2013 English

Advanced Higher

Finalised Marking Instructions

CONTENTS

PART 1 – ADMINISTRATIVE POINTS

A. SQA PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

The most significant of these are that markers must:

- **attend the meeting of markers** – convened to clarify the procedures to be followed and to establish the standards to be applied in the course of their marking
- **take personal responsibility for assessing each script allocated to them** – fairly and consistently in accordance with the guidance and exemplars provided at the meeting of markers
- **follow SQA instructions** – for:
    - checking that they have received the appropriate scripts
    - reporting any anomalies or irregularities in their allocation
    - recording clearly and accurately the marks they have awarded
    - keeping a record of marks awarded
    - returning scripts, marks sheets, mark sheets substitutes, PA referral sheets and any other necessary materials within notified deadlines
- **provide SQA with a report** – outlining the principal features of candidate performance and drawing attention to any other matters of assessment or procedure they consider relevant.

B. TECHNICAL MATTERS CONCERNING THE VALIDITY OF CANDIDATE RESPONSES

The key statements concerning the validity of candidate responses in relation to those components assessed by external examination occur in the National Course Specification and are as follows:

"Candidates will be allowed **1 hour 30 minutes** under examination conditions in which to answer **one question** in relation to each of the units they have studied."

"No access to text(s) will be permitted …"

"Authors, texts and topics that are central to the work of candidates in *English: Specialist Study* may not be used in any other parts of external course assessment."

"Candidates will be required to record on their external examination answer booklet(s)

- Specialist Study texts and topics"

Several matters arise with regard to validity in the light of these statements.

1. Scripts containing answers to more than one question within a section

Markers should skim such scripts to establish (quickly) the better (or best) of the responses and make that response only the subject of detailed assessment. Such scripts are likely to be self-penalising. No formal (or other) penalty should be applied.

Instances of this sort should be marked as indicated above and referred to the Principal Assessor.

2. Scripts containing answers to questions from more than one section

Markers should return such scripts to SQA, together with an explanatory note, in the envelope in which they were received with the words **SPECIAL ATTENTION** clearly written on the outside of the envelope.

If such scripts contain an answer to a question from a section the marker is contracted to mark, such answers should be marked in the normal way before returning the script to SQA, and an explanation of what the marker has done enclosed with the script.

There may also be instances where a marker finds within a packet some scripts he or she is contracted to mark and other scripts he or she is not contracted to mark. In such instances, the procedure described above should also apply.

There is no need to refer such instances to the Principal Assessor.

3. Scripts on which candidates have failed to record relevant details of Specialist Study (Dissertation) texts and topics

Candidates are clearly instructed on the examination paper to include such details.

All such scripts should be marked in the normal way (if possible) and referred to the Principal Assessor.

4. Scripts offering answers based on texts that are outwith SQA specifications

Markers should note candidates are not free to base their answers on any text that seems to them to "fit" the question.

All answers based on texts outwith SQA specifications should be marked in the normal way (if possible) and referred to the Principal Assessor.

5. Uptake of questions and other issues

It would clearly be useful to glean from the responses of candidates as much useful information as possible about matters such as the popularity of the choices presented in the paper as well as about technical and other problems that have been unforeseen in the arrangements that have been put in place for the examination.

It would be appreciated if all markers included in their reports a tally of question uptake, suggestions for improvements in procedures (or in wording or lay-out of questions) and recommendations for the solution of specific problems that have arisen.

PART 2 – THE EXAMINATION PAPER MARKING SCHEME AND HOW TO USE IT

Markers should develop an understanding of the rationale of the marking scheme which they are required to apply and of the various considerations that have informed its construction.

1. The decision to use category descriptions

Markers will be familiar with the use of category descriptions from their experience of assessing the work of candidates in Revised Higher Grade and CSYS English.

