

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

GEOGRAPHY

MAY 2014

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**IM GEOGRAPHY
MAY 2014 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

Part 1: Statistical Information

Table 1 shows the distribution of grades for the May 2014 session of the examination.

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	abs	TOTAL
NUMBER	5	17	33	19	8	14	5	101
% OF TOTAL	5.0	16.8	32.7	18.8	7.9	13.9	5.0	100

Part 2: Comments regarding candidate's performance

A total of 101 candidates sat for the Geography Intermediate exam in May 2014. Candidates got higher marks for questions in Sections 2 (Human Geographical Processes) and 4 (Fieldwork and Mapwork Skills). Answers to questions in Module 1 tend to lack detailed explanation of physical processes. As in previous sessions of this examination, candidates have difficulty in referring to real life examples of physical processes and human activities as required by some questions. Once again this indicates that candidates have difficulties engaging in higher order thinking skills.

2.1 Section 1: Physical Geographical Processes**Question 1**

The mean mark for question 1 was 7.6

- (a) Most candidates defined the term drainage pattern correctly.
- (b) Most candidates limited their answers to describing the flow of water from high to low land and did not mention the smaller drainage basins.
- (c) Once again most candidates mentioned that water flows from the higher western region of Malta to the lower region on the east. Some candidates mentioned the NW to SE tilt of the Maltese Islands but few candidates explained the watershed present along the western coast. The presence and effect of Blue Clay in the western region of Malta was omitted by the majority of candidates.

Question 2

The mean mark for this question was 8.6

- (a) Most candidates defined the term local wind correctly although some confused this wind with prevailing wind.
- (b) Most candidates had difficulty explaining the difference between local and prevailing winds. Most answers lacked the necessary detail to explain the different circumstances that give rise to local and prevailing winds.
- (c) Most candidates were aware of various local winds influencing the Mediterranean region such as the Mistral, Gregale and Scirocco but descriptions of the associated weather often lacked accuracy.

Question 3

This was the most popular question in Section 1. The mean mark for this question was 10.9

- (a) The most common answer to this question was acid rain and wave pounding. The latter term was, however, supplied only by few candidates.
- (b) Only one candidate marked and labelled the term bedding plane on their sketch. Most candidates considered only the roof of the arch to be the area of weakness in the arch.
- (c) Some candidates mistakenly described how arches developed from headland erosion to caves and then to arches but lacked to describe three processes that brought about the change in landscape. Some candidates did mention the processes but either lacked the correct technical explanation or lacked an accurate description of the processes.
- (d) Most answers to this part of the question were correct. Some candidates drew and labelled diagrams correctly but failed to explain in writing the formation of stacks.

2.2 Section 2: Human Geographical Processes

Question 4

The mean mark for this question was 13.6

- (a) A number of candidates mixed up the urban land use models as indicative of population density and not urban land use. Various variations were given but, overall, correct.
- (b) Many candidates merely provided a description of the visible similarities and differences between the two models; hence, mentioning concentric circles and sectors and citing the legend provided. There were also, however, some laudable answers which provided detailed points.
- (c) Some candidates referred to the complicated urban development of Malta as a small densely populated island but some answers made better references to the urban development around the harbours and the fragmentation of the CBD in various parts of Malta. This question requested many subjective answers with possible various interpretations and points of view, thus giving candidates an opportunity for critical thinking.

Question 5

The mean mark for this question was 13.9

- (a) Generally, many correct answers were provided. A good number concentrated on explaining the main label for each, namely Stage 1- expanding, Stage 2- expanding and so on and merely focussed on the level of birth and death for each stage. Some other candidates, however, considering the eight marks assigned for this part of the question, provided a relatively much wider overview with more and better details but with more chances of providing wrong points. Another consequence was that some candidates, in this section started discussing points requested for part (b).
- (b) Some candidates were very terse, without considering the eight marks assigned for this part but some others wrote extensively on the factors of this element of development: for example, there were good references to birth control, declining death rate and an ageing population high standard of living, especially better nutrition and better medical facilities.
- (c) Some candidates claimed that Malta is at Stage 3 but most answers included correct reasons for Malta's demographic structure as shown by pyramid at stage 4.

