

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION**

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

ITALIAN

MAY 2013

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**IM ITALIAN
MAY 2013 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

Statistics

	May 2010	%	May 2011	%	May 2012	%	May 2013	%
No. of Candidates	207	100	205	100	188	100	173	100
Grades A - C	125	60.4	125	61	115	61.2	101	58.4
Grades A - E	181	87.4	180	87.8	167	88.8	150	86.7
Grade A	13	6.3	12	5.9	13	6.9	9	5.2
Grade B	36	17.4	34	16.6	30	16	27	15.6
Grade C	76	37.7	79	38.5	72	38.3	65	37.6
Grade D	29	14	24	11.7	26	13.8	33	19.1
Grade E	27	13	31	15.1	26	13.8	16	9.2
Failed	24	11.6	21	10.2	17	9	21	12.1
Absent	2	1	4	2	4	2.1	2	1.2

As can be noted from the figures above, the negative trend in the number of candidates sitting for the Intermediate examination in Italian continued with a further 8% decline from last year's figures. It is clear that more should be done to attract students towards Italian, given the strong cultural, commercial and economic links that exist between Malta and Italy. The declining popularity of Italian television stations in Malta is a strong factor in the appeal of the subject among students, but this situation ought to be counterbalanced by other factors that must be identified and marketed appropriately.

General Performance

Exercise	Average 2012	Average 2013	Maximum /(differ.)
Oral	13.22	12.66	20 (- 0.56)
Listening Precis	6.86	6.77	10 (- 0.09)
Comprehension	14.46	13.61	20 (- 0.85)
Essay	9.7	10.07	20 (+ 0.37)
Literature	16.55	15.67	30 (- 0.88)
Average of Totals	60.79	58.78	100 (- 2.01)

Overall performance has slightly decreased, with an increase, albeit very marginal, recorded in the Essay question. The most significant decrease was registered in the Literature question.

Remarks

Oral: The candidates did not find particular difficulties in the oral component. However, it was confirmed that weaker candidates require more practice in expressing themselves in the language. It is therefore highly recommended that candidates spend more time practising the oral component, possibly through discussions or mini-presentations, in order to be accustomed to speak Italian. It is also recommended that topics chosen for discussion are not limited to those which are of immediate interest to the students (e.g. Facebook, smartphones, internet, entertainment, etc.) as in real life they will be required to talk about other topics, and the oral exercise is intended to reflect this.

Listening précis: Most candidates showed that they are able to grasp the main points of the passage and summarize them in a coherent manner. However, some of the candidates limited themselves to reproducing key sentences, possibly changing a few words or slightly modifying a phrase. A number of candidates also included their own comments and remarks on the topic; this is not permissible in a précis exercise. It was also noted that various orthographical errors were due to the candidates' unfamiliarity with the vocabulary, e.g. 'veterano' was rendered as 'vetrinaio' / 'vetraio' / 'veterinaio' / 'veteriano' / 'vetrano' / 'veterrani'. Finally, it is highly recommended that candidates write neatly and clearly, avoiding interlinear cramming as much as possible, as this hinders comprehension and possibly leads to loss of marks.

Comprehension: The comprehension was once again the exercise in which the candidates performed best. However, it must be emphasized that candidates are not to reproduce phrases from the passage, and clear, complete and correctly written answers must be provided.

Essay: The data in the Table above shows that candidates performed slightly better this session. However, this was mostly due to a certain number of very good essays that obtained high marks and increased the overall average. In general, the quality of written Italian was definitely unsatisfactory, with candidates rarely managing a sentence without errors. The shortcomings were the usual ones: lack of planning resulting in repetition and self-contradiction; grammatical errors even in the most basic rules of the language, especially as regards tenses, mood and pronouns; orthographical errors even in the most commonly used words; very restricted vocabulary which in extreme cases induced the students to write words in English or to morphologically adapt Maltese words into an inexistent Italian term.

Literature: The literature component requires the studying of content. Consequently, the candidates who studied the text performed well. However, it was noted that the number of candidates who clearly did not study the text increased. This was noted both in the increased number of unsatisfactory answers and in the number of candidates who opted not to attempt the literature question altogether, thereby losing 30 marks despite not doing badly in the other exercises. The crucial nature of the literature component needs to be stressed.

*Chairperson
2013 Examination Panel*