

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION
SEC LEVEL**

HISTORY

MAY 2013

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

SEC HISTORY
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT

Part 1: Statistical Information

- 1.1 The number of candidates sitting for History – SEC May 2013, was 251 or six less than the previous year. Of these 165 registered to sit for Paper IIA while 86 registered to sit for Paper IIB. Candidates taking Paper IIA option were well prepared and only 24 or 14.5% were unsuccessful. Candidates attempting Paper IIB were rather weak as in previous years: only 11 or 12.8% managed to get Grade 4 or Grade 5, 23 or 26.7% obtained Grade 6 or 7 while 33 or 38.4% were unclassified. Overall 139 or 55.4% of all candidates got a pass at Grade 5 or higher. There were 32 prospective candidates or 12.7% who did not sit for the examination.
- 1.2 Table 1 below summarises the distribution of grades for the SEC History Examination – May 2013

Table 1: Distribution of grades for Sec History Examination – May 2013:

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	10	31	36	31	20			24	13	165
PAPER B				5	6	15	8	33	19	86
TOTAL	10	31	36	36	26	15	8	57	32	251
% OF TOTAL	4.0	12.4	14.3	14.3	10.4	6.0	3.2	22.7	12.7	100.0

2.0 General Remarks

- 2.1 A number of candidates, especially those choosing Option B, lacked knowledge of basic terms and historical concepts and were unable to produce analytical or interpretative essays.
- 2.2 Many candidates seem to rely on prepared notes on the theme under discussion without caring to read the question carefully.
- 2.3 Most candidates chose to answer in English, but their level of expression leaves much to be desired. Lack of clarity and logic and weak sentence structure often rendered their answers difficult to assess.
- 2.4 There were candidates whose handwriting was at times difficult to decipher.
- 2.5 In Paper I candidates often showed lack of historical knowledge and were unable to recall certain historical facts, to evaluate and to interpret evidence and analyse sources diligently. In Paper II, candidates especially those choosing Option B, often found it difficult to construct a good exposition or to present arguments based on historical evidence.

3.0 Comments regarding Paper I

- 3.1 Paper I 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 questions. Option A candidates generally fared better in Section B while Option B candidates were rather weak in both Sections.

Specific remarks on Paper I

4.0 Maltese History

- 4.1 Question 1: The first question focused on the Rising of the Priests: Many candidates did not even know that Mgr. Pellerano was the Bishop of Malta, who was the Grand Master of Malta when the Rising occurred or the priest who led the rebels. Moreover, though some candidates explained correctly why hunting was prohibited only a few could outline the various causes that led to the Rising or describe its main events. Regarding the consequences of the Rising, most candidates simply concluded that it led to the decline of the Order.
- 4.2 Question 2: In this question, candidates were expected to focus on the issue of Maltese emigration: Answers given indicate that many candidates lacked knowledge of certain key terms such as 'emigration', 'hostilities' and 'economic conditions' and could not therefore produce good answers. Few candidates explained what kind of economic conditions existed in Malta following World War II and why emigration was then considered as an important solution to the Maltese economy except that many hinted that Maltese migrants would reduced the problem of overpopulation and help their relatives in Malta by sending back some of their earnings.
- 4.3 Question 3: This question dealt with Independent Malta: Candidates were often unable to give a clear definition of such terms as 'sovereignty' and 'non-alignment'. Moreover, many candidates failed to indicate the constitutional milestones of Maltese history between 1964 and 1987 while others seem to have been completely unaware of the Defence Agreements that finally led to the end of the British military presence in Malta.

European and International History

- 4.4 Question 4: This question focused on the French Revolution: Though there were some reasonably good answers, many candidates seem to be still uncertain about what constituted the Third Estate. Others failed to indicate in which year the French Revolution occurred and were unable to explain what happened when the Third Estate abandoned the Estates General. On the other hand, quite a few candidates managed to give four reasons or causes to explain why the French revolted against their King.

