

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE

SEC

HOME ECONOMICS

MAY 2013

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD

SEC EXAMINERS' REPORT MAY 2013

SEC Home Economics May 2013 Session Examiners' Report

Section 1: Statistical Information

Table 1 shows the distribution of grades for the May 2013 session of the examination.

Table 1: Distribution of candidates' grades for SEC Home Economics 2013

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	43	141	152	106	27			38	0	507
PAPER B				75	77	108	32	43	4	339
TOTAL	43	141	152	181	104	108	32	81	4	846
% OF TOTAL	5.08	16.67	17.97	21.39	12.29	12.77	3.78	9.57	0.47	100

Part 2: Comments regarding candidate's performance

2.1 PAPER 1

Question 1: Milk

- a. (i) The majority of candidates could outline the three main differences between the nutritional labels effectively, showing a good skill in deciphering nutritional labels. Very few candidates confused the word differences as they provided similarities between the two products and subsequently did not answer the question correctly.
- (ii) The majority of candidates answered the question correctly giving a valid reason as to why Product A was a healthier option.
- (iii) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly by listing different types of dairy products produced in Malta. However, there were a few candidates, both high and low achievers, who ignored the phrase 'produced in Malta' and focused instead on a variety of dairy products that are not available locally. Very few low achievers mentioned food products which cannot be even classified with dairy, showing lack of knowledge and understanding of the question.
- b. (i) In general, most of the high achievers answered the question correctly and were able to name the condition *lactose intolerance*. However, most of the low achievers wrote part of the name of the condition or gave a totally different answer. This question was based on recall, which could be one reason as to why low achievers had more difficulty with this question.
- (ii) Very few candidates got full marks in this question. Most of the candidates were unable to suggest a nutritionally complete and balanced main course and a drink, and did not focus on providing lactose-free alternative sources to milk for Protein, Vitamin D and Calcium. Some of the correct suggestions included the *use of soya as an alternative to dairy products*, as well as *dark green leafy vegetables* as Calcium-rich sources of food. Some of the low achievers even suggested meals and drinks which are unhealthy or inappropriate altogether.
- c. The majority of low achievers ignored the age group in this question, as well as the phrase 'original ideas' and just provided common ways of increasing the consumption of dairy products. There were also a good number of candidates who repeatedly suggested the same ideas, showing lack of creativity, some also suggesting unhealthy or inappropriate ideas, like

milkshakes, ice-cream, chocolates and bribing. The high achievers gave some original and healthy ideas, but overall, it seems that very few candidates gave this question enough time to come up with good suggestions.

Question 2: Breakfast

- a. The majority of candidates answered this question correctly, giving advantages of having breakfast.
- b. The majority of candidates also answered this question correctly as they showed awareness on how time, work and commitments can be a detriment on having a nutritious breakfast on a regular basis. However, some low achievers seemed to struggle in finding reasons and gave repetitive answers.
- c. Most of the candidates, both high and low achievers answered this question correctly by providing a solution to why people usually skip breakfast. Correct answers included *waking up earlier; preparing a breakfast to take at school, work or on the way; as well as increasing the consumption of small portions gradually for people who suffer from morning or car sickness*.
- d. The majority of high achievers did not find any difficulty in modifying the menu to healthier and more nutritious alternatives. However, most of the low achievers seemed to struggle with providing six different ideas, giving repeated ideas and often suggesting unhealthy alternatives. Both high and low achievers seemed to forget modifying the flavoured and whole milk to skimmed milk.

A good number of candidates also just modified the sugary cereal to a *healthy* cereal, without underlining that the choice of cereal has to be one which is low in sugar and salt, and high in dietary fibre. A significant number of candidates also suggested *butter* as an alternative to jam on toast and did not include low-fat spreads like ricotta in their answers. Only a number of high achievers significantly suggested a variety of healthy and balanced alternatives.

