

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**

**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION**

**SEC LEVEL**

**HISTORY MAY 2014**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

## SEC EXAMINERS' REPORT MAY 2014

### SEC HISTORY MAY 2014 SESSION EXAMINERS' REPORTS

#### Part. 1: Statistical Information

1.1 The number of candidates who registered to sit for History – SEC May 2014, was 226 or 25 less than the previous year. Of these 158 registered to sit for Paper II A and 68 registered to sit for Paper II B. A total of 44 candidates or 27.8% of those opting for Paper II A, failed. 33.8% of the candidates attempting Paper II B managed to get Grade 4 or Grade 5, 13 or 19.1% obtained Grade 6, 6 or 8.8% obtained Grade 7 while 15 or 22.1% were unclassified. There were 18 prospective candidates or 8% who did not sit for the examination.

1.2 Table 1 below summarises the distribution of grades for the History Examination – May 2014.

**Table 1.** Distribution of grades for SEC History Examination – May 2014.

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	8	24	34	22	19	-	-	44	7	158
PAPER B	-	-	-	7	16	13	6	15	11	68
TOTAL	8	24	34	29	35	13	6	59	18	226
% OF TOTAL	3.5	10.6	15.0	12.8	15.5	5.8	2.7	26.1	8.0	100

#### 2.0 General Remarks

2.1 Markers have once more noted that a number of candidates lacked knowledge of basis terms and historical concepts and were unable to produce analytical or interpretative essays. Moreover there were candidates who still lack an understanding of time and space as well as knowledge of basic historical facts.

2.2 Many candidates are not reading the questions properly with the result that questions are only partially addressed while several candidates seem to be reproducing notes rather than seeking to answer the set questions.

2.3 Once again a good number of candidates chose to answer in English, but the level of expression was poor. The same applies to those who answered in Maltese. Overall, it was a weak performance characterised by a lot of vagueness.

2.4 Some candidates have poor writing skills. A considerable number employed the we/they attitude in their writings which is unacceptable at this level, and there were quite a few whose handwriting was at times difficult to decipher.

2.5 In Paper I there were candidates who were unable to recall certain historical facts, to distinguish between primary and secondary sources and to interpret and evaluate evidence diligently. In Paper II, there were some Option A candidates who fared well, but Option B candidates often took the paper lightly and even failed to present a good listing of facts and description while some failed to cover the whole questions.

2.6 It is evident that many candidates seem to ignore the rubrics and failed to appreciate the link between the marks allotted to specific questions and the length of the answers they should give. Moreover, particularly with regard to Paper I and Paper II B, many candidates even ignored to write the number of the questions they answer on the front of the scripts.

### 3.0 Comments regarding Paper I

**3.1** Paper 1 was divided into two Sections (A – Maltese History and B – European and International History) each having three questions based on sources. Candidates were expected to answer all the questions. It was evident that some candidates are very weak regarding historical concepts and some are still unable to differentiate between primary and secondary sources. On a positive note, a good number of candidates addressed correctly the issue that a guide book is not a reliable historical source.

### 4.0 Specific remarks on Paper I

#### Maltese History

#### 4.1 Question 1:

- (a) There were candidates who pointed out that Mdina was an inland city and that the Knights preferred Birgu because it was a maritime town.
- (b) Few candidates could explain fully Mdina's role during the Siege of 1565. Many indicated that it was used as a place of refuge.
- (c) Regarding Valletta, there were candidates who pointed out that it was situated in the Grand Harbour.
- (d) Most candidates indicated that there was an earthquake in 1693.
- (e) Few could explain fully the changes that were made to Mdina particularly by Grand Master de Vilhena.
- (f) Many candidates did not know what role Mdina played during the uprising against the French.
- (g) Many candidates explained correctly that Source A was a secondary source and that guide books are not always reliable.