The decision to continue to use category descriptions as the principal means of assessing candidate performance in Advanced Higher English is informed partly by the advantage to be gained from continuing with an already familiar system and partly by other considerations. Such a system, for example:

- offers validity and reliability through assessment procedures of proven fairness and robustness
- puts in place one means of facilitating articulation of standards between "old" and "new" curricular frameworks
- requires holistic assessment that rewards the actual attainment of each candidate within each assessment component by allocating each response to the category that best describes its overall quality
- allows for refinement of assessment by requiring the placing of each response at a particular point within the limited range of marks available for each category
- contributes to consistency of assessment by requiring repeated application of familiar and agreed statements of differentiated standards
- facilitates standardisation of assessment by providing clear evidence of degrees of severity or leniency of marker response and interpretation.

2. The decision to use numerically weighted category descriptions

The decision to use numbers rather than grades in external assessment has been taken

- to allow for the refinement of assessment judgements about the quality of each candidate response within each assessment component
- to facilitate the aggregation of assessment judgements in a form that fairly represents the overall attainment of each candidate across components
- to reveal the range and pattern of the performance of the total candidature in a way that enables final judgements to be made about appropriate threshold scores and mark ranges in the determination of final grade awards.

3. The construction of category descriptions

The starting point for the construction of category descriptions is the information on performance criteria and indicators of excellence for the various assessment components for Advanced Higher English published in the Arrangements document.

In all components, there is clear consistency of statement in relation to both performance criteria and indicators of excellence.

The extracts presented below, in which key features of required performance are emboldened, illustrate this consistency. Virtually identical statements are made about characteristic performance criteria and indicators of excellence for each of the assessment components – **although it should be noted that the criterion of Expression does not apply to the assessment of Textual Analysis.**

GRADE C **Performance Criteria**	**GRADE A** **Indicators of Excellence** *At least 4 bullet points from at least two categories*
Understanding The response takes a **relevant** and **thoughtful** approach to the prescribed task and demonstrates **secure** understanding of key elements . . .	**Understanding** • A **thorough exploration** is made of the implications of the prescribed task. • **Sustained insight** is revealed into key elements . . .
Analysis The response makes **relevant** and **thoughtful** . . . comment and demonstrates **secure** handling . . .	**Analysis** • A **full** and **satisfying** range of . . . comment is offered. • Literary/linguistic techniques . . . are handled with **skill** and **precision**.
Evaluation Judgements made are **relevant**, **thoughtful** and **securely based** on detailed evidence ...	**Evaluation** • **Perceptive** and **incisive** judgements are made. • Deployment of evidence . . . is **skilful** and **precise**.
Expression Structure, style and language, including the use of appropriate critical/analytical terminology, are consistently **accurate** and **effective** in developing a **relevant** argument.	**Expression** • Structure, style and language, including the use of appropriate critical/analytical terminology, are **skilfully deployed** to develop a **pertinent** and **sharply focused** argument.

The words that best strike the note that is characteristic of **competence** of performance (equivalent to Grade C) at the level of Advanced Higher are:

- relevant
- thoughtful
- secure
- consistent
- accurate
- effective.

At this level, **excellence** (equivalent to Grade A) is indicated by words such as:

- thorough
- sustained
- insight
- full
- satisfying
- perceptive
- incisive
- skilful
- precise
- pertinent
- sharply focused.

It may be relatively straightforward to find qualitative words that will differentiate – for each criterion – between candidate work that is competent (Grade C) and candidate work that is excellent (Grade A). It is clearly more difficult to find qualitative words to describe the range of performance (Grade B) that may lie between these two well-defined points.

The Arrangements document recognises this difficulty by noting: "Where the overall quality of a piece of work goes beyond the performance criteria for Grade C, but falls short of Grade A, it will attain Grade B. In this case, it may show only **one or two** of the A characteristics or it may show **three or more** of the indicators of excellence without reaching A quality for any."

In response to this flexibility, the following external assessment framework of four "pass" categories and two "fail" categories has been adopted for the grading of candidate performance in each of the Advanced Higher English assessment components:

Category 1 **Excellent** – well aligned with a significant number of the published indicators of excellence.

Category 2 **Still signs of excellence** – but not quite so well aligned with (or aligned with fewer of) the published indicators of excellence.

Category 3 **More than competent** – in some significant ways beyond some of the published performance criteria.

Category 4 **Competent** – in overall quality firmly anchored to the published performance criteria.

Category 5 **Less than competent** – in some significant ways not quite achieving all of the published performance criteria.

