

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

**SPANISH**

**MAY 2008**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**IM SPANISH**  
**MAY 2008 SESSION**  
**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**1.0 Statistical Information**

The following table is set for comparative purposes with previous years since 2005. It indicates the number of candidates in accordance to the grade award structure, and the percentage of the total.

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>absent</b>
<b>2005</b> <b>No of candidates</b>	0	0	4	2	3	2	2
<b>Percentage</b>	0%	0%	31%	15%	23%	15%	15%
<b>2006</b> <b>No of candidates</b>	0	0	5	2	4	2	1
<b>Percentage</b>	0%	0%	36%	14%	29%	14%	7%
<b>2007</b> <b>No of candidates</b>	0	3	5	3	2	0	0
<b>Percentage.</b>	0%	23%	39%	23%	15%	0%	0%
<b>2008</b> <b>No of candidates</b>	2	5	4	5	1	1	0
<b>Percentage.</b>	11%	28%	22%	28%	5.5%	5.5%	0%

This year the candidates who sat for this exam were 18 (of which one was absent except for the oral) compared with last year's 13, an encouraging increase.

There were no marked changes since last year in the grades obtained, and the percentage of the first 3 grades combined, that is A, B and C, was 61% against 62% last year. Still there was a very significant improvement when compared with year 2005 and 2006. The average overall total mark was this year 65 from a total of 100, a significant increase from the 59 of last year.

**2.0 Comments on Candidates Performance**

**2.1 Written Paper.**

**1. Redacción.**

The average mark in this section was 19 out of a possible 30. Last year's average was 16. This is encouraging, but the examiners still noted that candidates still fall short in their proper use of grammar, possibly as a result of the notion of many that it is a priority to learn language, even at the neglect of grammar. Language in a bad grammar context is no language at all. It may sometimes appear boring to study and memorize grammar rules, but this is an indispensable tool to ultimately possess the language.

It was a pity that in cases there appeared good ideas which were marred by confused construction. It is imperative to emphasize to candidates that before putting pen to paper,

they should spend a few minutes to structure what they intend to write, so that the essay will follow a smooth train of thought. 6 candidates exceeded the 20 mark level. In one case the essay was shorter than the required minimum, and this caused loss of marks.

## **2. Comprensión**

The average mark was 19 from 30, maintaining the same level as last year. It was noted that some candidates copied from the actual text in their answers. This is expressly forbidden in the paper question itself, and candidates should realize it is not enough to know the answer, because putting it in their own words is part of the exercise.

## **3. Textos Literarios y Cultura Hispánica**

The average mark here was 19 out of 30, a slight increase from last year. In accordance with the new 2008/10 syllabus, literature has been introduced in the form of a condensed version of 'Lazarillo de Tormes' and 'El Quijote'. Candidates had to choose between answering a question on literature, or a question on Spanish culture, which could include history, and civilization, during 3 key periods in Spanish history. If they opted for literature, candidates had the choice of two questions on each book. They first had to choose which book they preferred, then choose one question from the two offered on it. If on the other hand, they opted for the Spanish culture, they had a choice of three questions from which they had to choose one. The introduction of literature proved popular as more than 75% opted for it.

### **2.2 Oral**

The average mark was 7 out of 10, a very slight improvement from last year. 3 candidates obtained 9 marks and a further 2 obtained 8, a very creditable performance. As pointed out last year, candidates must make up for the lack of opportunity to speak the language by learning idiomatic phrases and listening to Spanish TV and radio, and reading assiduously from newspapers and books.

## **3.0 General Comments**

It appears that the level of the papers was getting better overall, especially when taken over a 4 year span. Besides, the number of candidates is slowly in the increase. Teachers should insist with their candidates to put some thought before they write out the answer, as sometimes avoidable mistakes are made through lack of proper reflection, and perhaps little or no revision before handing in the paper. They should also put more effort to teach better grammar and insist that this is an indispensable part of learning a language.

Chairperson  
Board of Examiners

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