#### 4.2 Question 2:

- (a) Though some candidates indicated correctly that sources A and B referred to the Sette Giugno, there were many who failed to do so.
- (b) Few candidates could explain fully what led to the Sette Giugno.
- (c) Most candidates identified Valletta as the place where the event occurred.
- (d) Many candidates were unable to explain what happened on the day. Many did not even answer the question.
- (e) Many candidates failed to identify Governor Onslow Plumer.
- (f) Few candidates could explain that the Governor had his share in calming the situation.
- (g) Some candidates did not indicate the effects of the event and there many who gave wrong information regarding the Constitution that followed.
- (h) Quite a few candidates identified source A as a primary source.

#### 4.3 Question 3:

- (a) Many candidates could not identify the subject of the sources given, namely the politico-religious struggle of the 1960s.
- (b) Archbishop Gonzi was identified correctly by many candidates.
- (c) Some failed to identify Dr George Borg Olivier as the leader of the PN.
- (d) Few could comment diligently on Mintoff's claims about the position of the Church regarding Independence. Many mixed up the events with the Integration issue.
- (e) Few could explain fully the Archbishop's reaction to the PL's criticism though many noted that the Archbishop had condemned the PL.
- (f) Though some identified sources A and B as primary sources, there were some who stated wrongly that source B was a secondary source.
- (g) Many failed to distinguish between statement of fact and an opinion, though there were quite a few who hinted that the author quoted could have been biased because he was a nationalist.

### European and International History

#### 4.4 Question 4:

- (a) Many identified the French Revolution correctly.
- (b) The First Estate and the Second Estate were noted as being formed by the Nobility and the Clergy but there were quite a few candidates who wrote that it was the Monarchy and the Nobility that formed these Estates.
- (c) Most candidates pointed out that these Estates paid no taxes and that they taxed the Peasants.
- (d) Few could explain what was the Declaration of the Rights of Man.
- (e) Many identified Great Britain as the main enemy of Napoleon.
- (f) Many candidates also stated correctly that Napoleon finally lost the war.
- (g) However, there were many who did not indicate correctly that he was exiled to St. Helena.
- (h) Many candidates did not explain that the Code Napoleon was a codification of laws made by Napoleon himself.

(i) Regarding reforms in education, many candidates were rather vague in their answers: many just stated that he set up schools everywhere. Few mentioned the lycées and the University of France and there were some who referred to scholarships that were granted to some Maltese youths when Napoleon captured Malta.

(j) Few could explain that peasants called Napoleon 'our father' because they considered him as the one who guaranteed their rights and benefits acquired during the French Revolution.

#### 4.5 Question 5:

- (a) Quite a few candidates identified correctly the French Emperor and the Austrian Emperor.
- (b) However, few could explain why the cartoonist labelled them as bad.
- (c) Many candidates could not indicate that Victor Emmanuel II ruled over Piedmont and Sardinia. Most candidates listed one or the other, or any other part of the Italian peninsula.
- (d) Only a few could explain further that Italy and Victor Emmanuel were weak when compared with France and Austria.
- (e) Many explained that Garibaldi was the leader of The Thousand or the conqueror of Sicily but few could expound the part he played in the unification of Italy.
- (f) Some candidates failed to identify Garibaldi as 'The Man in Possession'.
- (g) Many other candidates also failed to explain that the 'Possession' was the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.
- (h) Many answered correctly that Garibaldi handed the Kingdom to King Victor Emmanuel.
- (i) Many failed to identify Pope Pius IX.
- (j) Many also failed to give a good explanation of the symbolism of the sword (temporal power) and the keys (spiritual power).

#### 4.6 Question 6:

- (a) Only a few candidates could explain that Dubcek wanted to introduce a mild form of socialism in Czechoslovakia.
- (b) Consequently they could not explain that he did not wish to alarm the USSR.
- (c) For many, Brezhnev was simply a Communist leader.
- (d) Many described the Warsaw Pact as a defence agreement among many Eastern European countries.
- (e) Few could explain that Communist troops led by Russia crossed over into Czechoslovakia to restore Communist rule.
- (f) There were some candidates who indicated correctly that Western states did not intervene because they wanted to avoid a major war.
- (g) Only just a few candidates, mostly from Option A, could explain thoroughly what was the Brezhnev Doctrine.
- (h) Only a few candidates, also mostly from Option A, explained thoroughly what the Cold War was. Otherwise, most of the candidates could barely explain that it was a period of sustained political and military tension between the Western Bloc and the Eastern Bloc.

