UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
ADVANCED LEVEL

ART

MAY 2010

EXAMINERS’ REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD
The examiners’ panel for May 2010 Advanced Level in Art submits the following report on the
general performance of the candidates who sat for the said examination.

115 candidates registered for the examination of which 9 were absent. The breakdown of the
Grades obtained by the candidates was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<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>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coursework:
The Coursework Section is an essential part of the Examination process and is meant to show
how the candidates worked in the years preceding the presentation of the exam. It is meant to
show the candidates’ responses to different stimuli, their research and development of ideas, and
their technical confidence in the use of different media. The level of attainment was generally
satisfactory. Considerable improvement was noted in how candidates presented their work in the
portfolios, particular after the circular issued by MATSEC instructing all candidates to comply with
the regulations that the portfolio itself should not be tampered with, i.e., enlarged or modified in
order to fit in works which are larger than the required size. This circular is also available on the
MATSEC website www.um.edu.mt/matsec in the ‘Notices and Deadlines’ link entitled ‘Notice to
all Art Students’.

The Examiners’ Panel continues to stress on the importance that the work presented in the
portfolio should be the result of a selective process, during which the candidates review and
reflect on their own work.

Paper I Project – Composition from a theme:
The main issue of complaint in this Paper is that the occasional candidate fails to provide
evidence of how the subject was researched and how the initial ideas developed and progressed.
This Paper is surely not about the presentation of a single Final Work. The stimuli and points of
departure presented in this paper are wide and varied and are meant to allow a rich variety of
artistic response. The candidate should show confidence with the theme of choice and this can
only happen after proper research on the subject.

Paper I – Work from Observation
This paper is divided into sections (a) drawing and painting from the model, (b) still-life with man-
made and natural form. Candidates generally achieve better results and show greater confidence
in the still-life. This section is not only about the proper representation of the objects under
observation, but candidates are here given the opportunity to lay-out their own arrangement.
Obviously this section tests compositional skills.
The human figure paper showed the same difficulties and problems encountered over the past
years. Some candidates are simply not preparing themselves well for this paper. A number of
candidates do not possess a proper knowledge of basic anatomy and this obviously hinders them
in the representation of the human figure. Some candidates used media which are not quick
drying or which are not appropriate for a ‘single-session’ use.
Paper II - History of Art
The format of the History of Art paper asks students to prepare themselves widely on the subject, giving them at the same time the opportunity to delve more deeply into specific areas. The main issues here relate to proper time management and, despite clear instructions, some candidates seem to spend excessive time in discussing the three works in Section I. In this Section, candidates are meant to be synoptic and concise and place the work of art in its proper art-historical context, apart from giving proper information on the artist who produced it and on the general iconography. Descriptive essays which simply illustrate what the work of art shows are not adequate answers.
The two essay questions in Section II are meant to test the candidates’ ability to develop an argument on the art-historical subject under review. The examiners take this opportunity to repeat their concern about the fact that many candidates do not read the questions properly and thus stray away from the answer that was required of them. Others seem to present a ‘preset’ answer, whilst some limit themselves to strict biography with discussing style or analysing works of art. It is also imperative that candidates show a more proper use of artistic terminology.

The Chairperson
Board of Examiners

May 2010