Category 6 **Incompetent** – well below Advanced Higher level as required by the published performance criteria.

A 30-point scale (corresponding to a weighting of 30% in the final award) has been adopted for the assessment of the components that are assessed by external examination. It applies to these (briefly described) six categories as follows:

CATEGORY 1 **27 – 30**	**Excellent** – well aligned with a significant number of the published indicators of excellence: thorough exploration and sustained insight; full, satisfying comment and skilful handling of technique; perceptiveness/incisiveness and skilful use of evidence; a sharply focused argument.

CATEGORY 2 **23 – 26**	**Still signs of excellence** – but not quite so well aligned with (or aligned with fewer of) the published indicators of excellence: not quite so thorough or sustained; not quite so full or satisfying or skilful; not quite so sharply focused.

CATEGORY 3 **19 – 22**	**More than competent** – in some significant ways beyond some of the published performance criteria: glimmers of insight or perceptiveness or incisiveness; occasionally satisfying critical comment; occasionally skilful deployment of evidence in support of argument.

CATEGORY 4 **15 – 18**	**Competent** – in overall quality firmly anchored to the published performance criteria: relevant and thoughtful and secure in understanding; secure and consistent; accurate and effective.

CATEGORY 5 **10 – 14**	**Less than competent** – in some significant ways not quite achieving all of the published performance criteria: some weakness in relevance or thoughtfulness or security of understanding or accuracy or consistency or range or effectiveness of critical/analytical comment in the development of argument.

CATEGORY 6 **00 – 09**	**Incompetent** – well below Advanced Higher level as required by the published performance criteria: deficient in (probably) more than one of – relevance, thoughtfulness, security of understanding, accuracy, consistency, effectiveness in the development of argument.

4. Using the category descriptions

The following (fully described) categories are founded on the published performance criteria and indicators of excellence. They should be used as the basic "map" by which markers arrive at the category and the numerical mark within that category which best represents the attainment of each candidate.

CATEGORY 1 **MARKS: 27 – 30**

Excellent – well aligned with a significant number of the published indicators of excellence.

Understanding
- A thorough exploration is made of the implications of the prescribed task.
- Sustained insight is revealed into key elements, central concerns and significant details of the texts or of the linguistic or media field of study.

Analysis
- A full and satisfying range of critical/analytical comment is offered.
- Literary, linguistic or media concepts, techniques, forms, usages are handled with skill and precision.

Evaluation
- Perceptive and incisive judgements are made.
- Deployment of evidence from texts, sources or contexts is skilful and precise.

Expression
- Structure, style and language, including the use of appropriate critical/analytical terminology, are skilfully deployed to develop a pertinent and sharply focused argument.

CATEGORY 2 **MARKS: 23 – 26**

Still signs of excellence – but not quite so well aligned with (or aligned with fewer of) the published indicators of excellence.

Understanding

As for Category 1, but
- the implications of the prescribed task are not quite so thoroughly explored
- insight is not quite so well sustained.

Analysis

As for Category 1, but
- the range of critical/analytical comment is not quite so full or satisfying
- relevant techniques, concepts, forms, usages are not handled with quite the same level of skill or precision.

Evaluation

As for Category 1, but
- judgements made are not quite so perceptive or incisive
- deployment of evidence is not quite so skilful or precise.

Expression

As for Category 1, but
- structure, style and language are not quite so skilfully deployed or argument quite so sharply focused.

CATEGORY 3 **MARKS: 19 – 22**

More than competent – in some significant ways beyond some of the published performance criteria.

Understanding

As for Category 4, but

- with glimmers of – awareness of implications or thoroughness or insight.

Analysis

As for Category 4, but

- with glimmers of – fullness or skill or precision of critical/analytical comment.

Evaluation

As for Category 4, but

- with glimmers of – perceptiveness or incisiveness or skilful deployment of evidence.

Expression

As for Category 4, but

- with glimmers of – skilful deployment of language in the development of argument.

CATEGORY 4 **MARKS: 15 – 18**

Competent – in overall quality firmly anchored to the published performance criteria.

Understanding

The response takes a relevant and thoughtful approach to the prescribed task and demonstrates secure understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the texts or of the linguistic or media field of study.