## 5.0 Comments regarding Paper II A

**5.1** Paper II A was divided into two Sections (A – Maltese History and B – European and International History). Candidates had to choose and answer two essay questions from each Section.

**5.2** In the Maltese History Section, questions no. 1 and no. 6 were generally more popular while question no. 2 was the least popular. In the European and International History Section, question no. 7 was the most popular while only 7 candidates answered question no. 9.

**5.3** With regard to the Maltese History Section, the quality of the candidates' answers was good though at times lacking in depth and analyses. Description of facts and events was the approach mostly taken. Candidates give the impression that they still lack training to voice their opinion and compare and contrast various events. Moreover, in the Maltese History Section it was noted that many candidates tried to insert references to the Language Question even though there was no specific question about it. In the European and International History Section, some candidates ignored the question partially or completely and reproduced notes as given to them by their teachers. Their answers tended to be partly out of point and were awarded lower marks. Some candidates simply beat around the bush and did not show any real depth in their essays.

**5.4** Table 2 indicates the distribution of questions chosen by candidates opting for Paper II A.

Table 2: *Distribution of questions chosen by candidates opting for Paper II A.*

Question	No. of candidates choosing question	Percentage of candidates
1	82	54.3
2	16	10.6
3	49	32.5
4	38	25.1
5	35	23.1
6	78	51.6
7	115	76.1
8	49	32.4
9	7	4.6
10	54	35.7
11	20	79.5
12	48	31.7

## 6.0 Specific remarks on Paper II A

### Maltese History

#### 6.1 Question 1:

This was the most popular choice among students, unfortunately, however, it was also the question where candidates fared the worst. This is because many failed to properly read and understand it. The focus of the question was on how the French Revolution affected the Order in the years prior to the Napoleonic invasion of 1798 and including the invasion itself. The vast majority of candidates, however, focused almost exclusively on the latter part. It also emerged that in the minds of most students Napoleon *is* the Revolution; in fact, he overwhelms their narratives of the French Revolution. This fact should be noted and addressed.

#### 6.2 Question 2:

This was the least popular question; it focused on the French period and the early years of British rule. Students' understanding of these years – and of the 'Declaration of Rights' in particular – was sketchy and weak.

**6.3 Question 3:**

This question was about Church-State relations throughout the British period; it was the third most popular choice. Although some candidates' coverage of a subject that is generally popular was sketchy, in the main candidates answered quite satisfactorily.

**6.4 Question 4:**

In this question candidates were asked to discuss the constitutional development of Malta from 1921 to 1964. Many answered this question and those that did showed quite a good understanding of the subject matter. In fact, performance in this question was probably the best.

**6.5 Question 5:**

The fifth question dealt with Malta's foreign policy after Independence (incidentally a word that was repeatedly misspelled as '*Indipendence*'). Answers here represented a mixed bag. Some answered quite well and maturely, but others showed a very shallow knowledge of the matter.

**6.6 Question 6:**

The question about Malta and the Second World War was the second most popular. In contrast to the first question, candidates here understood better the question and answered accordingly. As a result, answers were more confident and to the point; naturally, some still presented very fragmented answers.

### **European and International History**

**6.7 Question 7:**

This was the most popular choice among candidates. They generally explained briefly how the Renaissance started in Italy and spread throughout Europe. They also explained the progress registered in art, sculpture and architecture. However, few candidates mentioned the progress registered in engineering, mechanics and literature. When dealing with results candidates generally concentrated on the discovery of the printing press and the spread of written communication, the discovery of new lands and routes and the re-introduction of the classical languages of Latin and Greek. Few candidates mentioned the religious divergences leading to the Protestant revolt, the increased nationalism in some states and other important discoveries such as the discovery of powder and the invention of guns and the compass.

