UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
ADVANCED LEVEL

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

May 2009

EXAMINERS’ REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD
AM Information Technology
May 2009 Session
Examiners’ Report

Part 1: Statistical Information

<table>
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<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Abs</th>
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This year there were about 90 students sitting for the IT Advanced level. There seems to be a slight increase in the amount of private candidates sitting for this exam. The quality of the students work has improved. More students seem to be obtaining a pass mark in this examination. There is a great discrepancy when comparing the work presented by the students as projects and the examination itself. This might indicate the students are not doing the projects by themselves and getting a lot of help from their tutors.

Comments regarding Paper 1

Section A

This section focuses on Information Systems.

The average mark for this section was 28 out of 50. The students seem to be less familiar with the networking terminology of the compulsory question 1. They could have explained more about network topologies. Few students managed to get 75% of the total marks for question 1. Question 2 was about management information systems was also well answered but less popular. Question 3 about project management issues was surprisingly more popular and well answered. Question 4 dealing with batch processing seemed to be very interesting and well answered.

Section B

This section focuses on human communication and business organisation.

The average mark for this section was 28 out of 50 which seems to be normal. This can be improved. Compulsory question 1 was not so well answered. Only a handful of students obtained about 75% of the marks. The majority just got half of the marks. The students should undertake more reading and try to apply their understanding of the topic. Mere recall is insufficient for these questions. Sometimes students cannot understand the terms used in these questions. Question 2 which was based on application rather than recall was not so popular, but those who choose it obtained quite good marks. Question 3 was more structured than Q2 and was more popular for this reason. Q3 had more recall than Q2. The marks for this question were quite high. Question 4 was less popular. It seems that the terms like ‘availability’, ‘performance’, and ‘scalability’ were not liked. This means that more attention and explanation is necessary for this part of the syllabus. Unfortunately those students who selected Q4 scored low marks in this question as compared to the other questions, again this indicates lack of understanding of these topics.

PAPER II

Section A

The average mark for this section was 26 out of 50. This quite low compared to the marks obtained in some of the previous years. The questions were definitely more difficult, technical, and challenging. Compulsory question 1 contained different parts about databases, the World Wide Web, and processing software. Marks were quite low for Q1. Question 2 was about generic software, software evaluation, operating systems and processing types. Marks were quite low for this question. Question 3 was again about the internet and internet technologies. This was not a popular question and again marks were on the lower side. Question 4 was about database management systems and again the marks were a bit low. Perhaps some parts of question 4 were a bit difficult for advanced level.
Section B

The average mark for this section was 26 out of 50. This again quite low when compared to some of the previous years. This section deals with programming and system development and is one of the fundamental areas in computing and information technology that seems to be very difficult to tackle correctly. The questions were definitely more difficult than those of the previous years. Compulsory question 1 was difficult to answer. Q1 covered many different topics from the syllabus. Question 2 also proved to be difficult although some students managed to obtain good marks. Question 3 which contained some object oriented design features was not popular at all. Very low marks were obtained for Q3. Question 4 again contained programming and design aspects. Very low marks were obtained in Q4. This shows that students cannot understand: algorithms, programming etc.

Set Exercises

The marks obtained for the set exercises seem to be quite fair and reflecting the work the students.

Concluding Remarks

Given that the new students will be now trained to program in Java one must see what shall happen next year. The marks obtained for section B still show that students are not adequately trained to obtain proper programming skills which should be given more importance.

Chairperson
Board of Examiners
July 2009