SEC HISTORY
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT

- 4.5 Question 5: This question dealt with social conditions in Britain during the Industrial Revolution: Many candidates produced good interpretations of the first three sources, however very few candidates could name an industrial city in Great Britain. Moreover, only a few could clearly explain what the Industrial Revolution was or to write a good paragraph about the serious problems that developed during this period, while many candidates produced vague one word answers regarding results of this Revolution.
- 4.6 Question 6: This question focused on the Cuban Crisis of 1962: Most candidates indicated correctly the position of the three personalities referred to in the sources, and could give fairly good answers regarding the events of this Crisis. However, many candidates indicated that they are still unable to explain what the Cold War was, when the Cuban Crisis occurred and what the main results of this Crisis were.
- 5.0 Comments regarding Paper IIA**
- 5.1 Paper IIA 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. 3 was the least popular. In the European and International History section, question no. 7 was by far the most common choice followed by question no. 10. On the other hand, only a few candidates chose to tackle questions no. 8, no. 9 and no. 11.
- 5.3 The overall performance was adequate, though answers to questions no. 2 and no. 12 were rather weak. The quality of the candidates' answers was good though at times lacking in depth and analysis. Description of facts and events was the approach mostly taken.
- 5.4 Table 2 indicates the distribution of questions chosen by candidates opting for Paper IIA.

Table 2: Distribution of questions chosen by candidates opting for paper IIA

Question	No. of candidates choosing question	Percentage of all candidates
1	80	48.5%
2	20	12.1%
3	15	9.1%
4	74	44.8%
5	44	26.6%
6	67	40.6%
7	119	72.1%
8	19	11.5%
9	14	8.5%
10	101	61.2%
11	20	12.1%
12	27	16.4%

6.0 Specific remarks on Paper IIA

Maltese History

- 6.1 Question 1: A lot of students opted to answer this question, however, many did not adequately understand that the question had two aspects; that is, they were meant to discuss both the Order's early administration of Malta and the defensive measures. Instead, many focused almost exclusively on the latter part.
- 6.2 Question 2: This question asked students to think about the three jurisdictions in early modern Malta: that of the Grand Master, the Bishop and the Inquisitor; students were also meant to delve into the work of the Inquisition in some detail. Unfortunately, most of those who attempted this question did not understand it. Answers were therefore sketchy and incomplete. It is also worrisome to see that particular stereotypes still prevail, especially in relation to the Inquisition being a monster that tortured everyone. A more balanced treatment of such subject should be encouraged.
- 6.3 Question 3: Not so many students went for this question, but those that did showed an overall satisfactory grasp of the subject, even if discussions of the plague tended to predominate to the expense of other issues of Maitland's period in office.
- 6.4 Question 4: The Language Question remains a popular choice among students, though understanding of this critical issue in the formation of modern Maltese political institutions varied from a fairly basic one to a more adequate grasp of it.
- 6.5 Question 5: In this question students were asked to reflect upon Malta's nineteenth-century fortress-colony economy. Many were able to give a range of examples of how this economy operated, with a few being able to present a more analytical understanding.
- 6.6 Question 6: The question about Malta's role during the First World War was answered by many. Knowledge of this was fairly adequate though formulaic representations were a feature of most answers. Thus, while practically all students were aware of Malta's designation as the 'Nurse of the Mediterranean', only a few were really able to explain its significance and practical applications. One student misread the question and focused his/her answers on World War II, while a few got facets of the two conflicts mixed up.