**6.8 Question 8:**

Most candidates dealt with the enlightened philosophers, mentioning and explaining some of the main ideas of Voltaire, John Locke, Rousseau and Montesquieu. They also explained how this movement started in Paris and the prevailing political background. However, not all candidates discussed and explained the ideas and policies of enlightened despots such as Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine the Great of Russia and Maria Theresa and Joseph of Austria. Most candidates dealt rather superficially with the various reforms undertaken such as the codification of laws, the abolition of torture, the improvement in education and the abolition of capital punishment.

**6.9 Question 9:**

Only a few candidates attempted this question. They generally described the events dealing with the various revolutions. However, few candidates analysed the reasons for the failure of these events such as the fact that there was no common aim or action among the different races revolting, the ability of generals serving the Austrian Emperor, the loyalty of the army to the Emperor and the decisive help of the strong Russian army.

**6.10 Question 10:**

Most candidates explained the development of the Dual Alliance which later expanded in the Triple Alliance to include Italy and the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1893 and Entente Cordial of 1904. However, they were rather superficial when dealing with the problems and frictions resulting from the colonial questions and the Balkan Crises which led to tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia and to the First World War after the Sarajevo Assassination.

**6.11 Question 11:**

Few candidates explained the deplorable internal conditions in Italy and how this general discontent increased communist propaganda. They generally referred to the March on Rome and how Mussolini became a dictator. Most candidates mentioned the Concordat with the Pope and concentrated on Mussolini's bellicose speeches and his vigorous foreign policy which aroused the Italian national spirit and led to Italy's participation in the Second World War on the side of Hitler and his eventual overthrow.

**6.12 Question 12:**

When dealing with the advantages of globalisation candidates generally mentioned increased democracy, more rights to women, the increase in technology and an access to a healthier life. Few candidates mentioned the increase in per-capita food supplies, the increase in global literacy, the decline in the percentage of children in the labour force and the increased trends toward electric power. When dealing with the disadvantages candidates generally concentrated on the increased promotion of corporatist interests, how corporations move production to foreign countries where labour is cheaper and weaker labour unions. Few candidates explained how poorer countries are sometimes at a disadvantage, the exploitation of foreign impoverished workers and the increase in income inequality, both between and within nations.

**7.0 Comments regarding Paper II B**

**7.1** This paper was divided into two Sections as Paper II A, but the questions were structured. In the Maltese History Section, question no. 6 and question no. 1 were the most popular while questions no. 2 and no. 4 were the least popular. In the European and International History Section, question no. 7 was the most popular while no. 9 was the least popular.

**7.2** In this paper analysis and criticism is not expected, however a good listing of facts and description is. Once again, candidates seemed to take this paper lightly. Consequently they often failed to cover the whole question. At the same time, the overall performance felt better this year than in 2013, with a few candidates giving a fairly well thought answer to some of the questions.

**7.3** A number of students did not answer the four questions they were expected to in each section. Some misunderstood the instructions while others failed to show an appreciation of the link between the marks allotted to specific questions and the length of the answers they should give. It would seem that quite a few students never saw a past examination paper and so were completely unfamiliar with its set-up and with what was expected of them. Overall, performance was characterised by a lot of vagueness and poor English and Maltese of all candidates.

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7.4 Table 3 indicates the distribution of questions chosen by candidates opting for Paper II B.

Table 3: *Distribution of questions answered by candidates opting for Paper II B.*

Question	No. of candidates choosing question	Percentage of candidates
1	30	52.6
2	3	5.3
3	15	26.3
4	3	5.3
5	5	6.7
6	49	85.9
7	44	77.2
8	7	12.3
9	8	14.0
10	14	24.6
11	10	17.5
12	27	47.3

**8.0 Specific remarks on Paper II B**

**Maltese History**

**8.1 Question 1:**

This question about the last years of the Order in Malta was the second most popular. While candidates showed a basic awareness of this era, very often there was an imprecise grasp of events, chronology and personalities. Some candidates did not always make enough of a distinction between the sub-parts of the question. It is also clear that students repeat stereotypes about 'immoral' knights and 'poor' Maltese without thinking about them at all. No one mentioned Mikiel Anton Vassalli, a key figure in the last years of the Order and a personality who was often in the media in recent months due to 2014 being the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth; clearly there is a lack of interest in current affairs.