Analysis

The response makes relevant and thoughtful critical/analytical comment and demonstrates secure handling of literary, linguistic or media concepts, techniques, forms, usages.

Evaluation

Judgements made are relevant, thoughtful and securely based on detailed evidence drawn from texts, sources or contexts.

Expression

Structure, style and language, including the use of appropriate critical/analytical terminology, are consistently accurate and effective in developing a relevant argument.

CATEGORY 5 **MARKS: 10 – 14**

Less than competent – in some significant ways not quite achieving all of the published performance criteria.

Understanding

As for Category 4, but

- with some weakness in – relevance or thoughtfulness or security of understanding of key elements, central concerns, significant details.

Analysis

As for Category 4, but

- with some weakness in – relevance or thoughtfulness or accuracy or range of critical/analytical comment.

Evaluation

As for Category 4, but

- with some weakness in – relevance or thoughtfulness or substantiation of judgements made.

Expression

As for Category 4, but

- with some weakness in – accuracy and effectiveness of structure or style or language or critical/analytical terminology in the development of argument.

CATEGORY 6 **MARKS: 00 – 09**

Incompetent – well below Advanced Higher level as required by the published performance criteria.

Understanding

The response is deficient in – relevance or thoughtfulness or security of understanding of key elements, central concerns, significant details.

Analysis

The response is deficient – relevance or thoughtfulness or accuracy or range of critical/analytical comment.

Evaluation

The response is deficient in – relevance or thoughtfulness or substantiation of judgements made.

Expression

The response is deficient in – accuracy and effectiveness of structure or style or language or critical/analytical terminology in the development of argument.

NB It should be noted that, in the category descriptions provided, where performance in one category is described as "significantly" different from performance in an adjacent category, this may be demonstrated by:

- marginally stronger or weaker performance **in a range of aspects**
  or
- very much stronger or weaker performance **in one or two aspects**.

Several factors should be taken into account before assigning each candidate response to a particular numerical mark within a particular category.

(a) Categories are not grades. Although derived from the performance criteria for Grade C and the indicators of excellence for Grade A, the six categories are designed primarily to assist with the placing of each candidate response at an appropriate point on a continuum of achievement. Assumptions about final grades or association of final grades with particular categories should not be allowed to get in the way of objective assessment.

(b) The expectation is that the vast majority of candidates will already have demonstrated in unit assessment a level of competence that has merited achievement of the unit outcome. Markers should begin, therefore, with the expectation that each response will meet, at least, the requirements of Category 4. While there may be some responses that for various reasons fail to demonstrate the level of competence required by Category 4, the likelihood is that they will prove characteristic of Category 5 – and it is hoped that no response will be so incompetent as to require assignment to Category 6.

Any response which is assigned to Category 6 should be referred to the Principal Assessor.

(c) For each category, a range of marks is available within which markers may refine their assessments, for example within a mark or so at the upper end, the middle or the lower end of the category. The marks range within each category should prove sufficiently generous to allow markers scope for fair and justifiable discrimination. Markers are encouraged to make full use of the ranges of marks available to them.

(d) Mixed profiles of attainment will occur. Normally, these will represent variations within the range of performance that is characteristic of a particular category. In some instances, however, performance may be so uneven as to require markers to weigh up strengths and weaknesses of performance that extend across categories. Markers are reminded that their assessment should at all times be holistic – assigning each response to the category (and to the numerical point within that category) that best describes its overall achievement. In instances where there is genuine doubt as to whether a response should be placed at the lower end of a higher category or at the upper end of a lower category (and only in such instances), candidates should be given the benefit of the doubt, and their responses awarded the lowest mark in the higher category.

Any response which presents such a mixed profile of attainment (or some other such difficulty) that it cannot be assessed fairly in terms of the category descriptions should be referred to the Principal Assessor – with explanation of the nature of the difficulty encountered and with justification of the numerical mark awarded.

(e) NO ANNOTATIONS OR COMMENTS SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE SCRIPTS OF CANDIDATES. The entry of a mark (which carries its own meaning in terms of the category descriptions provided) is all that is required – and all that is permitted.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]