

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

SPANISH
MAY 2014

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS' BOARD

**SEC SPANISH
MAY 2014 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

Three hundred and one (301) candidates registered for the SEC Spanish examination. The following Table outlines the distribution of grades obtained:

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	22	29	38	35	35			20	8	187
PAPER B				15	30	21	18	23	7	114
TOTAL	22	29	38	50	65	21	18	43	15	301
% OF TOTAL	7.31	9.63	12.62	16.61	21.59	6.98	5.98	14.29	4.98	100

Paper I Listening Comprehension

For the third time, during the May 2014 session, a standard digital recording was used for the long and short listening comprehensions. The candidates' overall performance in the listening comprehension was quite good.

Paper I – Part 2

With regard to Paper I (Part 2), candidates performed well in the grammar question. There was no specific question in this section which proved to be problematic to the candidates. In the Cultural Component section, a substantial number of candidates showed that they were unfamiliar with the Moorish monument and UNESCO World Heritage site of the Alhambra in Granada. In the Cloze test (Gap Filling exercise) of Paper I, although a word bank was provided, many candidates demonstrated poor grammar and understanding skills.

Paper 2A and 2B

Performance in the Reading Comprehension of both papers was remarkably poor. Most candidates were unable to elicit the overall meaning of the text given. A substantial number of candidates were intent on lifting answers from the text, even though it was made clear to them that they had to use their own words. Some candidates even went so far as copying entire sentences to provide answers.

Candidates need to infer overall meaning in this type of exercise rather than merely scan the text to lift and copy answers. They need to be more exposed to this type of reading comprehension exercise and use their own words as much as possible.

The essays this year were particularly poor, possibly the poorest observed in a very long time. As reported in previous years, there were a number of essays which were almost entirely written in English or Italian. A number of others tried to adapt words in Maltese, English, Italian or a combination of all three languages to Spanish resulting in unintelligible texts.

A large number (especially in the Paper 2B essays but also in some Paper 2A's) of those who attempted to write in Spanish, could not demonstrate any agreement of subject, verb, adjective, gender and number. There was no proper use of direct/indirect object pronouns and almost no conjugation of any kind. A number of sentences in some essays did not even include verbs. This poor performance in the writing of Spanish was coupled with a general (except for a few exceptions) poor level of creativity, originality and even relevance to the essay title chosen. A number of candidates did not seem to have had any practice in writing essays and/or were not taking Spanish seriously.

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With regard to the Guided dialogue, considering the relatively easy level required by the questions (basic greetings, weather conditions, the time) which are all an essential part of the syllabus, most of the answers provided were very poor. Again it is felt that candidates need to practice this kind of exercise more if they are to improve their grade.

*Chairperson
2014 Examination Panel*