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Summary report of the 2016 ATAR course examination:
Ancient History

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2016	184	6

Examination score distribution
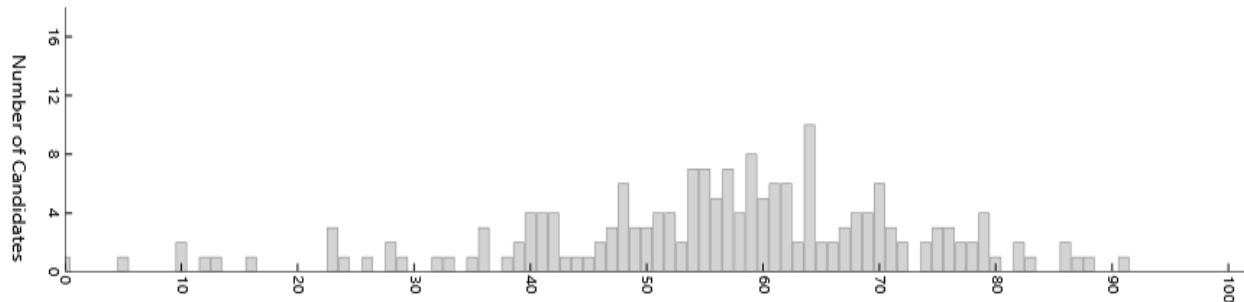
Summary

The examination consisted of three sections. Candidates were required to answer three questions out of four in Section One Part A, one question out of two in Part B; one question in Section Two and one question from a choice of three in both Section Three Part A and Part B. The spread of marks ranged from 0% to 91.00% and the standard deviation was 16.66%.

Attempted by 184 candidates	Mean 55.63%(100)	Max 91.00%	Min 0.00%

Section means were:
Section One: Short answer – Unit 3

Part A attempted by 183 candidates	Mean 8.40(/15)	Max 15.00	Min 0.50
Part B attempted by 179 candidates	Mean 5.83(/10)	Max 10.00	Min 0.00

Section Two: Source analysis – Unit 4

Attempted by 183 candidates	Mean 14.38(/25)	Max 23.50	Min 1.50

Section Three: Essay – Units 3 and 4

Part A attempted by 178 candidates	Mean 14.58(/25)	Max 22.50	Min 0.50
Part B attempted by 178 candidates	Mean 13.64(/25)	Max 22.50	Min 1.00

General comments

Overall, candidates performed quite well on the examination this year, particularly given the different format and the new syllabus content. It should be noted that the introduction of short answer questions in Section One seems to have posed few problems for candidates.

Advice for candidates

- Follow the specific directions in short answer questions. If you are asked to give two examples/reasons, give only two; markers cannot give you credit for additional material.
- Be as detailed as possible in your responses.
- In essay questions, try to bring to the fore the line of your argument, and bring in your knowledge of the historical narrative to support that argument. Do not expect the marker to deduce the argument for you.

Advice for teachers
- Encourage students to have a grasp of relevant ancient evidence for the key items on the syllabus. The difference between a competent and really good answer in the essay sections often comes down to the deployment of ancient evidence. Citation of modern textbooks, particularly for matters of historical 'fact' rather than interpretation of it, is much less useful.

Comments on specific sections and questions

Section One: Short answer – Unit 3

Part A

Attempted by 183 candidates   Mean 8.40(/15) Max 15.00 Min 0.50

In general, candidates engaged with the short answer style questions quite well with most writing an appropriate amount of material for the five-mark allocation for each question. The specificity of these type of questions though does, however, demand a thorough and precise knowledge of syllabus content and some candidates struggled to produce detail relevant to the question focus.

Part B

Attempted by 179 candidates   Mean 5.83(/10) Max 10.00 Min 0.00

Candidates seemed well prepared for this part of the examination with responses being of a suitable length and stronger responses being succinct and detailed. As with Part A though, the specificity of the Part B questions proved challenging for some candidates.

Egypt: Part A

Attempted by 15 candidates   Mean 10.53(/15) Max 15.00 Min 7.50

Candidates in this elective performed particularly well on this part of the examination. While a number of the questions were largely archaeological in focus, responses tended also to acknowledge historical trends, and the marking keys were adjusted accordingly.

Egypt: Part B

Attempted by 15 candidates   Mean 6.23(/10) Max 10.00 Min 4.00

Question 6 was the most popular choice of question and responses to it were generally strong.

Athens: Part A

Attempted by 122 candidates   Mean 8.61(/15) Max 14.50 Min 0.50

Most candidates were well prepared for this part of the paper, with responses generally being of an appropriate length and level of detail.

Athens: Part B

Attempted by 120 candidates   Mean 5.78(/10) Max 9.50 Min 0.00

Candidates wrote extensively on both question options in Part B. The strongest responses went beyond generalities to provide specific detail and specific source references.

Rome: Part A

Attempted by 46 candidates   Mean 7.17(/15) Max 12.50 Min 1.00

The mean for the Rome elective is slightly lower than the Athens elective, reflecting a generally lower level of accurate detail in candidate responses.

Rome: Part B

Attempted by 44 candidates   Mean 5.82(/10) Max 9.50 Min 0.00

Candidates performed strongly in this part which was due in large measure to the level of responses to Question 18.

Section Two: Source analysis – Unit 4
Attempted by 183 candidates   Mean 14.38(/25)   Max 23.50   Min 1.50
Source analysis is arguably the most challenging component of the examination with some candidates struggling to understand the demands of the questions asked.

Egypt
Attempted by 15 candidates   Mean 14.80(/25)   Max 18.00   Min 11.50
Candidates wrote well about the general context of Tutankhamun's reign and situated the sources provided at Source 1 well within the context of Egyptian burial practices.

Athens
Attempted by 122 candidates   Mean 15.68(/25)   Max 23.50   Min 1.50
Candidates were generally well prepared to address material on the Sicilian Expedition.

Rome
Attempted by 46 candidates   Mean 10.80(/25)   Max 18.00   Min 1.50
This section proved challenging, with some misreading of the sources undermining a number of candidate responses.

Section Three: Essay – Units 3 and 4
Part A: Unit 3
Attempted by 178 candidates   Mean 14.58(/25)   Max 22.50   Min 0.50
Performances across this part were generally strong. Better answers were distinguished by the level of detail provided and by demonstration of an understanding of the ancient evidence.

Part B: Unit 4
Attempted by 178 candidates   Mean 13.64(/25)   Max 22.50   Min 1.00
The majority of candidates made a substantial attempt in addressing the questions in this part of the examination.