Question 3: Food Labelling

- a. The majority of high achievers answered this question correctly. However, some candidates confused food labelling with food packaging and subsequently did not answer correctly.
- b. In this question, only the few candidates who managed to define the terms by clearly identifying the difference between them got full marks. The majority of candidates got this question wrong also because they were not comfortable expressing themselves in English.

When defining expiry date the majority of candidates reused the word *expire, expires* or *expired* and seemed to find it difficult to explain the term in other words. Very few candidates outlined the relation of the shelf life to supermarkets and points of sale, and consequently their answers were incorrect.

The majority of candidates confused the best before date with the expiry date, and even though some outlined that products still can be used after the best before date, they did not outline the possible change in colour, texture, taste and nutrition. Most of the candidates also did not outline that with net weight we do not only mean the weight of the product, but also

weight of the product without the packaging. Overall, the majority of the candidates struggled with this question and very few candidates got full marks.

- c. The majority of candidates got most of the answers wrong and very few were able to give both the correct name and meaning of the symbols shown in the table. This part of the question was often left out by low achievers and answered incorrectly by high achievers.

A good number of candidates did not give a good explanation for the gluten free symbol as only some high achievers mentioned *coeliac disease* as part of their answer. The majority of low achievers did not recognise the microwaveable and chill symbols and surprisingly a good number of candidates also mixed them up with washing and clothing symbols. Most of the low achievers also failed to identify the E-Mark or Estimated Sign and confused the symbol with *the icon used for internet explorer*.

Like some other parts of the paper, this question confirmed that many candidates, particularly the low achievers, struggle in answering questions entailing recall and in-depth explanation.

- d. Several candidates misunderstood this question and did not understand what was meant by 'bound by law'. Some candidates, even though they were given clear instructions, gave answers which contained information which was given in the previous parts of the question. The majority of the candidates, including the high achievers, also oftentimes did not provide the proper terminology or keywords, resulting in loss of marks.

Question 4: Fats

- a. Very few candidates got full marks in this question as this part of the question demanded a detailed explanation of the terms. High achievers did not find it difficult to define the terms 'cholesterol' and 'omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids' in detail, but only a couple of candidates explained the chemical structure in their definition of 'saturated fats'. The majority of candidates, both high and low achievers, stopped at defining 'saturated fats' as *fats of animal origin*, or *bad fats*, but did not go much deeper in their definition.

The majority of candidates also failed to refer to HDL and LDL Cholesterol in their definition of 'cholesterol' and mistakenly defined cholesterol as a *disease*. The majority of the candidates acknowledged the health benefits of omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids, and some mentioned rich sources like *fish*, but only a handful of high achievers explained their properties as *essential fatty acids* which *fight blood cholesterol levels* and that they are *only provided by the diet*.

- b. The majority of high achievers answered this question correctly. However, some of the low achievers struggled with this question as it seems that they did not properly read what was expected of them. Due to this fact, a good number of candidates had marks deducted because instead of listing functions of fat in the body, they listed *diseases associated with high fat intake*.
- c. The majority of candidates answered this question correctly, giving suitable sources of animal fats in the human diet.
- d. (i) Most candidates did not have problems with answering this question. Some of the most common answers included *obesity, overweight, high blood pressure and heart disease*.
- (ii) The majority of candidates got this question wrong and very few were able to give the correct answer.

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(iii) The majority of candidates answered this question correctly. Some low achievers did not understand the point of the question and gave suggestions of ways to reduce *sugar* and *salt intake* instead of fat intake. Others mentioned *physical activity*, which, despite being relevant, is not related to reducing the intake of fat in the diet.

