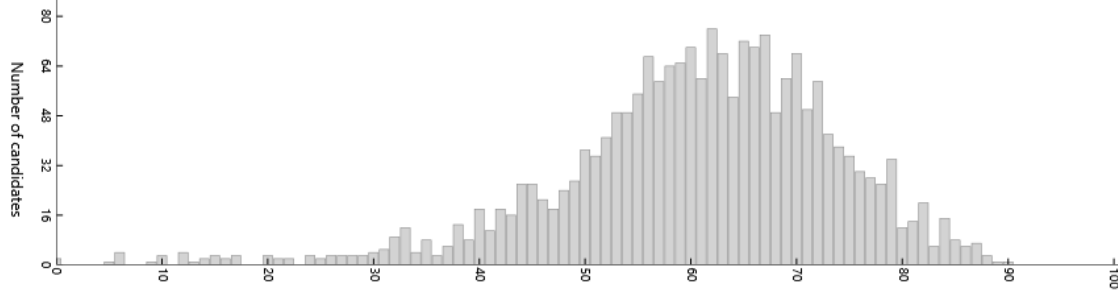




## Summary report of the 2018 ATAR course examination: Modern History

Year	Number who sat	Number of absentees
2018	2004	28
2017	2178	23
2016	2295	36

### Examination score distribution-Written



### Summary

The standard demonstrated across scripts showed a sound grasp of the two syllabus strands of *Historical Knowledge and Understanding* covered in Units 3 and 4. It was noticeable that there were a significant number of essay scripts where candidates did not write beyond two and a half pages nor develop their arguments accordingly. Generally speaking though, most candidates attempted all questions and completed most of the paper. The slightly lower mean in Section Three, and lower again mean for Section Four perhaps, as usual, highlights time management skills as an area of concern for candidates, as there seemed to be more incomplete or blank answers for these two sections of the paper overall. *Russia and the Soviet Union 1914–1945* and *The changing European world since 1945* remain by far the most popular electives studied in Units 3 and 4 respectively.

Section means were:

Section One: Source analysis–Unit 3	Mean 63.76%		
Attempted by 2000 candidates	Mean 15.94(/25)	Max 24.50	Min 0.00
Section Two: Essay–Unit 3	Mean 61.68%		
Attempted by 1981 candidates	Mean 15.42(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00
Section Three: Source analysis–Unit 4	Mean 60.9%		
Attempted by 1996 candidates	Mean 15.22(/25)	Max 24.00	Min 0.00
Section Four: Essay–Unit 4	Mean 57.28%		
Attempted by 1954 candidates	Mean 14.32(/25)	Max 25.00	Min 0.00

### General comments

Overall, candidates in Modern History performed well in 2018. It was pleasing to note that a full range of marks were awarded in all four sections and the paper mean at 60.27% was a reflection of that, as well as the fact that the paper allowed candidates to demonstrate their historical knowledge and understandings comprehensively.

#### *Advice for candidates*

- Read all the source material written text thoroughly to ensure that the message is being understood.
- Ensure time management is a focus – if you run out of time in the last section, it will adversely affect your overall mark.

#### *Advice for teachers*

- More work needs to be done to differentiate between a good answer for Question 1(e) and Question 11(e) – they are different questions, requiring candidates to answer them differently.
- Give your students essay writing practice under timed conditions with a focus on formulating sustained arguments throughout an extended piece of writing.

### **Comments on specific sections and questions**

The source analysis sections seemed to show improvement from previous years in addressing historical context and contestability. However, addressing the specific element(s) of contestability is key. Furthermore, candidates clearly emphasising and accounting for the perspective of the sources was an area showing improvement in terms of addressing motive, purpose, place and time clearly. However, there was still confusion about how accurate insight/contestability/usefulness/perspective differ as questions, as candidates often presented the same points of discussion in all four, rather than responding to the unique elements of each question.

#### **Section One: Source analysis–Unit 3 (25 Marks)**

The structure of responses to Question 1 (b) and 1 (d) seemed to be stronger this year, with more candidates having learned a specific approach to structuring their answers that enabled them to get at least solid marks. However, some candidates were still not looking deeply enough into the source, but were simply exploring strengths and weaknesses on the basis of what a source showed and didn't show. Similarly, candidates who had learned a structure for the part (d) question, still did not always explore that specific source deeply enough, but instead wrote their answer in a generic way. The Russia elective Source 3, for example, being of British origin, was therefore biased against the Bolsheviks, but candidates did not attempt to explain how such bias was specifically evident in that source.

#### **Section Two: Essay–Unit 3 (25 Marks)**

While Russia was studied by the largest number of candidates, the China elective produced the highest mean for this section.

#### **Section Three: Source analysis–Unit 4 (25 Marks)**

In general, specifying a different idea for each elective for Question 11(e) was an excellent idea and enabled candidates to really focus on that specific idea, how important it was, and how the sources depict it, rather than try to guess the idea/theme, or run through a buffet selection of important things that showed up in the sources. However, a lot of candidates still tended to discuss the accuracy of individual sources, or the accuracy of the set as a whole in relation to the idea (in effect, re-answering Question 1(e)), rather than linking the elements of the idea shown in the sources to the importance of the idea in the context of the course as a whole. For 11(d), many candidates seemed to explore contestability on the basis of what the source omitted, rather than providing a counter-argument to the argument that was presented; as such, it often looked more like a response to Question 1(b) rather than 11(d).

#### **Section Four: Essay–Unit 4 (25 Marks)**

Although there were a number of short or non-existent essays in Section Four, which has become more prevalent in recent years, it was pleasing to note that the full range of marks were awarded in this section with several essays in each elective receiving full marks.