European and International History

- 6.7 Question 7: Most candidates attempted this question and explained how the Renaissance was the rebirth of learning after the ignorance and stagnation which had characterised Europe during the Middle Ages. They also explained how this movement started in Italy. However, they mentioned few advantages which the Italian independent states had. They just mentioned that these states enjoyed the legacy of the ancient Roman Empire and the patronisation of art by rich Italian families. Few dealt in depth with the progress registered in various areas and how this spread to other countries. When dealing with the results of the Renaissance, candidates tended to limit their answers to the Protestant revolt and the spread of written communication.
- 6.8 Question 8: Only a few candidates attempted this question. Answers were generally rather poor. Candidates explained how the monarchs referred in the question were influenced by the enlightened philosophers and how they tried to carry out reforms. However, they were superficial in mentioning specific examples, mostly mentioning that they allowed religious toleration and some freedom of the press. Some also explained that they patronised art and literature.

SEC HISTORY
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT

- 6.9 Question 9: This was the least popular question. Those attempting this question failed to give a short overview of the main revolutions in Europe and to explain how these generally failed to achieve their aims. Revolutions in Lombardy and Bohemia were hardly ever mentioned. Candidates generally failed to give good reasons for the failure of these revolutions.
- 6.10 Question 10: This was the second most popular question. Generally candidates gave a good account of the causes of World War II. Many of them concentrated on the harsh Peace Treaties of 1919-1920 as the main cause of this war. The weakening of the League of Nations and its inability to take effective action against great powers such as Germany, Italy and Japan and the rise of dictatorial and nationalistic governments in Germany and Italy were other causes which were generally mentioned. Some candidates, however, just concentrated on the weak policy of appeasement followed by Great Britain. On the other hand candidates were rather poor in listing the main results of this war though some mentioned the occupation of Germany and its division into four zones, the founding of the United Nations for the preservation of world peace, the beginning of the division between the democratic, capitalist West and the autocratic, communist East, and the beginning of the Cold War.
- 6.11 Question 11: Candidates were rather superficial when dealing with the crisis in the Soviet Union when Gorbachev became leader in 1985. Some mentioned the weak economy and the existing system which gave Soviet workers no incentive to work harder or better. Most candidates mentioned Gorbachev's belief that the Soviet Union needed a complete rethinking and his two key ideas of glasnost and perestroika. However, candidates were rather poor when dealing with the effects of his rule – the market forces introduced, the cuts in defence spending, the signing of the Treaty with the USA to remove missiles from Europe, the new relations with the outside world and the end of the Cold War.
- 6.12 Question 12: Most of the candidates who answered this question, explained that terrorism is a kind of psychological warfare using violence against civilians to achieve political objectives by creating fear. Most of them gave good reasons to indicate causes for the rise of terrorism – ethnic conflict, lack of democracy, economic deprivation, unemployment and religious conflict. On the other hand, few candidates explained how governments are trying to combat terrorism with only some of them mentioning deportation, enhanced police powers, increased intelligence and surveillance activities and war on terrorism. Generally candidates pointed correctly to factors resulting from terrorism – e.g. fear, uncertainty, the slowdown of the economy, decline in tourism and the rise in oil prices.

7.0 Comments regarding Paper IIB

- 7.1 The Paper was divided in two Sections as Paper IIA, but the questions were structured. Questions no.1 and no. 6 were by far the most popular in the Maltese History Section while question no. 7 was the most popular in the European and International History Section.
- 7.2 In this paper analysis and criticism is not expected, however a good listing of facts and description is. Candidates seem to take this paper lightly and answer very shortly. Consequently they failed to cover the whole questions. No student answered in a detailed and analytical manner. Quite a number of students seemed to fail to understand that they were supposed to choose from the questions given and instead attempted to answer all questions. There was also a clear lack of understanding of how the amount of marks assigned to a question should relate to the length and detail of an answer.

SEC HISTORY
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT

- 7.3 The overall performance was rather weak particularly in the European and International Section, and was characterised by a lot of vagueness, short and incomplete sentences, and the proverbially poor English (and Maltese) of all candidates.
- 7.4 Table 3 indicates the distribution of questions chosen by candidates opting for Paper IIB.

Table 3: Distribution of questions chosen by candidates of Option B.

