials constitutes identification of the features of evidence from sources and is best matched to the Analysing criterion, rather than the Evaluating criterion
 - judgments at the upper performance level are well reasoned and corroborated
 - well-reasoned judgments include highly relevant evidence from the source and/or its context statement as supporting evidence to justify the opinion reached
 - corroboration is linked to a judgment of usefulness and/or reliability, rather than simply the corroboration of evidence.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate:

- in Excerpt 1, features of an essay in response to historical sources, specifically
 - an introduction with a clear hypothesis and an outline of the main arguments to be presented
 - a paragraph with a clear topic sentence and consistent demonstration of ethical scholarship
- in Excerpt 2, an example of analysis at the top performance level, with
 - discerning identification and detailed examination of the features of evidence, such as Herodotus’s context and perspective. The response is thoughtful in its examination of the features of evidence, identifying and examining those most relevant to the point being made. Analysis was present across the response for a range of sources, e.g. Thucydides, Pritchard, Plutarch, Euripides and a pyxis
 - an informed explanation of how this evidence contributes to the development of the hypothesis. Here, both Herodotus’s words and his own status are used to further this argument, developing the hypothesis presented in Excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1

The Greek polis of Athens was considered to be one of Greece's greatest, largely due to the significant political and ~~so~~ cultural advances made during the 5th century. Although the political and cultural developments of 5th century Athens sought to dramatically improve the lives of Athenians, these benefits failed to extend to women and slaves.

The values that underpinned changes in the 5th century were those of equality. These changes were in many ways beneficial to the free men of Athens. However, these changes in no way benefitted the women and slaves who were not given the right to partake in the decision-making process of Athens.

Excerpt 2

Political and cultural advancement greatly benefitted the free men of Athenian society. This can be seen in an excerpt from *Histories* a book written in the 5th century by ^{the Greek} historian Herodotus. In the *Histories* he states "when they ^{the Athenians} were freed, each one was eager to achieve for himself" indicating that the move from a familial style leadership to a democracy made Athenian men willing and happy to work towards greatness. Because Herodotus was a metic of Athens and was writing from an outsider's perspective it indicates how foreigners' lives benefitted from the development of Athens. His positive description is indicative that the life of a ~~se~~ male historian - someone useful to society - was a respected

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

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 making judgments, assessment evidence of student performance in each criterion is matched to a performance-level descriptor that describes the **typical** characteristics evident in student work.

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	9
Authentication	0
Authenticity	1
Item construction	0
Scope and scale	0

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- selected topics for investigation that provided students with the opportunity to demonstrate the assessment objectives across the full range of performance levels in the IMSG, e.g. to meet the upper performance levels of the ISMG for the Devising and conducting, Analysing, and Evaluating criteria, primary and secondary sources must be used
- provided a task question/statement that was broad enough to allow for a student-generated hypothesis, e.g. 'investigate an aspect of ...' Where topics were narrowed further, they still provided the opportunity for students to generate their own key inquiry question and unique response, such as 'investigate how evidence can be used to construct an understanding of an aspect of society in Pompeii and/or Herculaneum ...'

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- include all task specifications from the syllabus, e.g. when providing instructions about practising ethical scholarship using a recognised referencing system to acknowledge sources, the direction 'including a reference list' is also required.

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	0
Layout	0
Transparency	0

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
- included information in checkpoints relevant to the year of implementation, e.g. if using dates, these dates were for the correct year.

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	91.16	3.72	5.12	0.00
2	Analysing	87.91	9.77	2.33	0.00
3	Evaluating	81.40	14.88	3.26	0.47

Criterion number	Criterion name	Percentage agreement with provisional	Percentage less than provisional	Percentage greater than provisional	Percentage both less and greater than provisional
4	Creating and communicating	97.67	0.47	1.86	0.00

Effective practices

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

- for the Devising and conducting criterion, responses at the upper performance level that demonstrated
 - a nuanced key inquiry question and relevant sub-questions. Nuanced key inquiry questions demonstrated an understanding of the subtleties of the topic and narrowed the focus of the investigation by specifying, e.g. the issue, event, time, individual, group, location, society
 - use of the historical questions, e.g. the key inquiry question and sub-questions were used and applied across the response, such as in the source analysis and/or critical summary of evidence
- for the Creating and communicating criterion, responses at the upper performance level
 - were succinct in nature, e.g. they avoided repetition of information across different headings and sections of the response
 - conveyed ideas related to both the key inquiry question and sub-questions in a logical way
 - consistently used the features of an independent source investigation, as specified in Syllabus section 4.13.2
 - consistently used a recognised system of referencing, including a reference list.