Question 5: Preservation of food

- a. The majority of the candidates answered this question correctly. However, there were some who only came up with one correct method of preserving food or listed a type of *food packaging* instead.
- b. The majority of the candidates had no difficulty in answering this question and easily identified two reasons why food is preserved. Some however, managed to come up with only one valid reason. The most common correct answer was to *prolong shelf-life of food item*.
- c. Mixed answers were given when comparing the colour and texture of canned and frozen vegetables. There were some candidates who gave correct answers while others confused canned with frozen vegetables and listed that *frozen is more soggy than canned*. As regards to the nutritional value, the majority of the candidates knew that *canned is less healthy than frozen*. In fact, *vitamin loss and the addition of additives and preservatives* were often mentioned.
- d. This question proved not to be difficult since the majority of the candidates managed to come up with two foods, other than vegetables, that can be canned. There were some however, who listed a type of *vegetable* even though it was made clear not to do so.
- e. Most candidates answered this question correctly. Some common answers were *check expiry date* and *make sure cans are not dented*.
- f. Candidates performed well in this question with *saves time* and *good in taste* being the most popular reasons why cook-chill foods and ready prepared meals are becoming so popular.

Question 6: Meal planning for a pregnant mother

- a. Nearly all candidates were able to identify another water soluble vitamin apart from folic acid and two fat soluble vitamins. High achievers even listed their scientific name. Only few listed answers not related to this question.
- b. When it came to identifying two sources of folic acid a variety of correct answers were given. There were some however, who listed other non-related answers. The problem seemed to be a lack of understanding of the word 'sources' hinting that candidates have problems reading and understanding English fluently. In addition, some decided not to answer this question and the previous one.
- c. Most candidates came up with several correct meals suitable for a pregnant mother. Full marks could not be given to candidates who hesitated to list a vegetable and/or potatoes accompaniment to meat, poultry and fish dishes.

In addition, when asked to give reasons of choice of dishes, some listed *the nutrients present in the meal only*. Hence, no functions were listed. For this reason, half of the marks had to be deducted.

Question 7: Water

- a. Candidates did very well in this part of the exam. On the whole, they all identified good functions of water in the human body.
- b. Here again, some candidates gave incorrect answers since they did not know the meaning of the word 'sources'. In fact, at times functions were listed instead. Some candidates gave more than one example of *fruits and/or vegetables*. In such cases only one answer was considered as correct since they fall under the same category. Other common incorrect answers were *tap water* and *flavoured water*.

Regarding the daily recommended intake of water, the majority of the answers were correct.

- c. This question proved not to be difficult to candidates. Some however, mentioned *situations* rather than ways in which water is lost from the body. Most candidates identified *dehydration* as an effect of water deficiency.
- d. *Athletes* were the most common group of people identified in this part of the question. When asked to give one reason why a higher intake of water was needed, some stated *because of excessive exercise* and failed to mention that this leads to loss of water through sweat. For this reason full marks could not be given.

Question 8: Keywords: Macro-nutrients, Micro-nutrients, Malnutrition, Under nutrition and Calcium

- a. For most candidates there was no difficulty in giving the definition of macro-nutrients, micro-nutrients, malnutrition and under nutrition. The keyword malnutrition however, proved to be the most difficult to define. Several incorrect answers were given while others gave the same definition of under nutrition. In addition, there were some low achievers who either gave incorrect answers or decided not to answer at all.
- b. Nearly all candidates listed *for healthy bones and teeth* as a function of calcium in the diet. However, most candidates were unable to come up with a second function of calcium in the body.
- c. *Vitamin D* or *Cholecalciferol* was identified by nearly all candidates as the vitamin which helps calcium absorption during digestion.
- d. The majority of candidates demonstrated appropriate knowledge regarding non-milk plant sources of calcium in the diet and several valid answers were given. However, some candidates might not have read the question properly and listed *animal sources* of calcium instead.
- e. On the whole this question was completed appropriately.

Question 9: All-in-one method of cake making

- a. For most of the candidates there was no difficulty, to give one advantage of using the all-in-one method of cake making. *Very quick method* and *less time consuming* were the most popular answers.

