

# External Assessment Report 2013

## Higher Italian

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### General Comments

- The reaction to the examination from both teachers and candidates appears to have been very positive.
- There were no significant issues regarding content, level of difficulty and marking. The marking scheme worked very well and there were no non-functioning questions.
- This year there was a significant and welcome increase of 32% in the number of presentations. There were six new and five returning centres out of a total of 35.

### Reading and Directed Writing

- Candidates appeared to react positively to the subject matter of the reading comprehension. The majority had success in the comprehension questions, all of which were well done, even by less able candidates.
- In some responses to the comprehension questions poor English lost the candidate marks.
- Positive results in the translation were also noted with an average mark of 6.3. Having said this, some candidates had problems translating the question forms of the first two sense-units.
- There was the usual spread of marks in Directed Writing, but it was pleasing to note that the majority of candidates had been well prepared and were usually able to adapt pre-learned material effectively. Very few penalties were applied this year for the omission of bullet points.

### Listening and Short Essay

- Many candidates found the listening difficult despite the apparent accessibility of the subject-matter and a clear and well-paced recording. The average mark for Listening was 10.3 out of 20.
- Questions 4b) and 6a) were particularly poor; many candidates failed to recognise *sfilata* and *palcoscenico* and were unfamiliar with the present tense of the verb *salire*.
- While candidates reacted well to the Short Essay title, performance here was uneven, and the average mark was 4.9 out of 10. The usual weaknesses in grammatical knowledge and accuracy were again noted – as they were in the Directed Writing - and can be listed as follows, in no particular order of importance:
  - *piacere* in all its forms
  - *qualche* with a plural noun

- agreement of adjectives
- articulated prepositions
- incorrect definite and indefinite articles
- prepositions before infinitives
- prepositions with towns and countries
- plural nouns and adjectives, especially those ending in *-co* and *-go*
- confusion between *tu*, *voi* and *si*
- *la gente / la famiglia* and plural verb
- irregular past participles, especially *decidere* and *mettere*
- direct and indirect object pronouns
- *pensare di / che*
- *aiutare a*
- possessive adjectives with family members
- confusion between *c'era* and *c'erano*

## Advice to centres on the preparation of future candidates

- Centres should advise candidates to approach each task in the order it is presented. It is unwise to attempt the translation before the comprehension questions. Centres should advise candidates that such an approach sometimes leads to a compromised performance.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read the precise wording of the comprehension questions carefully and to attempt to answer the specific questions precisely, avoiding the temptation to translate large chunks of language. They should be clear that no information from the translation section should be included in these answers.
- Every year there is evidence of candidates rushing through the translation because they have not managed their time effectively. Candidates need practice to improve this. They need time to check carefully for accuracy and possible omissions, especially of single words, as these can often incur a penalty. Special caution is needed when translating numbers, especially the larger ones. Proper dictionary training is essential here.
- In the Directed Writing, train candidates to read the whole scenario carefully and to have a strategy for ensuring that they cover all bullet points in adequate detail. One such strategy is to present each bullet point as a separate paragraph. This makes it easier for both candidates and markers to check that everything has been covered.
- Double line spacing in written tasks is recommended for maximum legibility and candidates should ensure that any rough working is clearly scored out.
- Pre-learned material should be manipulated logically to given scenarios and essay questions. Candidates need to have the skills to make any necessary textual and grammatical adjustments. It is disappointing when, in some centres, candidates write almost identical essays or almost identical paragraphs to specific bullet points.

- The importance of adequate proofreading cannot be overemphasised, and candidates should be encouraged to use the full allocation of time to achieve this. .
- In listening comprehension, candidates should be trained to use the questions to anticipate the kind of information they might hear in advance of the first recording.
- Candidates should be extra cautious with numbers, times, dates and days, as many careless mistakes are made here.
- Candidates must understand that, at this level, many questions will require precise detail. They should make sure that they include relevant adjectives in their answers, as these are often essential for points to be awarded. If a question asks *where* or *when exactly*, this indicates that some specific detail is required.
- In the Short Essay, candidates must ensure that they read the essay question carefully and attempt to address the precise issues raised. The use of pre-learned material here can be dangerous as it may lead to partial or total irrelevance, unless the candidate has the skills to adapt it to the essay title.