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 only are selected for interrogation, as per the task specifications. At least one primary source and one secondary source must be selected, analysed and evaluated to achieve the two upper performance levels in both the Analysing and Evaluating criteria. In selecting these, careful consideration should be given to what constitutes a primary source. For instance, in a study of Alexander the Great, there are limited primary sources available. Primary sources were created or written during the time being investigated, e.g. during or very soon after an event. Consideration should be given to the availability of primary sources prior to a student beginning their investigation
- in the Evaluating criterion
 - a distinction is made between judgments and statements
 - a statement includes a decision or conclusion about the usefulness or reliability of a source
 - a judgment includes a clearly stated decision or conclusion about the usefulness or reliability of a source and provides supporting evidence to explain the reasoning behind this opinion. Where there is reasoning, but no decision or conclusion stated, a response does not meet the top three performance levels, all of which require judgments

- a discerning judgment at the top performance level is well reasoned. It includes highly relevant evidence in support of the judgment made and is directly linked to the focus of the inquiry
- corroboration must be linked to judgments about reliability and usefulness, rather than simply the corroboration of evidence, e.g. a response might indicate that a source is considered more useful or reliable as it substantiates the evidence in, or perspective of, one of the other selected sources and includes an explanation of how or why the sources align.

Samples

The following excerpts have been included to demonstrate the upper performance levels of the Analysing and Evaluating criteria. This response sought to investigate the key inquiry question, 'To what extent was Pope Urban II acting in the interest of strengthening the power of the papacy within the political landscape when launching the First Crusade (1096–1099 CE) rather than a genuine desire to push back against Muslim expansion?'

These excerpts demonstrate:

- in Excerpt 1
 - discerning identification and detailed examination of the features of evidence, e.g. origin, context, motive, audience and perspective. There is thoughtful and astute selection of the features of evidence to examine for the source, showing discernment
 - informed explanation of how evidence from Pope Urban's letter contributes to the development of the key inquiry question by acknowledging the source's relevance in understanding the political climate at the time of the First Crusade
- in Excerpts 1 and 2
 - discerning judgments about usefulness and reliability that are well-reasoned, e.g. clear decisions about both usefulness (Excerpt 1) and reliability (Excerpt 2) of the sources have been made, weighing up strengths and limitations and supported by evidence from the sources.

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

Excerpt 1

Interrogation of evidence from the source

This letter was written by Pope Urban II on September 19 1096, to publicise his proclamation of war while establishing crusading canon and law. It offers a significant contribution to the limited source record available regarding Urban's motivations and is, therefore, a useful firsthand account as it was created less than a year after he preached the sermon at Clermont that launched the Crusades.

However, according to Professor Georg Strack (2016) of the University of Marburg, it is likely that Urban "did not write this letter of his own initiative" but rather "was asked by a petitioner". This is suggested by second-hand language such as "We have heard" when referring to the residents of Bologna's desires to go to Jerusalem (Urban II, 1096). Subsequently, the contents of this source overtly indicate Urban's public motives to influence many Christians to risk their lives in the conquest and may not reliably reflect how it was used as a political tool. Addressing his partisans in Bologna, Urban assures his audience that Crusaders will be relieved of all penance for their sins as they "risked their belongings and lives for the love of God and their neighbour". Subsequently, this reference to the Christian tenant of loving one's neighbour demonstrates his intent to relate the concept of the Crusade to that of a holy pilgrimage that aids fellow Christians.

Despite this endorsement of the First Crusade as a religious act of service, Urban's letter is more notably highly useful in encapsulating the political challenges, but also opportunity, presented by a divided Christian Europe. It is evident throughout the letter that Antipope Clement III still had influence on the diocese of Bologna. Initially, Urban is seen to acknowledge the ongoing power struggle between himself and the antipope by offering thanks to both those who "have always stood firm in the Catholic faith" and who "have left the error of their ways". This provides a deeper understanding of the contentious political climate which may have led the papacy to feel a need to reestablish central Roman authority.

