

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

GERMAN

MAY 2013

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS' BOARD

**SEC GERMAN
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

Introduction

A total of 346 candidates sat for the German examination at SEC level in May 2013 (there were 378 candidates in 2012, 469 in 2011 and 473 in 2010.) This shows a drop in the number of candidates registering for the exam compared to the last two years, and also the years before. This year 216 candidates applied for Paper 2A (62.4%, same % as last year) while 130 (37.6%) opted for Paper 2B.

The examination papers had the same format as the last two years. In the reading sections, three items were the same for Paper 2A and Paper 2B. All the written sections in Paper 2A and Paper 2B were marked separately by two different markers and the final mark in each case was calculated considering both marks. In the cases where a discrepancy was noted, the opinion of a third marker was decisive.

Overall Performance

Table 1 below shows the distribution of grades obtained in the May 2013 session.

Table 1

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	Abs	Total
I & IIA	18	27	40	35	48	--	--	45	3	216
I & IIB	--	--	--	10	24	34	37	25	0	130
Total	18	27	40	45	72	34	37	70	3	346
% of Total	5.2	7.8	11.6	13.0	20.8	9.8	10.7	20.2	0.9	100

Tables 2 and 3 show a comparison of grades obtained in the 2013, 2012 and 2011 sessions.

Table 2

	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	Abs	Total
2013	I & IIA	18	27	40	35	48	--	--	45	3	216
	I & IIB	--	--	--	10	24	34	37	25	0	130
	Total	18	27	40	45	72	34	37	70	3	346
2012	I & IIA	20	35	37	39	47	--	--	55	3	236
	I & IIB	--	--	--	10	26	37	33	30	6	142
	Total	20	35	37	49	73	37	33	85	9	378
2011	I & IIA	30	36	44	35	75	--	--	70	5	295
	I & IIB	--	--	--	12	30	34	52	38	8	174
	Total	30	36	44	47	105	34	52	108	13	469

Table 3

		Paper I & IIA	Paper I & IIA
	Paper I & IIA	Paper I & IIB	Paper I & IIB
	Grades 1 – 5 (%)	Grades 1 – 5 (%)	Grades 1 – 7 (%)
2013	77.7	58.4	78.9
2012	75.4	56.6	75.1
2011	74.6	55.9	74.2

All papers were checked with reference to the instructions in the syllabus. Care was also taken to avoid repeating questions from previous years.

Part 1

Spoken Interaction

The oral examination consisted of three parts; two candidates had to interact with each other to perform these tasks.

Listening Comprehension

Candidates listened to a CD recording of the listening comprehension texts and the instructions regarding this component. The texts were recorded by a native German speaker and a Maltese speaker well versed in German. The feedback was very good. The topics were suitable for the average age of the candidates.

Paper 1 – Grammar (Sprachbausteine and Satzbau)

In this section, the results were varied.

Probably Parts 3 and 4 were not understood completely by the candidates, or alternatively they had not practised these kinds of tasks enough. Some candidates did not understand the texts set and therefore could not provide the answers expected. Many of the candidates - especially those who opted for Paper B - were not able to construct a simple sentence in the German language correctly. This problem was already discussed in previous years. This section garnered the worst results in view of the whole examination.

Paper 2A and Paper 2B

216 candidates opted for Paper A and 130 for Paper B.

Paper 2A and Paper 2B are made up of a reading comprehension section and a written section that comprises a letter or an e-mail, and a report in Paper 2A and a note in Paper 2B. The last three tasks in the reading sections are the same for both papers.

Reading Comprehension Section

The texts were interesting and suitable for the candidates' age. The candidates who opted for Paper 2A performed better than those who opted for Paper 2B.

Written Section

Paper 2A

Letter - Brief "Einladung zur Party"

This section tests the written productive skills, and some candidates had difficulties in this section requiring them to express themselves freely.

The theme of the letter was within the candidates' competence.

As noted in previous years, the incorrect expressions "Ich bin gut / Meine Familie ist gut" or "Ich gehe gut" are used instead of "Mir geht es gut/ Meiner Familie geht es gut." Another frequent mistake involved switching from one tense to another. Some candidates gave incomplete answers whereas others misunderstood the exercise.

A lot of students wrote an acceptable answer to the tasks set. Some very good phrases were also evident.

Second Task: Bericht über das Treffen mit einer Brieffreundin / einem Brieffreund.

As in the first task, the results were quite varied. Some candidates wrote very good letters whereas others obtained no marks in this section. The problems in grammar and syntax were the same as those mentioned above.

Paper 2B

E-Mail: Antwort auf Stefan Schreiner

Not all candidates answered all the questions and some wrote less than required.

Second Task: "Nachricht"

In this part many mistakes were made with regard to context. A couple of candidates evidently did not understand what to do. In particular, the fact that the candidate had to go to the dentist was often misunderstood, and there were many phrases which were invented. As in other written sections, candidates performed variedly with respect to grammar and syntax.

Conclusion

As last year, there was a drop in the number of candidates who registered for SEC German this year. This is, of course, a matter of concern, but considering the importance of the German language in the EU and a growing awareness of this importance, a rise in numbers will hopefully be seen in future years.

As can be seen in Table 3 at the beginning of the report, the total results this year are slightly better than those obtained in the last two years. This is both positive and hopeful.

*Chairperson
2013 Examination Panel*