Question 6

The mean mark for this question was 15.2

- (a) Some candidates ignored the instructions not to include Gozo's natural attractions in their answers and referred only to these pull factors, hence failing to gain marks. Many others, however, dealt with this question in the correct way and mentioned very good reasons which attract tourists towards Gozo without referring to its natural attributes.
- (b) As regards problems due to intensive tourism in Gozo, many answers, superficially, referred to littering and vandalism but other candidates reflected even deeper, mentioning inflation, loss of local traditions and pressure on the infrastructure.

2.3 Section 3: The Man-Environment Relationship

Question 7

The mean mark for this question was 8.

- (a) Most candidates failed to link the concepts of optimum population, overpopulation and underpopulation to the availability of resources or quality of life. It was evident that most candidates had a misconception that these terms are equivalent to sparse and dense population density. As a result they limited themselves to describing a dense or sparse population.
- (b) Quite a number of candidates made no reference to an underdeveloped country or listed Africa as an example. The factors listed were various but mostly linked to health and education. Though an attempt was made to explain the interaction between factors and economic development, most answers proved to be inaccurate.
- (c) Answers were mostly related to health and atmospheric pollution issues. Little or no reference was made to food consumption/hunger or exploitation by multinationals.

Question 8

The mean mark for this question was 9.8.

- (a) A good attempt to explain the term acid rain was made, but few candidates made reference to dry and wet deposition and responses were limited to describing the acidic content.
- (b) A good description of the causes of acid rain was given, mentioning both man-made and natural causes. Candidates also showed good knowledge of the reaction of SO₂ and NO₂ with water, oxygen and other chemicals in the atmosphere.
- (c) Candidates listed the effects on fish as one way how acid rain can threaten the state of health of the Mediterranean Sea but failed to describe clearly how this occurs. Other explained effects that are not directly linked to the Mediterranean Sea.

Question 9

The mean mark for this question was 11.9.

- (a) Answers were clear and overall correct, mostly listing damage to property and infrastructure.
- (b) Overall good answers were given for flood control measures.
- (c) Answers dealt mostly with the measures taken up by developed countries to respond to flooding. Few contrasted between developed and underdeveloped countries. Responses dealing with underdeveloped countries were mostly linked to lack of funds and expertise.

2.4 Section 4: Fieldwork and Mapwork Skills

Question 10

The mean mark for this question was 14.7.

- (a) Most candidates gave a good and clear hypothesis with some giving both a null and an alternative hypothesis. Few candidates lacked to be clear in the aim of the hypothesis.
- (b) Overall answers were correct and the candidates worked out the chi-squared test correctly. A few candidates did not use a calculator and attempted this question by giving their answers as fractions.
- (c) Most candidates worked out correctly the chi-squared test and the degrees of freedom, but lacked to interpret the answer correctly with reference to the hypothesis given in part (a).

Question 11

The mean mark for this question was 11.8.

- (a) Most candidates gave correct advantages and disadvantages of using online newspapers for geographical investigation.
- (b) Candidates showed good knowledge about ways how geography students can assess the reliability of internet websites for research purposes.

Question 12

The mean mark for this question was 10.9.

- (a) Most candidates explained correctly how the size of the reserves is indicated by exaggerating, on purpose, the size of the countries accordingly.
- (b) As for the advantages of this map, many candidates noted that this type of special map transmitted the information in a very easy and clear way but were not able to elaborate. Most candidates mentioned the indicators given by the countries' size and figures indicated on the map and on the legend. As for the disadvantages, many candidates were not clear enough in their responses with indications that some might have no exact idea of the real relative sizes of the countries in comparison.
- (c) For this section, there was a much-varied response: some made some repetitions from the previous parts of the question; others provided a very limited description referring to Saudi Arabia and few other countries with little attempt to go further and do some comparisons, for example with Europe and North America. There were, then, some extensive excellent answers which reflect the high ability and also the good guidance provided by their teachers