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- b. Overall, this question was poorly understood by both the high and low achievers. Some listed the name of all the three attachments given and not only the one that should be used to make the all-in-one cake. Others identified an incorrect attachment, mainly the *balloon whisk*, and some of those who identified the correct attachment gave incorrect name for the K beater.
- c. On the whole most candidates managed to give one reason why the all-in-one method is considered to be the least healthy method of cake making. Others misunderstood the question and tried to give reasons why it is the healthiest.
- d. The performance for this part of the question varied. Although it was simply a fill-in the blanks exercise only few managed to get full marks. Others managed to identify the main ingredients required, although *water* was often listed as a main ingredient. Most candidates could not remember the electric oven temperature and mixed up the rest of the method.
- e. Most candidates did not comprehend this part of the question. Instead of listing safety precautions to take when cleaning a food mixer, they listed *ways how to clean the food mixer properly*. Very few candidates obtained full marks in this question.

Question 10: Methods of cooking

- a. Most of the candidates answered this question correctly, with the majority explaining that the *nutrients present in foods are retained*. There were some candidates though who said that *steaming is a healthy method of cooking because it kills bacteria*.
- b. The majority of the candidates were able to mention two correct foods that are suitable for steaming.
- c. Most of the candidates got this question wrong either because they left this question out altogether or because they listed different cooking methods instead of the heat transfer methods.
- d. Almost all of the candidates identified valid foods that are suitable for boiling.
- e. In this question, most of the candidates gave correct answers. The most common answer was *the retention of nutrients*. Very few candidates wrote down *to tenderize tough cuts of meat*.
- f. When candidates were asked to write down two food examples that are suitable for grilling, most of the candidates answered correctly.
- g. A high percentage of the candidates gave a correct answer for this question. The most common correct answers were that *the spoon will become hot as it is a conductor of heat* or because *it can scratch the pan*.

Question 11: Food poisoning

- a. There were a lot of candidates who seemed not to understand this question. Most of them listed food that cause food poisoning, while others wrote side effects of food poisoning. Almost none of the candidates mentioned *natural decay*. Those who got this question right focused mainly on *contamination by micro-organisms*.
- b. The great majority of candidates did not know what perishable foods are. A good number of candidates left this part of the question out. On the other hand, most of the candidates

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seemed to know what cross contamination is and some of them even gave relevant examples.

- c. Most of the candidates were not able to give correct examples of perishable foods.
- d. In this part of the question the candidates were expected to answer three ways how to avoid food poisoning when preparing, transporting and cooking food. Most of the candidates seemed to give relevant answers for the cooking part, many of them saying that *meat should be cooked thoroughly*. The same cannot be said for the preparation and transport. It seems that the candidates were not aware of what preparation and transportation of a BBQ involved.
- e. Quite a number of candidates gave relevant answers to this question about kitchen hygiene. However, a small percentage confused kitchen hygiene with personal hygiene.

2.2 PAPER 2A

Question 1: The Environment

- a. Whilst the majority of candidates addressed this question well and outlined valid reasons such as *smaller workforce, reduced costs and increased landfill space*, some failed to understand the term 'waste separation at source' and reasons given were associated with the benefits of domestic waste separation.
- b. The majority of candidates found difficulty in correctly defining 'inorganic waste', while the term 'biodegradable waste' and examples of such waste were generally listed appropriately by the majority.
- c. This question did not pose any difficulties to the majority of candidates and the latter suggested practical reasons as to how waste can be reused, reduced, recycled and refilled.
- d. The majority of candidates cited appropriate ways how consumers can play a role in waste management when shopping, with typical answers including *using cloth bags and buying in bulk* to reduce the amount of packaging.

Question 2: Senior Citizens

- a. In general, this question did not pose any major difficulties to the candidates, and they found no difficulty naming and describing two support services provided for elderly people who live alone. At times, however, the accompanying description of the service proved to be rather scanty. Typical support services identified *included Meals on Wheels, Telecare, Night Shelter, Handyman Service and Home Care Help*.
- b. While the majority of candidates addressed this question well and identified appropriate points to consider when deciding on the suitability of a room such as *low beds, vicinity to a bathroom, well-lit and close to relatives*, numerous candidates indicated that the room should be on the *first floor to avoid stairs* while they were actually referring to the ground floor.
- c. In general this question was tackled well. However, some candidates failed to focus on the fact that the family has young children and the answers given were not in line with the demands of the question.