Reference

Strack, G. (2016). Pope Urban II and Jerusalem: a re-examination of this letters on the First Crusade. Retrieved from The Journal of Religious History: Literature and Culture: https://www.mag.geschichte.uni-muenchen.de/downloads/strack_letters.pdf

Excerpt 2

Although Robert the Monk prefaces his account of the speech at Clermont with the claim that he was an eyewitness, the reliability of his account is reduced by a desire to justify and glorify the recently concluded first Crusade. Written roughly 25 years after its delivery, the accuracy of his record of the Pope's exact words is quite diminished. Consequently, like many Christian chroniclers around the time of the First Crusade, he may have been prone to embellishment as his position in the Church would have incentivised him to ennoble and praise the actions of his Pope and Christians during the Crusade itself (Riley-Smith, 1977).

Additional advice

- Consideration should be given to the *QCE and QCIA policy and procedures handbook v6.0*, Section 8.2.6, which provides guidelines for managing response length. All words in the text of the response are included in the response length, e.g. all headings, subheadings and directions in a scaffold. Use of such scaffolds with excessive subheadings and instructional text encourages students to repeat information and may result in a response exceeding the maximum response length of 2,000 words. The key inquiry question and sub-questions are included in the response length. The excerpt of the source being analysed and evaluated is not included in the response length, as per the assessment conditions.
- Dot points can be used in the source analysis; however, standard language conventions still apply. Dot points should not be so brief that students are prevented from clearly addressing the Analysing and Evaluating criteria.
- An additional source, beyond those which have been analysed and evaluated, may be used as needed in the correct context. For instance, a response might refer to another source to determine the translation of Greek words on a coin about Alexander the Great or Philip II, or to note the qualifications/historical context of an author. In this case, the additional source should be cited and included in the reference list. Additional sources must not be used to develop the key inquiry question or corroborate the 4–6 sources included for investigation.
- Care is required to correctly apply the principle of best-fit when using the ISMG. In a performance level that contains a two-mark range, the upper mark in the range is awarded if evidence in the response matches all descriptors within the performance level. The lower mark in the range should be awarded where evidence in the response matches a majority of descriptors within the performance level. Further information on the application of best-fit is contained in the *Making judgments webinar*, available in the Resources section in the Syllabus application (app) in the QCAA Portal.

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	7
Authentication	4
Authenticity	1
Item construction	0
Scope and scale	1

Effective practices

Validity priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided a question/statement that allowed for a student-generated key inquiry question and hypothesis and a unique response, e.g. 'Create a historical essay based on research that investigates a key aspect of the Peloponnesian War.'

Practices to strengthen

It is recommended that assessment instruments:

- provide the syllabus specifications aligned to the correct instrument, e.g. sub-questions are a specification for IA2 rather than IA3. Similarly, a reference list (a list of all cited sources) — rather than a bibliography (a list of all sources cited and consulted/read) — is a specification of 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	0
Layout	0
Transparency	0

Effective practices

Accessibility priorities were effectively demonstrated in assessment instruments that:

- provided syllabus specifications and task instructions clearly in the task section and did not repeat these instructions in the scaffolding.

Practices to strengthen

There were no significant issues identified for improvement.

Additional advice

- Ensure all syllabus specifications are included and that the specifications are aligned to the correct assessment instrument, e.g. carefully edit the task description, checkpoints and scaffolding to ensure there are no IA2 specifications included in an IA3.

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	97.67	0.93	1.40	0.00
2	Devising and conducting	98.60	0.00	1.40	0.00
3	Analysing	96.28	2.33	1.40	0.00
4	Synthesising	96.74	2.33	0.47	0.47
5	Evaluating	94.42	4.19	0.47	0.93
6	Creating and communicating	96.74	2.33	0.47	0.47

Effective practices

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

- in the Comprehending criterion, terms were placed in historical contexts, issues were explained, and the relationship between concepts and ideas was developed across the response
- in the Analysing criterion, at the upper performance level, a discerning use of the features of evidence from both primary and secondary sources was present, and the examination of these sources was detailed. Responses at this level demonstrated thoughtful and astute choices in their use and examination of features of evidence, choosing those that were most appropriate for the selected source, rather than using/examining the same features of evidence for each source.

