UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

THE MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

ITALIAN

MAY 2012

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD

IM ITALIAN
MAY 2012 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT

	May 2009	%	May 2010	%	May 2011	%	May 2012	%
No. of Candidates	199	100.0	207	100.0	205	100.0	188	100.0
Grades A- C	119	59.8	125	60.4	125	61.0	115	61.2
Grades A- E	171	85.9	181	87.4	180	87.8	167	88.8
Grade A	15	7.5	13	6.3	12	5.9	13	6.9
Grade B	31	15.6	36	17.4	34	16.6	31	16.5
Grade C	73	36.7	76	36.7	79	38.5	71	37.8
Grade D	28	14.1	29	14.0	24	11.7	32	17.0
Grade E	24	12.1	27	13.0	31	15.1	20	10.6
Failed	23	11.6	24	11.6	21	10.2	17	9.0
Absent	5	2.5	2	1.0	4	2	4	2.1

After a lull in the decline of the number of candidates who sat for the Intermediate examination in Italian in 2011, this year the negative trend continued with a 9% decrease from the numbers registered last year. The situation is definitely worrying and all stakeholders concerned should carry out a thorough analysis of the causes. Apart from demographic considerations, it is clear that Italian is becoming a less appealing option for students. An investigation of the causes in such a decline should lead to a review of marketing strategies and possibly a re-think of the syllabus that has remained unchanged for many years.

General Performance

Exercise	Average 2011	Average 2012	Maximum /(differ.)
Oral	**13.15**	**13.22**	**20 (+ 0.07)**
Listening Précis	**5.17**	**6.86**	**10 (+ 1.69)**
Comprehension	**9.23**	**14.46**	**20 (+ 5.23)**
Essay	**8.60**	**9.70**	**20 (+ 1.10)**
Literature	**16.96**	**16.55**	**30 (- 0.41)**
Average of Totals	**53.12**	**60.79**	**100 (+ 7.67)**

Overall performance has been good, with a higher average obtained in all exercises except in Literature. The most notable improvement has been in the Comprehension. This was also due to a shift in emphasis in the exercise affected by the Board (less emphasis on the inferential aspect). It must be noted that in the Essay, most candidates showed a level of grammatical, lexical and

syntactical competence that is considerably lower than that expected at this level. The Board of Examiners strongly recommends that candidates have a good grounding in the basic grammatical principles of the language, especially as regards articles and pronouns, agreement in gender and number, orthography and verb moods and tenses. In the Listening Précis, the Comprehension and the Literature section, the level of written Italian was generally unsatisfactory, although this aspect was not the main object of examination in these exercises.

The results obtained in the Oral section confirm that candidates' passive skills are not improving. Given that the examination situation hinders, to a certain extent, the candidates from expressing themselves freely in Italian, it is still very important that they be well prepared for the task. Oral competence may be the skill Intermediate candidates will require most in their future profession. Since exposure to Italian through mass media has diminished considerably in recent years, it is recommended that passive skills be given significant importance in the classroom.

The Chairperson
Board of Examiners

July 2012