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- d. Overall, the candidates cited good reasons how residential homes meet the needs of elderly citizens, with typical answers including *providing nutritionally-sound meals* and *providing health care and assistance round the clock*.

Question 3: Labour-Saving Devices

- a. (i) and (ii) On the whole this question was completed appropriately; however the steamer was often mistaken for a food processor, the hand-held whisk was often listed as a *whisker* and the liquidizer was commonly referred to as a *blender*. In addition, a substantial amount of candidates listed vague functions such as *making soups*, *mixing eggs*, rather than using the appropriate terminology such as pureeing, blending, whisking, or beating.

(iii) The term 'labour saving devices' was not always defined correctly. Some candidates failed to answer this question, while others found difficulty using the correct terminology.

- b. (i) Similarly to the above, some candidates found difficulty using the correct terminology and the words *mixing* and *making* were commonly used in lieu of blending, pureeing and several other functions performed by a food processor.

(ii) Overall this question was addressed well with typical safety rules identified such as *keeping away from contact with water*, *caution when washing blades* and *not inserting hand during operation*. However, it is pertinent to note that a substantial amount of candidates listed *closing the lid* as a safety rule to keep in mind whilst using a food processor, whereas this is more a matter of common sense rather than a safety measure.

Question 4: Laundry and Fabric Care

- a. On the whole, good examples of natural and synthetic fibres were identified by the majority. However, a small proportion of candidates listed commodities such as *cereals* and *wheat* as examples of natural and synthetic fibres despite the fact that the question addressed the topic of laundry and fabric care.
- b. This question was completed appropriately with typical answers including *separating by colour*, *closing zips* and *treating stains* when preparing the clothes for washing.
- c. The majority of candidate's listed key factors associated with the selection of an environmentally friendly detergent, with answers including *free from phosphates*, *works at low temperatures* and *concentrated*. However, some candidates simply commented that *the detergent should carry the environment symbol* without providing further detail such as the mobius loop on the packaging material.
- d. The labels *do not dry clean*, *do not tumble dry* and *do not bleach* were generally identified appropriately. However, with regards to the *iron on warm heat*, some candidates simply listed the word *iron* or *warm heat*. Similarly, with regards to the symbol that indicates that the garment should be *machine washed at a temperature not exceeding 40°C*, some candidate merely stated the temperature.

Question 5: Childcare

- a. This question did not pose any major difficulties to candidates. They managed to give two ways how to show respect to one another. The two most common answers were *sharing responsibilities of the child* and *sharing household chores between them*.

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- b. Nearly all candidates managed to list four valid factors that can negatively affect the unborn child.
- c. Most of the candidates managed to suggest two ways how to promote healthy eating habits for a child.
- d. A good percentage of candidates came up with valid examples how to stimulate intellectual development.

Section B:

Question 6: Shopping, the consumer and advertising

- a. Most candidates managed to give a valid definition of the term 'consumer'. Some candidates even stated that *consumers have their rights and responsibilities*.
- b. Not all candidates were able to give a personal and social factor that can influence one's choice when purchasing an item. Some candidates negatively wrote psychological factors such as *media and advertising*.
- c. The majority of candidates were able to mention three ways how to shop wisely for food. The most common answers given were *making a shopping list, comparing prices and looking out for special offers*.
- d. Overall most of the candidates listed both a correct advantage and a disadvantage of shopping online. The most common advantage given was *shopping for cheaper items from the comfort of the home*, whereas the most common disadvantage given was *it may take a long period of time to arrive*.
- e. Nearly all candidates listed two advantages and a disadvantage of shopping in a supermarket. The most common correct advantage given was *finding different variety and brands to choose from* while the most common correct disadvantage given was *might find long queues*.
- f. This question did not pose any difficulty and candidates suggested valid ways how food items can be purchased in Malta.
- g. Not all candidates were able to mention three different store techniques supermarkets use to encourage customers to spend more.
- h. Overall most of the candidates suggested two valid means how to advertise a new product.
- i. Most of the candidates did give a valid advantage and disadvantage of advertising from a consumer or a manufacturer point of view.

