**External Assessment Report 2012          Advanced Higher French**

**Comments on candidate performance**

**General comments**

- Number of presentations: 646
- The content of the examination was of an appropriate level of difficulty. Each element was accessible to candidates but proved demanding and produced a good range of performances.
- Candidates were well prepared with very few really poor performances. These tended to be in the Folio and Discursive writing
- There was a marked improvement in performance in all components, particularly writing in comparison to the previous year.
- Listening is still the skill candidates find the most difficult
- Average Speaking mark: 35.9/50

**Candidate performance in Reading/Translation and advice to centres**

 Average Reading and Translation mark:  34.4/50

- Many excellent performances. Content and vocabulary of the reading passage accessible to candidates and topic one to which they could relate.
- Candidates responded accurately to the reading comprehension questions, and there was less evidence of 'word for word translation'
- Candidates foud: 'l'atmosphère est très bon enfant and lutter contre l'image stéréotype de la génération du numérique et d'internet … à moins que ce ne soit au moyen d'un écran d'ordinateur' difficult
- The inferential question producing a range of performance and many candidates wrote unnecessarily long answers. Information given in answer to the comprehension questions was repeated. Key aspects of the text and any stylistic techniques should have been highlighted.
- Most candidates performed well in the Translation section, but often there was lack of accuracy and details. Ce/ces as 'the', singular/plural nouns, verb tenses
- Only the more able candidates translated s'éloigne de', 'il   s'adonne à' and 'liée à une de ces fêtes' accurately and with appropriate English expressions.
  **Advice to centres**
- Continue to highlight difference between reading for comprehension and accurate and precise translation with appropriate use of English expressions.
- Encourage candidates to attempt the translation after the reading comprehension questions
- Discourage candidates from giving a word-for-word translation of the text, as this often results in English that is difficult to comprehend.
- Encourage candidates to give a general response to the inferential question and to support this statement with specific, key information from the text while commenting on any particular stylistic features used by the author.

**Candidate performance in Listening/Discursive Writing and advice to centres**

- Average Listening and Discursive Writing mark: 44.9/70
- Marked improvement in the response to the listening texts on mobile phones with candidates performing very well, particularly in Part A.
- The clarity and speed of recording were commented on favourably by many centres.
- Good variety of straightforward, factual questions and more demanding questions requiring more detailed responses.
- Many candidates often understood part of the information but answers lacked sufficient detail ('moins cher' / 'plus rapide', 'le travail scolaire', 'si tu n'es pas à côté d'un téléphone fixe').
- Some excellent performances in Discursive Writing, where very able candidates drew upon the topics they had covered to produce an excellent range and variety of language structures, but performance ranged from very good to poor
- All six essay topics were attempted. Topics 2 and Topic 5 most popular
- Some candidates struggled to incorporate relevant learned material accurately enough for a satisfactory performance. A small number of candidates' performances showed little or no control of basic grammar and verb formation, and with serious misuse of dictionary.

**Advice to centres**

- Candidates should be encouraged to read the essay title carefully and to use learned material relevant to the essay title.
- Candidates should use the dictionary to check the accuracy of what they have written (spelling, genders, etc.) not to create and invent new sentences.
- Share the assessment criteria for Discursive Writing so that candidates know what is expected in terms of Content, Accuracy, Range and Variety.

**Candidate performance in the Folio and advice to centres**

- Average Folio mark: 21.2/30
- Wide range of literary texts and background topics but no Language in Work reports.
- The weaker performances were those where candidates were descriptive, rather than critical and analytical, often resulting from poor choice of essay title.
- Some candidates were penalised for exceeding the word limit and for not including a bibliography.
- In some background topics, and particularly those related to films, it was not always clear how much of the study had been in French or how far the topic was being approached from a French as distinct from a European or American perspective.

**Advice to centres**

- Candidates should choose an essay title that allows for a critical and analytical response.
- Candidates should develop an appropriately formal and accurate use of English.
- Candidates should adhere to the word limit and include a bibliography.
- Share the assessment criteria for Folio Writing with candidates