

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

ITALIAN

MAY 2008

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

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MAY 2008 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT

1.0 Statistical Information

Table 1: Grade Distribution of May 2007, May and September 2008

	May 2007	%	May 2008	%	Sept 2008	%
Candidates	260	100	220	100	14	100
Grades A-E	226	86.92	186	84.5	10	71.4
Grades A-C	152	58.46	129	58.6	5	35.7
Failed	31	11.92	26	11.8	4	28.6
Grade A	17	06.54	15	6.8	0	00
Grade B	45	17.31	32	14.5	0	00
Grade C	90	34.62	82	37.3	5	35.7
Grade D	39	15.00	30	13.6	1	7.1
Grade E	35	13.56	27	12.3	4	28.6
absent	3	01.15	8	3.6	0	00
		220				

2.0 Comments on Candidates' Performance

Last year's report lamented the fact that the number of candidates had gone down from 316 in 2006 to 260 in 2007. This year, unfortunately, the slump continued by a further 40, which means that we lost a hundred students in two years. There must be a serious reason for this and teachers, being in constant contact with students, must discover it and see if something can be done to halt the decline. The examiners and the syllabus board will listen.

Performance was more or less equal to last year's, with a slight improvement being registered (percentage-wise) in the number of students awarded Grades A and C, and Failures being slightly lower. However the students' overall performance leaves much to be desired and is not what one would expect when one considers that candidates had two years to prepare themselves for this exam. The averages, as shown in the following table, reveal that the oral is where candidates obtain the highest marks and the Listening Précis is the exercise which is most difficult for them. In all the others the average is above half of the available marks, except for Literature which this year, surprisingly, shows an average of just under the half-way mark (14.79; last year it was 15.38). This was mainly due to the loss of marks for careless spelling, grammar errors and faulty composition, because otherwise, the candidates showed a very good knowledge of the set text.

The main reason for poor performance is obviously the candidates' lack of competence in the language. It seems that students taking the Matriculation Certificate do not give the Intermediate too much importance, although this is strategically unwise. Another reason may be that the number of hours devoted to Intermediate subjects in the schools' timetable is not sufficient to raise the candidates' level above the SEC level, in spite of the two years' coaching. Apparently they are not given sufficient opportunities for writing. Considering that the syllabus for the Intermediate is lighter than that for the Advanced Level, teachers must insist mainly on the elimination of elementary errors and the development of language skills, because this is reflected in all the parts of the examination. The candidates must be encouraged to supplement their lessons by reading at home. Exposure is indispensable for linguistic progress and it is nowadays easy to obtain because many newspapers and magazines are available online and most students have computers with internet facilities. The examiners do not expect them to draw on heavy classical literature, because we are aware that only what interests the students can provide the

necessary motivation. All in all the variety available these days is so great that everyone can find the topics one likes.

Table 2: Performance in the various parts of the exams

<i>Exercise</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Minimum</i>
Oral	12.31	20	10
Listening Précis	4.36	10	5
Wr Comprehension	11.47	20	10
Essay	11.63	20	10
Literature	14.79	30	15
Average of Totals	54.72	100	50 (passmark 41)

Chairman,
Board of Examiners

September 2008