Practices to strengthen

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

- in the Synthesising criterion, responses at the upper performance level
 - combine information to develop a sophisticated historical argument. A sophisticated historical argument has intellectual complexity and is sustained across the response. This includes the establishment of the argument in the introduction with the presentation of a clear hypothesis, and the development of this hypothesis across body paragraphs, with its summary in the conclusion
- in the Evaluating criterion
 - the distinction between a judgment and a statement is clearly understood. A judgment includes a clear conclusion drawn about either the reliability or usefulness of the source and an explanation in support of this. Simply noting the author and their qualifications or context does not meet the requirement for a judgment, unless used to support a decision about the reliability or usefulness of a source. A statement notes an opinion about reliability or usefulness, but provides no evidence in support of this
 - discerning judgments about both the reliability and usefulness of sources are present at the upper performance level. A discerning judgment is perceptive and discriminating, and weighs up the strengths and limitations of the source to support the historical argument being developed
 - judgments at the upper performance level are well reasoned, meaning the supporting justification of a source's usefulness or reliability is highly relevant for the specific judgment made. Responses are better matched to the mid performance level when the judgment is simplistic and/or generic and not linked to the development of the argument.

Samples

The following excerpts demonstrate evidence of:

- the Evaluating criterion at the top performance level with discerning, well-reasoned judgments about both usefulness and reliability for multiple sources. For instance
 - in Excerpt 1, the judgment about Plutarch's reliability weighs up the benefits, limitations and implications of the evidence, e.g. considering where Plutarch's information came from and how this might impact Plutarch's perspective on Marius. The judgment is also specific to the excerpt selected by the student, as well as connected to the argument presented about Marius's role in the breakdown of the Roman Republic

- in Excerpt 2, from a different response, the judgment about the usefulness of Plutarch's information on Sulla considers both
 - the perspective presented by Plutarch
 - the usefulness of this evidence to the argument that Sulla's proscriptions caused immense instability.

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

Excerpt 1

The Greco-

Roman historian Plutarch recorded in *Parallel Lives* that to a subjugation sent by the Senate begging Marius to spare the citizens on entering Rome again, Marius "made it clear...that he would at once fill the city with slaughter" and that in the civil violence leading up to his seventh consulship "Marius...thirsted for blood, [and] kept on killing all whom he held in any suspicion whatsoever" (Plutarch, ca. 2nd century CE). As a secondary ancient source, Plutarch used the memoirs of Sulla and Rutilius Rufus who were two of Marius's main enemies meaning this interpretation of Marius likely exaggerates his violence and cruelty, however, it provides a reliable depiction of a pro-Senate *Optimate* perspective on Marius's role in the civil war. This is relevant and useful in determining the significance of Marius's unconstitutional *potestas* and *auctoritas* in breaking down political cohesion and exposing the true nature of the Republic, one that favoured the *Optimates* and patricians.

Reference

Gambino, M.C. (2015) The Military Reforms of Gaius Marius in their Social, Economic, and Political Context. Retrieved from <https://thescholarship.ecu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/bababf9a-8bbc-4406-8783-cb3afa9ac577/content>

Excerpt 2

Yet Plutarch's account warrants scrutiny, since villainising Sulla's dictatorship aids his narrative of Sulla's moral decline as he ascended to power, incentivising overemphasis on the harms of his proscriptions. Even if exaggerated, Plutarch still offers a valuable insight into the disorder created by Sulla's proscriptions: they caused a breakdown in civil order across much of Italy, blindsiding Senatorial authority.

Additional advice

- The key inquiry question should be included by the student and is typically located at the top of the page prior to the student response.
- Responses that exceed 2,000 words require the application of the school's assessment policy for managing response length. Evidence of this should be annotated on the student response and ISMG.
- It is not mandated that students use the words *reliable* or *useful* when evaluating — synonyms can be used provided a judgment is made. Students should also be reminded that evaluation should not come at the expense of presenting a clear argument.

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.

External assessment — 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 syllabus. The examination consisted of one paper (41 marks).

The examination assessed subject matter from Unit 4: People, power and authority, with a focus on Topic 12: Augustus.

The assessment required students to respond to four short response items requiring paragraph responses 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.

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:

- understood the requirements of each cognition, e.g. when explaining, students provided an unpacking of evidence, linking this to the assertion made in the response
- demonstrated an informed understanding of issues in the stimulus related to the question/s
- structured responses in a clear and logical way
- used terms from the provided stimulus appropriately (in historical context).

