

# **Assessment Report**

## **Scholarship, 2007**

### **Classical Studies**

### **Commentary:**

Scholarship Classical Studies requires that candidates “unpack” the question, make some decisions about the content required, and then establish the direction and thrust of their argument. The best candidates were able to produce three outstanding essays, demonstrating a superb grasp of content and exceptional skill in critical analysis. Those who failed to reach the standard tended to write all they knew about a conventional topic “theme”, with inadequate focus on the question set.

The examination paper provides a range of question types: some open-ended, some content specific, others based on source material. Candidates are advised to choose questions to answer with care. At this level, each type of essay requires carefully planning, decisions about appropriate content, and forethought about structure. When the question provides source material for analysis (often in question 3), the material should not be glossed over as an optional component of the essay.

Although many candidates provided evidence of wide and intelligent additional reading in their answers, a number failed to produce a balanced argument, particularly when asked to evaluate the fairness of a statement. Scant attention was sometimes given to the possibility of alternative viewpoints and a rhetorical tone adopted.

A few candidates wrote two essays of high quality, but appeared to run out of time or energy for the third. It is important to maintain an even standard of attainment across three essays, since all are equally weighted.

The Scholarship standard explicitly requires that candidates “communicate ideas effectively in essay format”. Too often, otherwise knowledgeable candidates struggled to record their ideas with clarity and precision.

### **The best performing candidates most commonly demonstrated the following skills and / or knowledge:**

- the ability to focus on the question set
- the ability to evaluate content critically and develop a cogent, structured argument
- the ability to present a balanced viewpoint and think laterally
- accurate recall of relevant source material, and in the case of outstanding students, the ability to incorporate a wide range of salient primary and secondary sources into a cohesive argument
- clarity and precision of expression
- insight and/or originality and/or an expressive turn of phrase.

### **Candidates who did NOT achieve scholarship lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge above and in addition they:**

- failed to answer the question directly, coherently, or fully
- made sweeping and unsupported generalisations
- took a simplistic view, regarding the classical world in black and white terms
- wrote lengthy introductions that simply repeated the essay question
- did not communicate information in a clear or accurate way.