Question 7: Safety in a playing field, persons with special needs

- a. Candidates found it a bit difficult to mention four ways why Maltese communities benefit from the opening of new playing fields.
- b. Some candidates did not describe correctly two types of social interactions that are encouraged through local playing fields.

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- c. This question did not pose difficulty to candidates. Most of the candidates were able to list four safety rules to be included on a sign in the playing field.
- d. (i) The majority of candidates listed correctly four ideas how playing fields can be made more wheelchair accessible. The most common answers given were *wide passage ways, the use of smooth ramps* and also *toilets which are wheelchair accessible*.

(ii) Not all candidates were able to mention correct difficulties that people with mobility impairment face in today's society.
- e. (i) This question did not pose any difficulty in mentioning two groups of people who are more prone to accidents. The most common acceptable answers were *children* and *senior citizens*.

(ii) Most of the candidates explained correctly the procedures to follow in treating the injuries given.

Question 8: Refrigerators and methods of payment

- a. A good number of candidates were not able to mention three types of refrigerators available on the market. A lot of candidates listed *chest freezers* as a type of refrigerator.
- b. Most of the candidates gave relevant reasons on which refrigerator the couple, who live in a small flat, should choose.
- c. The majority of the candidates answered this question correctly, with *energy efficiency* being the most common answer given.
- d. Most candidates gave relevant, correct answers with regards to the different methods of payment the couple can use to pay for the refrigerator. However, there were quite a number of candidates who lost marks because the four methods of payment mentioned were related such as *quickcash, visa, debit card* and *credit card*. These were accepted as one correct answer only, as they all represent plastic money. Other accepted answers were *cash, cheques, higher purchase, bank loans* and *overdraft facilities*.
- e. While a lot of candidates gave correct advantages and disadvantages for two of the methods of payment of their choice, a good number of them mentioned *easy to use* as an advantage of both methods of payment. While ease of use is an advantage, the candidates were expected to provide different answers. There were quite a number of candidates who instead of giving out advantages, they described one of the methods of payment.
- f. Quite a few candidates seemed not to understand this question, while a good number left this part of question unanswered. However, though a good majority managed to identify three correct methods of redress, some lost marks in the second part of the question (g) when they had to provide an explanation.

2.3 PAPER 2B

Question 1: The Environment

- a. The majority of candidates addressed this question well and suggested alternative materials for plastic bags. However, at times, the reasons given failed to compliment the choice of

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material. For example, instead of a lunch box serving as a means of reducing waste since it can be reduced, some candidates commented that *this container keeps the lunch fresh*.

- b. Overall, this question did not pose any chief difficulties to the majority of candidates who outlined practical reasons as to how waste can be reused and reduced. Some candidates however used these terms interchangeably.
- c. This question posed no major difficulties and the majority of candidates identified waste that was both non-recyclable and recyclable. Nonetheless, some candidates found difficulty varying their answers and listed *plastic bags* and *plastic bottles* as recyclable waste and *food leftovers* and *vegetable and fruit remains* as non-recyclable waste.
- d. A considerable number of candidates failed to correctly identify items that can be disposed of in a compost bin. Some inappropriate answers included: *animal waste* and *plastic*.

Question 2: Senior Citizens

- a. The candidates, generally listed appropriate reasons how a family can help a senior citizen who lives alone. Such reasons typically included *help in the preparation of meals* and *frequent visiting to prevent loneliness*. It is pertinent to note, however that answers given were not elaborated upon and the majority of candidates had the tendency of giving scanty answers.
- b. In general, this question did not pose any major difficulties to the candidates, and the latter found no difficulty identifying two support services provided for elderly people who live alone.
- c. The answers provided to this question were considered good overall and the candidates correctly outlined both advantages and disadvantages of living alone or in a residential home.