Practices to strengthen

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

- emphasising the importance of carefully reading each question to determine which cognition/s are being assessed. Students should be discouraged from studying question types and instead focus on the cognitions of the assessment objectives
- preparing students to respond using evidence from the provided sources and their accompanying context statements in their responses. While knowledge about the topic supports student engagement with the questions and sources, no marks are awarded for recalling additional knowledge or terms outside the scope of the question and stimulus

- providing students with 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. the purpose of Augustus's moral laws. Generic or pre-prepared judgments that lack specificity and links to the question are not discerning. Judgments must be supported by evidence in, or what can be reasonably inferred from, the source (including the context statement), rather than relying on prior knowledge of a source or its author.

Samples

Short response

The following excerpt is in response to Question 2a). It required students to analyse evidence from Ovid's *Fasti* (Source 2) to explain how Augustus is portrayed by Ovid.

Effective student responses:

- identified the way Augustus is portrayed by Ovid
- provided an explanation of the way Augustus is portrayed by Ovid
- used well-chosen evidence from Source 2
- used terms in historical context.

This excerpt has been included:

- to show an example of an explanation, supported by well-chosen evidence.

Ovid portrays Augustus as being the Greatest ruler of Rome and being on the level of the gods. Ovid states that "Augustus alone has a name that ranks with great Jove," Jove likely being Jupiter, meaning that Augustus was as highly ranked as the king of the gods even. The excerpt "Such titles were never bestowed on men before," again reaffirms Augustus's god-like status according to Ovid. He also portrays Augustus as being a great conquerer and military commander with the excerpt, "If Caesar Augustus was to take his titles from the defeated, He would need as many names as tribes on Earth." Ovid saying that Augustus had vanquished nearly every enemy and tribe on Earth. He also ~~portrays Augustus~~ portrays Augustus's name as being a great compliment and as being a sacred word, "Sacred things are called August by the senators, And so are temples duly dedicated by priestly hands." Showing that Ovid thought of Augustus as being a divine name and only being reserved for the greatest of projects. Thus, showing how Ovid portrays Augustus as being the greatest ruler of Rome and being godly in power.

The following excerpt is in response to Question 3. It required students to analyse evidence from Source 3 in the stimulus book to explain Seneca's opinion of Augustus and evaluate how reliable Seneca is for understanding Augustus's approach to leadership.

Effective student responses:

- explained Seneca's opinion of Augustus, using well-chosen evidence from the source
- used terms in historical context
- understood issues associated with Augustus's approach to leadership
- made a discerning judgment about the reliability of Ovid's description of Augustus's achievements
- explained the judgment using well-chosen evidence from the source
- identified issues related to the nature of evidence.

This excerpt has been included:

- to show an explanation of Seneca's opinion of Augustus, using well-chosen evidence from the source. The response uses carefully selected evidence to explain that Seneca believed that although Augustus was violent in his youth, he grew to be merciful which benefited the Empire
- to demonstrate a discerning judgment that uses well-chosen evidence from the source. The judgment is discerning as it considers the strengths, limitations and implications of the source, and uses well-chosen evidence from the source and its context statement to justify the judgment. For instance, the response considers
 - the strengths of the source, e.g. Seneca's position as Nero's tutor and the likelihood that Seneca had access to records which allowed him to select examples of Augustus's clemency
 - the limitations of the source, e.g. the likelihood that as an employee of the Roman Emperor, Seneca may have been motivated to avoid harsh criticisms of previous emperors.

In the excerpt from Seneca's *On Clemency* (source 3), it can be identified that Seneca's opinion of Augustus was that of believing Augustus to largely be a merciful ruler who benefited Rome despite his violent actions in his youth. ~~Although~~ Seneca^(source 3) acknowledges that Augustus was "hot-headed" in his youth where he "wielded the sword," indicating that he believed Augustus had a tendency to use military force and violence to gain power, such when he "buried his dagger in the [chest] of friends," and through his actions as "a partner in proscription" where Augustus as part of the second Triumvirate killed many Senators and Equites in order to gain wealth and remove political opposition. However, Seneca^(source 3) claims that in

