

# EXAMINERS' REPORT

ADVANCED THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE

FIRST SESSION 2018



L-Università  
ta' Malta

**MATSEC**  
**Examinations Board**

University of Malta  
Msida MSD 2080, Malta

Tel: +356 2340 2814/5/6  
matsec@um.edu.mt

[www.um.edu.mt/matsec](http://www.um.edu.mt/matsec)

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	ABS	Total
NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	2	0	4	1	1	1	0	9
% OF TOTAL	22.22	0.00	44.44	11.11	11.11	11.11	0.00	100

2018 was the first year that the subject was offered at Advanced Level. This in itself is a very positive development as it proves that the subject is growing and there are candidates who wish to obtain qualifications in the subject at Advanced level. Nine candidates sat for the subject. It is a good start and there is plenty of scope for further growth.

Candidates were able to qualify for grades A-E only if they satisfied the examiner in Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 of the exam. This fact proved to be a determining factor for candidates. As a general assessment, it must be stated that as consistently takes place in the Intermediate examination, With regards to the written elements, candidates performed better in Paper 2 than in Paper 1. However, the nature of the two papers are very different. Each paper is discussed in detail below. As regards Paper 3, the practical element, all candidates created interesting and valid work and the overall standard was quite high.

## Paper 1

As a general comment regarding Paper 1, the examiners noted that candidates' ability to answer specific questions in a structured and convincing way was weak. In far too many cases, candidates simply reproduced general knowledge that they would have studied, as opposed to applying that knowledge in a way that successfully answers a specific question. It is not enough to be able to replicate in writing general content. An ability to answer a specific question, using one's acquired knowledge on the topic as a general framework within which to formulate one's answer is a key skill that was lacking in the work of far too many candidates.

A number of the answers in the Paper 1 were either out of point or did not answer the specific question. Examiners also felt that general writing skills were lacking. In many cases, answers did not contain convincing introductions or conclusions. In some cases, only a superficial level of knowledge of the subject matter was noted. Candidates are reminded that when using specific play texts as examples, it is not enough to simply give a synopsis of the text. Clearly, texts are to be used as relevant examples.

Even though spelling mistakes are not penalised, it is disappointing to see a number of candidates misspell the names of key theatre practitioners as well as key periods and genres in theatre history that they should have studied.

On a positive note, there were a few candidates who did manage to display a good grasp of the subject matter, as well as an ability to apply their knowledge in order to answer the specific question.

## Paper 2

Paper 2 consists of two sections. Section A requires candidates to write a critical review of a performance they have watched. Section B requires candidates to discuss how they would communicate a given text to an audience through live performance.

### Section A

Examiners noted that in some cases, the analytical content was weak, with the work of the actor only superficially discussed and little or no specialist vocabulary and terminology used effectively. In other cases, some candidates gave very detailed description of critical elements such as space, design of costumes, props, set, lights, soundscape, etc. At times, content was

promising but presentation, structure and overall writing skills were weak. Overall, examiners remind candidates that their work is required to be a detailed evaluation of a performance, and not simply a detailed description of a performance.

### **Section B**

Five candidates chose to work on the text taken from Love and Information by Caryl Churchill. Four candidates chose to work on the text taken from Waiting for Godot by Samuel Beckett. None of the candidates chose to work on the extract from The Priests' Revolt by Alfred Buttigieg.

Some of the answers were very detailed and displayed the candidate's clear understanding of the various elements that need to be worked on in order to turn a written text into a performance. Examiners noted the following points.

1. Reasons should be given for one's creative decisions in order to help the examiner understand what the candidate is trying to achieve, and thus be in a better position to evaluate these decisions.
2. Specific reference should be made to vital elements such as space and staging, reference to the text, light design, soundscape, costume, prop and set design.
3. Candidates are expected to deal with the selected text in great detail and not simply discuss the play which it was taken from on a general level. Context is good, but only one part of the answer.
4. Highly original ideas for staging need to be backed up by solid argument and reasoning. Radically departing from a playwrights directions for staging and set are not necessarily wrong, but they need to be based on solid creative reasons and intentions.
5. The question asked for the candidates to discuss how they would communicate the text "as a performer". Some candidates failed to do this. Instead they took on the role of director or designer for too much of their answer.

### **Paper 3**

Paper 3 consists of a solo performance and a devised collective performance.

In general, candidates were competent and well prepared for the practical element. It was reassuring to witness so many well-crafted pieces presented during the practical sessions.

### **Conclusion**

Whilst it is true that the number of candidates is small, this must be looked on as a positive foundation upon which to build. Candidates are reminded that as well as refined performance skills and a general understanding of theatre events and the work of theatre practitioners and playwrights in different historical periods, candidates are also expected to display sound writing and analytical skills. Teachers and educators are encouraged to give due weight to this when preparing candidates for this examination.

Chairperson  
Examination Panel 2018