Question 3: Labour-Saving Devices

- a. (i) On the whole this question was completed appropriately; however the steamer was often mistaken for a food processor, the hand-held whisk was often listed as a *whisker*, the liquidizer was commonly referred to as a *blender* and the gas hob was merely referred to as a *hob* or *cooker*.

(ii) Incorrect answers listed in question a. (i), often affected the candidate's performance in a. (ii). Therefore, candidates were at risk of scoring poorly in question a. (ii), if a. (i) was inappropriately tackled.

(iii) Overall, this fill-in the blanks question was tackled well, with *time*, *energy* and *work* as being commonly used words. However, a substantial amount of candidates also made use of the words *money* and *electricity* affecting their performance in this question.
- b. (i) Most candidates correctly identified the labour-saving device as being a *food processor*.

(ii) A substantial amount of candidates found difficulty diversifying their responses and many made use of the word *mixing* rather than using the appropriate terminology such as pureeing or blending. In addition, many outlined the function of a processor as that of *making cakes*.

(iii) Overall this question was addressed well with typical safety rules identified such as *keeping away from contact with water*, *caution when washing blades* and *not inserting hand during operation*. However, it is pertinent to note that a substantial amount of candidates

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listed *closing the lid* as a safety rule to keep in mind whilst using a food processor, whereas this is more a matter of common sense than a safety measure.

Question 4: Laundry and Fabric Care

- a. On the whole, the table was well-completed and the candidates correctly deciphered between the natural and synthetic fibres.
- b. This question was completed appropriately with typical answers including *separating by colour*, *closing zips* and *treating stains* when preparing the clothes for washing.
- c. The majority of candidates found difficulty completing this question and many candidates stated that the detergent should carry *the environment symbol* without providing further detail such as the mobius loop printed on the packaging material.
- d. The table assisted the candidates with the matching of the symbols and only a few failed to obtain full marks in the assigned question.

Question 5: Childcare

- a. This question did not pose any major difficulties to the candidates as most of them managed to give two ways how to show respect towards one another.
- b. Most candidates listed correctly two factors that can negatively affect the unborn child. The most common answers were *smoking*, *alcohol* and *drugs*.
- c. Some candidates found it difficult to explain two ways how to promote healthy eating habits for a child.
- d. Not all candidates were able to explain how the toys shown can help improve the intellectual development of a one year old child.

Section B:

Question 6: Shopping, the consumer and advertising.

- a. Most candidates were not able to give a personal and social factor that can influence one's choice when purchasing an item. Most candidates repeated the same factor that was given as an example.
- b. The majority of candidates were able to mention three things to look out for when choosing a food shop. The most common answers given were *price of food*, *hygiene*, *friendly and helpful service*.
- c. Most of the candidates listed correctly two advantages and a disadvantage of shopping in a supermarket. The most common advantage given was *find different variety and brands to choose from* while the most common disadvantage given was *might find long queues*.
- d. This question did not pose any difficulty and candidates suggested two valid types of shopping outlets from where food items can be purchased.
- e. A significant percentage of candidates were able to give four valid different methods of advertising.

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- f. Most of the candidates did give a valid advantage and disadvantage of advertising.
- g. Overall most of the candidates listed both a correct advantage and disadvantage of shopping online. The most common advantage given was *shopping for cheaper items from the comfort of the home* whereas the most common disadvantage given was *it may take a long period of time to arrive*.
- h. Not all candidates were able to mention two different ways how to shop wisely when purchasing food.