The time of the principate when Augustus had ~~more~~ near complete power, he was "mild" and "good," [sparing] the vanquished" and using his "mercifulness to [lead] him on to safety and security." This ~~step~~ indicates that Seneca believes in the time of his rule, Augustus was particularly merciful, even to those who lost to him in battle, and that this mercy was what benefited the Roman Empire, in establishing ^{the} safety and security of the whole Empire, after years of wars both civil and foreign. Overall, it can be determined that, though aware of Augustus's violent actions before his rule, Seneca's opinion of Augustus was that of a merciful and beneficial ruler. In terms of reliability, Seneca is moderately reliable. As a tutor for the Roman Emperor Nero, Seneca likely would have had access to imperial records of Augustus's actions increasing the reliability of his essay. Additionally, ~~intending~~ ^{intending} to encourage Nero to find value in clemency, Seneca would have been encouraged to choose examples of clemency which held truth as to better help Nero grasp its value, ~~fulfilling~~ ^{fulfilling} his reliability. However, Question 3) as he was directly working for the emperor, Seneca may have avoided overly criticising the previous emperors as to avoid ~~gaining~~ ^{gaining} a negative response, leaving him inclined to possibly diminish the extent of ~~Augustus's~~ Augustus's violence, slightly reducing his reliability.

The following excerpt is in response to Question 4. It required students to synthesise evidence from Sources 4–7 in the stimulus book to create a historical argument about the purpose of Augustus's moral laws. As part of their historical argument, students were instructed to include one judgment of usefulness and one judgment of reliability for the *Res Gestae* (Source 5).

Effective student responses:

- presented a sophisticated historical argument about the purpose of Augustus's moral laws
- skilfully combined evidence from all four sources to develop the historical argument
- demonstrated appropriate use of terms and concepts in historical context
- demonstrated an informed understanding of issues associated with the purpose of Augustus's moral laws
- made a judgment about both the usefulness and the reliability of the *Res Gestae* that supported the development of the historical argument
- organised paragraph/s purposefully to succinctly and fluently convey ideas relating to the historical argument, acknowledging sources used.

These excerpts have been included:

- to demonstrate the way in which evidence from the four sources can be used to develop a *sophisticated* historical argument that directly responds to the question. Excerpts 1 and 2 provide examples of the introductory sentences of the historical argument. These responses recognise the key evidence from all four sources in response to the question, arguing that while Augustus's moral laws were designed to restore tradition, there was additional motivation to expand the population and therefore ensure the stability of Rome.

Excerpt 1

Augustus was a Roman ruler of great vision of his time, as he dedicated many of his final years ^{to} consolidating his rule and making sure the Empire was in a healthy condition. One of the measures he took to ensure this was the introduction of moral laws, specifically surrounding marriage. The emperor ~~expected~~ ^{identified} that for a people to prosper many years after him, there must be incentive for the population to grow. While Augustus' moral laws surrounding marriage did stem from beliefs regarding the importance of the family, the main utility of the laws were to grow the Empire under his rule and allow more young men to follow a public career.

Excerpt 2

Overall, the sources suggest the purpose of Augustus' moral laws was to ensure the bloodlines of the elite and to leave a legacy, after having lost many to civil war and his own proscriptions.

Note: The excerpt may not include all aspects of the high-level response listed above, e.g. it may be included to illustrate one of the three required relevant points.

This excerpt has been included:

- to demonstrate a judgment of both usefulness and reliability that supports the development of the historical argument. The judgments are connected to the student's argument that Augustus's moral laws were enacted to restore tradition, with the underlying purpose to increase the population to sustain both political and military success for Rome.

In implying this, the Res Gestae (source 5) is particularly useful in determining what Augustus ^{intended} ~~aimed~~ the for the Roman people to think about his moral laws: rather than just seeking to ~~to~~ increase the population of Rome, he was in fact ~~the~~ restoring Rome to its golden era through the ~~reenactment~~ reenactment of traditional practices such as the Iustum et sanctumque family. In terms of reliability, the Res Gestae is rather limited, though corroborated by Eck (source 4) in his acknowledgement of "the existence of Rome" being seen to be dependant on the "stability of family" as well as the identification of families placing "the highest priority on legitimate offspring ... to pass on their traditions." The Res Gestae was largely constructed to promote a beneficial image of Augustus, in this case functioning as a propaganda piece to present him as the restorer of Rome's traditional values, heavily reducing its reliability.