

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**  
**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION**

**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

**SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE**

**MAY 2014**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE**  
**EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

# IM SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE MAY 2014 SESSION EXAMINERS' REPORT

## 1. General Statistics

Table 1 reports the number of candidates per grade (in terms of raw numbers and as a percentage) for the May 2014 examination session. Figure 1 is a plot of the percentage frequencies for each grade.

Table 1. Summary of general statistical data – May 2014

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	Abs	Total
Number of Candidates	81	350	807	398	207	331	33	2207
% of Total	3.67	15.86	36.57	18.03	9.38	15.00	1.50	100

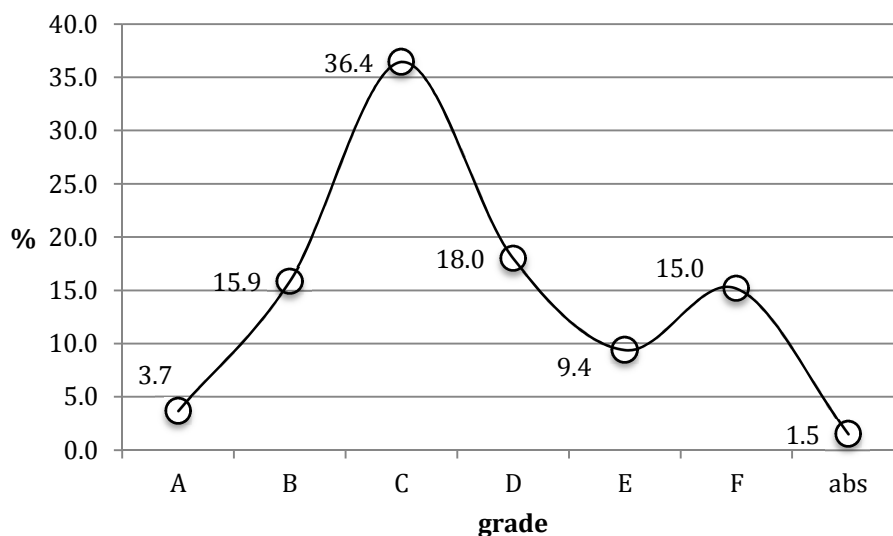


Figure 1. The percentage frequencies per grade – May 2014

## 2. Other Statistical Data per Question

The two Tables below report the following information:

Table 2 outlines data regarding the project: the number of candidates assigned zero marks and the number of candidates who did not present the project (np).

Table 3 depicts statistical data per question, namely the response frequency for each of the two questions – candidates had a choice of one out of two – in every Section (in terms of raw numbers and as a percentage).

Table 2. Data regarding the project – May 2014

Number of zeros	10
Number of np's	74

Table 3. Response frequency per question – May 2014

	Section A		Section B		Section C		Section D	
	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2
<b>Response frequency</b>	1659	485	938	1206	383	1761	1321	823
<b>Response frequency (%)</b>	77.4	22.6	43.8	56.2	17.9	82.1	61.6	38.4

### 3. Comments on the responses by candidates

#### 3.1 Section A

The vast majority of the candidates (77.4%) attempted question 1 instead of question 2. Few showed widespread knowledge in Question 1; many tackled the question by resorting to general knowledge whereas the minority showed evidence of studying and knowledge on current issues. The meaning of the word citizenship was not defined with knowledge and in relation to theorists. Few managed to discuss citizenship in the light of important theorists such as Oliver, Heater and Miller. Some candidates went out of point due to writing only about historical events like the Athenian democracy, the French revolution and the introduction of universal suffrage rather than focusing on what was actually asked of them in the exam question.

A fair number of the candidates answering this question failed to address the second part of the question properly. Some candidates did not mention any examples of active citizenship in our societies today. Most of the examples that the candidates gave were linked to voluntary work and a few also gave examples of different non-governmental organisations in Malta. A considerable amount of candidates mentioned that active citizenship is about voting every five years or else voting in referenda and local council elections but failed to explore other areas of active participation in one's society in between one election and the next. Some students managed to relate active citizenship to civic engagement meaning engagement in the political process. A number of candidates successfully managed to relate active citizenship to environmental values and the importance of being informed about local and international issues.

A number of candidates managed quite successfully to mention the different areas a citizen may participate in for the benefit of society as well as citizenship participation in ancient Athenian times, and also went on to successfully mention such occurrences today in Maltese and foreign democratic societies. Very few students managed to discuss active citizenship in the E.U such as youth in action programmes and the European Commission. The mention of these programmes is important as from this the candidates had to demonstrate their knowledge on cultural diversity, universal values of democracy, equality and human rights.

A substantially smaller number of candidates attempted question 2. In answering this question, a considerable amount of candidates failed to mention anything regarding the fact that rights, like freedom of speech, are very important to avoid misuse of the media.

Some candidates only answered the first part of the question and failed to show knowledge of what the word totalitarian means. Candidates also had to show that they know the meaning of the words propaganda, censorship and indoctrination. The majority of the students only managed to 'tackle' the word censorship while the other two important factors were not mentioned.