Question 7: Safety in a playing field, persons with special needs

- a. Candidates found it a bit difficult to mention two advantages of having playing fields in towns and villages.
- b. Some candidates did not explain why leisure time is important for families today.
- c. This question did not pose difficulty to candidates. Most of the candidates were able to list two safety rules to be included on a sign in the playing field.
- d. Some candidates had difficulty in answering this question and repeated the same answers written in question 7c.
- e. (i) The majority of candidates listed two correct ideas how playing fields can be made more wheelchair accessible. The most common answers given were *wide passage ways* and *the use of smooth ramps*.
(ii) Not all candidates were able to identify two difficulties that people with mobility impairments are likely to face in society today.
- f. (i) This question did not pose any difficulty in mentioning two groups of people who are more prone to accidents. The most common acceptable answers were *children* and *senior citizens*.
(ii) Most of the candidates gave a correct meaning to the term first aid.
(iii) The question proved to be difficult for some candidates and they had difficulty in listing down six different items found in a first aid box.
(iv) The majority of candidates were able to list down different injuries or accidents that are likely to happen in a playing field.

Question 8: Refrigerators and methods of payment

- a. Most of the candidates gave the correct names of these 3 refrigerators. Refrigerator C, the larder refrigerator, seemed to be the least recognised by the candidates, many saying that it is a *built in fridge*.
- b. This part of the question was well answered by most of the candidates with a relevant reason given for the choice of refrigerator.
- c. When asked to state factors that the couple should consider before buying the refrigerator, correct answers were given. The candidates who lost marks in this question did so because they repeated the answers that were already given to them as an example.

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- d. Most of the candidates gave correct methods of payment that the couple may use to pay for the refrigerator.
- e. The majority of the candidates gave a relevant advantage and disadvantage for one of the methods of payments of their choice.
- f. A good number of candidates did not understand this part of the question well and some incorrectly stated that *the couple should complain to the owner by going to the Tribunal court.*

Part 3: Coursework

Moderation of candidates' coursework was conducted in nineteen schools in addition to the marking of the private candidates' work.

In the majority of the schools, marking criteria was well used throughout the investigations as well as practical sessions. Moreover, marks given were a true representation of the submitted work.

Although the moderators have always informed the schools before they visited, in certain cases some of them were faced with difficulties. This is because, either not all the candidates' preparation sheets were provided or else the breakdown of marks was missing. Feedback regarding the coursework component is to be sent to school by the MATSEC office.

3.1: The Practical Component

With regard to the preparation sheets, at times, the reasons for choice and evaluation were not discussed in sufficient detail. It would also be more appropriate if the official SEC preparation sheet is used in all schools for standardisation purposes and so that all the criteria contained in the Home Economics SEC syllabus will be followed.

In one particular school the practical assignment called upon the candidates to prepare a two-course meal. This is not in line with the syllabus requirements.

Moderators also came across practical assignments which asked the candidates to present a sweet dish. The syllabus stipulates that a one-course meal/dish and a beverage should be presented using one of the indicated culinary skills, with no reference being made to the cake-making.

Quoting the SEC syllabus 2013 page 4:

***** The following include guidelines regarding the practical assignments:**

Each practical assignment will consist of the preparation of a one-course meal/dish and a simple non-alcoholic, home-made beverage. The meal/dish should include one of the proposed culinary skills: sauce-making, short-crust pastry making, yeast dough, stewing, casseroling, cooking rice and pasta, use of healthy cooking methods such as grilling, steaming, stir-frying and cooking using appliances/equipment that save energy and retain nutrients. Each practical assignment should include evidence of a different culinary skill. Salads should only be used as accompaniments.

However, moderators did not penalize the candidates for their choices, owing to the fact that the practical scenario was prepared by their respective teachers. Since cake-making is tackled in the syllabus it is advisable that such skills will be accepted to be used during the practical examination.

3.2: The Investigation

Investigations in most schools were neatly presented and varied topics were used. On the whole, a satisfactory standard of SEC level was observed. Only a few investigations were allotted high marks when the presented work was not of a desired level.

The work presented by some private candidates is still below the required standard. Unfortunately a few private candidates did not carry out the practical component of the coursework.

Chairperson

2013 Examination Panel