**8.2 Question 2:**

Very few chose to answer this question about the 1802 Declaration of Rights and the events / years around it. In the case of those that did, there was an overall weak grasp of basic facts and a whole set of misconceptions.

**8.3 Question 3:**

This question was about the role of the Roman Catholic Church during British rule, particularly in the nineteenth century; 15 chose to answer this question, which was surprisingly low. In answering this question, candidates showed an overall vague understanding of this subject, which was again surprising. There was also repeated confusion in terms of what happened in the nineteenth century, and what happened in the twentieth. A number of students tried to answer this question by making repeated references to the Language Question; while of course there were links between Church-State relations and the Language Question, this seems to be more indicative of students having pre-prepared essays in mind and then trying to adapt them to a question, even if it was not about that particular subject.

**8.4 Question 4:**

Only 3 chose to answer this question about constitutional development. The handful that did, answered very poorly.

**8.5 Question 5:**

This question about Malta's recent foreign history was also not popular among candidates. Answers were weak and schematic, except for one which was fairly good.

**8.6 Question 6:**

This question about the Second World War was the most popular and overall students' performance here was satisfactory. Quite a few students were able to draw comparisons and contrasts between the two world wars in question 6c, but many failed to understand that in question 6d they had to go down to 1958, choosing instead to stop in 1945.

**European and International History**

**8.7 Question 7:**

This was the most popular choice of question among candidates. They generally defined the Industrial Revolution well. In the second part of the question most candidates mentioned how Britain possessed an Empire and thus had a ready market in the colonies, had a big merchant marine and a powerful navy to guard her trade routes and was rich in natural resources such as coal and iron. Few of them mentioned that Britain was a great industrial and commercial power, had built up the capital to invest in enterprise, had fairly developed systems of banking and insurance, did not have internal customs barriers that restricted trade and had enjoyed long years of internal peace thus offering comparative stability of government. Candidates generally answered the third part of the question well and managed to name three other countries which were well advanced in industrialisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the last part of the question candidates tended to dwell exclusively on the social conditions prevailing in industrial areas. Few of them dealt with other important results such as urbanisation, the expansion of the communications system, the growth of the arms industry, the increase in population, the emergence of new electrical industries and the development of the socialist movements.

**8.8 Question 8:**

Only 7 candidates attempted this question. Most of them scored low marks. They did not even deal with the war against Denmark, failed to emphasise how Bismarck diplomatically isolated the enemy before any war and made no reference to the proclamation of the German Empire.

**8.9 Question 9:**

Most candidates managed to explain how Germany, Austria and Italy formed the Triple Alliance in 1882 but found more difficulties when dealing with how France, Great Britain and Russia formed the Triple Entente. Generally candidates did well in the third part of the question and explained how the formation of these alliances and alignments lead to the First World War mentioning the arms race, the naval rivalry, the German craving for colonies, the increased German influence and the formation of two armed camps. However, candidates generally found difficulties in explaining the various crises that arose.

**8.10 Question 10:**

In the first part of the question candidates generally explained how during World War I President Wilson of USA had advocated the formation of such a league as the League of Nations to guarantee the independence of all states. However, in the second part of the question candidates were rather weak and failed to deal adequately with the aims of the League of Nations namely that it bound members not to resort to war to settle disputes, to accept the rules of international law and to respect treaties and publish them. Again when dealing with the organisation of the League of Nations and its main achievements, candidates were rather weak.

**8.11 Question 11:**

Most candidates explained that the Europeans wished to build a united Europe and avoid another war between France and Germany. Few however, mentioned that they wanted Europe to become a powerful trading area and resist threats from the powerful USSR and USA. Generally candidates mentioned most of the countries founding the Common Market. They were generally weak in outlining how the present day EU developed.

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### **8.12 Question 12:**

Some candidates showed a good awareness of the importance of the personalities given. The most popular choices in this question were Vladimir Lenin, Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler and Mikhail Gorbachev.

**Chairperson  
Examiners Panel 2014**