Most candidates failed to mention mass media pluralism, where the candidates had to discuss how the power of the media is expressed widely throughout the world and how everyone should be free to put forward their own opinions and beliefs.

Some of the essays either gave very few examples or none at all regarding past and/or current media misuse. Some candidates did not make any reference to media bias and the fact that rather than just presenting the views of respective political parties, the media is there to keep the public informed in as impartial a way as possible. Some candidates also mentioned nothing at all about the importance of regulated censorship. Of those who did mention this, some expressed outright disdain for any kind

of censorship at all without really discussing the relevant merits and/or pitfalls of censorship in today's democratic societies.

A fair number of candidates managed to answer this question quite successfully by demonstrating a widespread knowledge of the role of the mass media in a modern democratic state. Reference was made to freedom of speech and opinion as well as to political situations such as elections. The importance of having various media sources was mentioned and our society was compared to other non-democratic societies such as China and North Korea where the media is state controlled.

In both questions, a number of candidates included quotes by famous people, which is highly encouraged. However, some either mixed quotes up or else attributed certain quotes to the wrong person/s.

### **3.2 Section B**

In the first question of this Section about morality in the arts, most students failed to give an appropriate definition of morality. Some candidates gave the impression that they did not even know the meaning of the term morality, and in certain cases even mistook it for mortality; a number of candidates wrote at length about the way in which art renders the artist immortal. When it came to giving examples, most students just mentioned 'The Scream' and another painting, irrespective of whether these were pertinent to their argument or not. This actually happened in both essay titles.

With regard to question 2, the overall average mark was slightly lower than that for question 1. Most candidates failed to mention the power of monarchs in the 17th century as well as Napoleon and neoclassical art. Some students focused solely on 20th century art giving examples of Nazism and Stalinism. Since the essay required examples from classical to modern times, the candidates' examples needed to be much more varied. One would have also expected the candidates to mention the power of the church, especially during the Middle Ages.

Most students have difficulties in expressing themselves and in writing coherently. They skip from one era to the other and from one argument to the other in their essay, making it very difficult to decipher what they are actually trying to prove. Quite a few students compared two paintings in detail, disregarding the essay titles completely. A very small percentage of students included examples from both music and literature, and the majority focused on the visual arts only.

### **3.3 Section C**

Question 2 attracted the large majority of students (82.1%) possibly due to its open nature in contrast with the other question in the same Section. The second question addressed general principles that students encounter during their studies as well as in the news, through speeches by persons involved in politics and NGOs, as well as in newspaper articles. Candidates were provided with three 'areas' that they could write about: science, gender and the economy. This meant that if they were 'weak' at one of these areas, they could still make the grade through the other two.

Question 1 dealt with arguments that would state and prove or bring out the assertion about positivism. Most of the candidates that chose this question were clearly quite 'strong'. In actual fact, around 80.5% of the candidates that answered this question scored higher than 50% of the total mark assigned. Quite a number of very high marks were registered in this group.

It is suggested that students check that they are addressing the whole question in their answer. There are too many instances where candidates answer one aspect or part of the question and completely ignore the rest.

### **3.4 Section D**

In general, except for a few exceptions, candidates failed to encompass the ethical and value dimension that is at the core of the Systems of Knowledge rationale. Handwriting was in some instances barely legible. At times the weakness of the response was more linked to the inability of

candidates to write essays cohesively in general, rather than to their knowledge linked to the questions. Candidates are to be encouraged to learn essay-writing skills. Clarity of expression, structure and the flow of the essay inevitably affect the mark assigned.

As regards question 1, candidates often did not refer to the nine principles but created their own three. While at times these approximated one of the nine, often they did not. Candidates were penalised when they did not refer explicitly to the nine principles. For example, a student would mention “the importance of reducing greenhouse emissions” yet fail to refer to the principle “conserving the Earth’s vitality and diversity”. Likewise, a number of candidates referred to “waste management” as one of the principles, rather than arguing for better waste management as under one of the other principles as appropriate (e.g. under conserving the earth’s vitality and diversity). Candidates need to be more systematic when approaching such questions. While there is some room for interpretation for each principle, it is important that candidates familiarise themselves with the main points of each principle as set out by the IUCN document.

Candidates also need to be encouraged to use the appropriate (legally and otherwise) terminology in general, and in particular, with regard to immigration, to refrain from using words such as illegal migrants. Furthermore it is clear that there is a lack of factual knowledge regarding the phenomenon of migration, apart from prejudices; candidates are encouraged to research beyond hearsay and contextualise their arguments in a rights based and ethical approach.

With regard to question 2, while the quote in the question refers to a local context, it is clear that the required solutions are local, Europe-wide, regional and international. Candidates only emphasised the local scenario and local solutions. Candidates need to understand that, as the same nine IUCN principles state, solutions are to be proposed at the different levels. Unfortunately candidates in general were much more able to deal with the problems, at times correctly, and to back them up with basic scientific knowledge, than with the solutions. This was heavily penalised as the question specifically asks candidates to focus on how two of the drivers can be *addressed*.

*Chairperson  
2014 Examination Panel*