Question	Chosen by	Percentage
1	44	51.2%
2	10	11.6%
3	4	4.6%
4	2	2.3%
5	17	19.7%
6	51	59.3%
7	52	60.5%
8	6	6.9%
9	6	6.9%
10	30	34.8%
11	32	37.2%
12	6	6.9%

8.0 Specific remarks on Paper IIB

Maltese History

- 8.1 Question 1: This question about the early years of the Order in Malta was very popular. While candidates showed a basic awareness of this era, very often there was an imprecise grasp of pre- and post- 1565 personalities and events. Some candidates did not always make enough of a distinction between the sub-parts of the question.
- 8.2 Question 2: Very few chose to answer this question about the Inquisition. Those that did showed that they have a very skewed understanding of this institution and its role in Maltese society. There was an overall weak grasp of basic facts and a whole set of misconceptions and stereotypes.
- 8.3 Question 3: This question was about Maitland and the early years of British rule. Again, it was not popular with students. Those that did go for this question showed a satisfactory level of knowledge, even if at times fragmentary.
- 8.4 Question 4: Very few chose to answer this question about the constitutional development of Malta. This is rather surprising given that this is a main topic. The handful that did answer it, gave very poor answers.
- 8.5 Question 5: This question came third in place in terms of the number of those who chose it. Many candidates showed that they were able to talk about various aspects related to hygiene and health, but again knowledge was very fragmentary. Quite a few candidates were unable to make a distinction between measures undertaken by the Hospitallers (and the question was not about this) and measures undertaken during the nineteenth century.
- 8.6 Question 6: This question about World War I and Malta was popular. Many were able to show a basic understanding of events related to the Great War and Malta's diverse roles in it, but as in Question 5, candidates here confused aspects from the two World Wars.

SEC HISTORY
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT

Many argued that the island was severely bombed during WW1 which it clearly was not. There should also have been a reference to the Sette Giugno in part (c) but only a few realised this.

European and International History

- 8.7 Question 7: This was the most popular question in the paper. Most candidates managed to define the Renaissance as the rebirth of learning after the Middle Ages. However, most of them failed to explain why it started in Italy. Many just referred to the legacy of the ancient Roman Empire and the patronisation of art by rich Italian families. Candidates were also unable to amplify on the progress made and often limited themselves to just mentioning Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the advent of printing. Some did indicate results of the Renaissance such as the spread of written communication, the opening of the New World and the Protestant revolt.
- 8.8 Question 8: Few candidates attempted this question. Their knowledge of enlightened despots is limited to the monarchs' benevolence and social reforms. They managed to name two enlightened despots and two philosophers, but were rather weak when writing about their policies or their teaching.
- 8.9 Question 9: This question about the 1848 revolutions was also answered by just a few candidates. In their answers they concentrated on some events that occurred in France, Vienna and Hungary. The answers indicate that the candidates are rather confused in their knowledge of causes, events and results of these events.
- 8.10 Question 10: Candidates generally did well when answering this question about the causes of World War II. The causes which were better discussed were the effects of the Peace Treaties of 1919-1920, the weaknesses of the League of Nations and the aggressive foreign policy of Hitler. However, candidates found it rather difficult to explain the rise of dictatorial and nationalistic governments in Germany and Italy and the rearmament of Germany and the arms race.
- 8.11 Question 11: A good number of candidates chose to answer this question and they did manage to explain that globalisation means that the world has become a single society having greater means of communication. Nonetheless, they could not give examples of the main characteristics of globalisation. They were unable to point out advantages resulting from globalisation though they seem to be more aware of major disadvantages. Most of them referred to disadvantages suffered by poor countries, weaker trade unions and an increase in income inequality both between and within nations.
- 8.12 Question 12: Just a few candidates attempted this question. They had to choose five topics and write a paragraph on each to explain their importance. Some candidates, however, did not even write about five topics. The topics mostly chosen were the Code Napoleon, the Continental System, the League of Nations, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and European integration.

**Chairperson
2013 Examination Panel.**