

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

CLASSICAL STUDIES

MAY 2014

EXAMINERS' REPORT

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Part 1: Statistical Information

This year, sixteen candidates sat for the Intermediate Level in Classical Studies. This was clearly a drop from last year. It is hoped that with the introduction of the subject in the Higher Secondary School, the registration will increase.

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	0	1	2	2	5	6	1	17
% OF TOTAL	0.0	5.9	11.8	11.8	29.4	35.3	5.9	100

Part 2: Comments regarding candidate's performance

Classical Studies is a subject which bridges the difference between Classics (Latin and Greek) and Classical Culture and Civilization. It is set at Intermediate Level to further bring up the level of Latin, Greek and C.C.C. candidates to one which would help them be prepared better for a Classics course at the University. The presence of Latin and Greek components in the paper is there to introduce candidates to reading Classics from the original. The syllabus was never meant to be daunting, but to give them the basics in the languages, apart from the civilization and culture parts.

The paper consists of 60% language and 40% civilization and culture.

The language part consists of three parts: translation into Latin (15%), translation into Greek (15%), and comprehension from a passage from the syllabus (prepared), either in Greek or in Latin (30%). The translations (Section A) consist of ten sentences, five to turn into Latin, five into Greek. They involve no syntactical problems, like purpose or consecutive clauses, but simple grammar: active and passive voices, all the conjugations of verbs in Latin, and all declensions of nouns and adjectives in Latin. No pronouns are examined and only vowel-stemmed verbs in Greek (the simplest and easiest to remember). The comprehension test (Section B) was lifted from the syllabus, and each student was expected to have studied it, not only in terms of meaning, but also of its application to author, genre and historical background. One question (out of the five) is a translation and carries 18% of the total. The other questions were simple: name of author, title of work, name of genre, geographical question and a historical question (background).

In the civilization and culture section, candidates have a choice of either a long essay in a topic they have covered, or two short essays in general topics. The topics for the long essay covered the following areas: the labyrinth (a), Trojan War (b), Roman Republic (c), 5th-century Athens (d), Homer (e) and Scipio Africanus Maior (f). The shorter general questions covered the study of classical languages (a), mythology (b) and civilization (c).

It is clear from an analysis of the present result that candidates performed badly only in the Language part of the paper. In fact, only very few candidates did well in Section A (translation into Latin and Greek), and only slightly more candidates did well in Section B (Comprehension). Many candidates did well in Section C (Essay). Since the Language section covers 60%, a candidate who knows no Latin or Greek,

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or who does not study the languages properly, will have little chance of achieving a good grade in this subject.

The following is a more detailed analysis of the performance of candidates.

Three candidates left out Section A completely or got no points for the two translations, and four left out or answered all questions wrongly in Section B, and scored less than 30% of the whole paper.

Of the sixteen candidates, ten (62.5%) chose the longer essay, and all did well, while six (37.5%) chose the shorter essays, and two (12.5%) failed to get a good mark. Of the twelve shorter essays written by the six students, seven were below standard. It is clear that candidates who opt for Question 5 (the general shorter essays) are the weaker students. Of the ten who chose the longer essay, none attempted questions c, e and f; six attempted question a, three question b and one question d. The six candidates who opted for the shorter essays showed an equal interest in all the three questions.

**Chairperson
Examination Panel 2014**