

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**  
**THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**  
**ADVANCED LEVEL**

**GEOGRAPHY**

**May 2006**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT\***

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**  
**CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**\*[NOTE: The following is a summary of the examiners' full report.  
The original can be consulted at the Matsec Office.]**

**AM GEOGRAPHY**  
**May 2006 Session**  
**Examiners' Report**

**Part 1: Statistical information****Table 1: Distribution of grades for AM Level Geography – May 2006 session**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Abs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Part 2: Comments on the Candidates' Answers****General Comments**

In general, candidates' replies focused on basic facts about a particular topic. However reference to specific issues and case studies was limited. Candidates should be encouraged to improve the content and the overall presentation of the answers given during exams by developing their thoughts properly. Some questions were answered superficially and replies did not address whole questions whilst key words were not properly explained, where required. It is of utmost importance that students make proper use of technical geographical language. At Advanced level standard, students should also be encouraged to make cross-references between topics, such as making the necessary links between climate, environment or geomorphology with human activity and impact.

**Physical Geography Paper****Topic 1: Physical Geography of the Maltese Islands****Question 1**

In general, candidates obtained low marks for questions about this Topic. For Question 1, most answers did not include the diagram, as specifically requested in the question. In addition, examples given were either located solely in Malta or in Gozo.

**Question 2**

Answers to question 2 were of low standard and more related to an Environmental Studies paper rather than Physical Geography.

**Topic 2: Global Processes****Question 3**

Both questions 3 and 4 had the poorest quality of all answers chosen. Most of the candidates did not produce diagrams to support their answers. The few candidates that made use of diagrams did not supplement or illustrate the written answer in any manner.

**Question 4**

Question 4 fared even worse, as candidates provided superficial answers and once failed to make cross-references between topics in other parts of the syllabus. Candidates also failed to take the advantage of the distribution of marks within the question.

**Topic 3: Temperate Environments****Question 5**

Candidates failed to cover sufficiently the climatic regime. In particular, there were hardly any references to the predominating winds, even if this was specifically requested. Responses to question 5b were disappointing, in particular those that tackled soil, since basic details were lacking. Some answers provided incorrect accounts of the soil profile, showing that the candidates had not yet grasped basic information. Answers to question 5c indicated lack of general geographical knowledge.

**Question 6**

Responses lacked simple definitions of terminology that are fundamental to the study of rivers in question 6. In addition, general knowledge of erosion, flow patterns, river profiles and stream patterns were lacking.

**Topic 4: Arid, Semi-Arid, Humid and Sub-humid Tropical Environments**

**Question 7**

This topic remains the favourite choice of students, in particular Question 7 on desertification processes. However, any question requiring an explanation of the human influence on an environment was tackled very superficially, which automatically resulted in the loss of valuable marks.

**Question 8**

Responses to question 8 lacked important details, whilst providing unnecessary explanations. In addition most candidates did not reply in essay format.

**Topic 5: Coastal Environments**

**Question 9**

Candidates could have easily obtained high marks for answers to Question 9 since it required a straightforward answer, which could easily be found in Waugh (2001). In fact, the few correct answers merited maximum or nearly maximum marks.

**Question 10**

Question 10 was a general question on the Coastal Environment whilst covering several other parts of the syllabus. However this question was not popular amongst candidates, indicating the candidates' inability to make cross-references between topics.

**Human Geography Paper**

**Topic 1: The Human Geography of the Maltese Islands**

**Question 1**

This was an unpopular question amongst students. It seemed that students do not feel confident with working out statistics. However this was unusual, since most of them use statistical techniques in their individual projects. However the small number of students attempting this question got high marks.

**Question 2**

This question was answered by most candidates. In general, it seemed that candidates felt too confident in answering this question, resulting in main basic points being left out.

**Topic 2: Global Issues in Human Geography**

**Question 3**

This question covering a topic which is currently being discussed in Malta; it was answered by a large number of candidates. However, in general, candidates referred to general facts without going into details. Moreover, few candidates made reference to specific examples which are being adopted. Poor answers were noted in the second part of the question. Though students might have a general idea on the topic they did not mention initiatives which governments are undertaking.

**Question 4**

This was not a popular question with only four candidates attempting an answer. One of the reasons could be due to the fact that the question was not subdivided into a number of questions.

**Topic 3: The Developing World**

**Question 5**

Students were quite knowledgeable on the Green Revolution, though they did not provide much information on the shortcomings of the Green Revolution. Specific examples and case studies were poor. Candidates just mentioned the countries which were affected by the Revolution.

**Question 6**

A limited number of candidates answered this question. Nearly all the candidates answering the question made reference to the same case study. Different case studies should be tackled during the

course of studies. The use of maps and diagrams should be encouraged since they were not presented with the replies.

**Topic 4: Issues in Resource Management**

**Question 7**

The questions regarding resources of energy are always very popular amongst candidates. There is good knowledge on renewable and non-renewable resources of energy.

**Question 8**

Whilst candidates provided good information on the environmental value of forests, poor answers were noted in the second part of the question. Students made reference to particular places in this question, mentioning areas where forests were abundant.

**Topic 5: The Geography of Tourism and Recreation**

**Question 9**

Questions dealing with tourism issues are extremely popular amongst candidates. Students provided a lot of information dealing with the impacts of tourism. Students did not feel confident with question c, since few candidates could identify the impacts of an increase in mainland tourism on island states.

**Question 10**

Candidates answering this question were extremely knowledgeable on the topic. Candidates identified all the stages of Butler's model and gave good interpretations in the chosen case studies, which were varied.

**The Chairperson  
Board of Examiners  
July 2006**