

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**

**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION  
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

**RELIGIOUS  
KNOWLEDGE  
MAY 2016**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION  
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

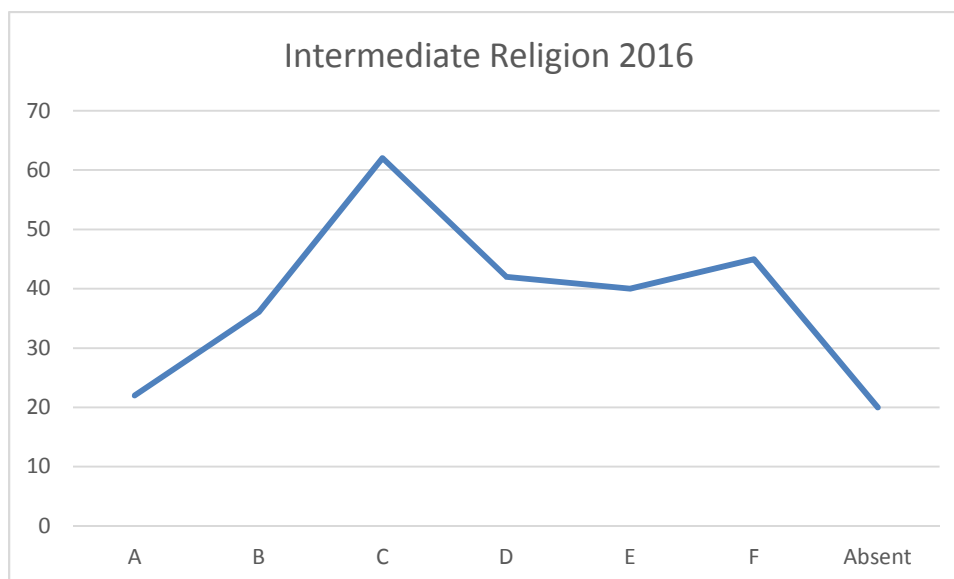
**IM RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE  
MAY 2016 SESSION  
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**Part 1: Statistical Information**

Two hundred and sixty seven (267) candidates registered for the May Intermediate examination in Religious Knowledge. When compared to the examination conducted in the previous year, there was an increase of 32 candidates.

Table 1 shows the distribution of grades for May 2016 session of the examination.

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	abs	TOTAL
NUMBER	22	37	62	42	40	44	20	267
% OF TOTAL	8.2	13.9	23.2	15.7	15.0	16.5	7.5	100



**Part 2: Comments regarding Candidates' Performance**

The examiners feel that there is still much room for improvement by the candidates sitting for this examination. The improvement can be achieved if candidates are able to delve deeper into the themes covered in the syllabus and not simply reproducing the notes they have taken in class. Candidates need to be more critical of what they learn, and to form their own opinion about the subject matter being discussed.

In order to help candidates produce better focussed answers, the examiners structure questions into further sub-questions. These are aimed at helping the candidates to give more detailed and focussed answers. Every year we feel the need to make candidates aware that block answers for questions which are divided into two or more sub-questions should be completely avoided. Candidates should answer each part of the question marked differently in a clear way, while distinguishing their answers by clearly stating which part of the question they are answering.

Candidates are to read the questions well before attempting at giving an answer. A lack of attention when reading the questions does not help candidates in scoring high grades.

### Remarks on Specific Questions

Candidates had to answer all 10 questions in Section A and choose another 3 questions from 5 in Section B. The questions in Section A carry 4 marks each, making a total of 40% of the entire weight of the marks. Each question in Section B carries 20 marks, thus Section B had a weight of 60% of the entire marks. An analysis of the frequencies of responses to the questions and the average score obtained for each question is revealing.

**Table 2: Analysis of candidates' performance on each question**

	N	% of total candidates answering the question	Maximum possible mark	Lowest mark obtained	Highest mark obtained	Average mark	Standard Deviation
Section A	227		40	5	40	25.2	7.2
Section B							
Q1	157	58.8%	20	0	20	8.4	5.4
Q2	199	74.5%	20	2	20	11.4	4
Q3	173	64.8%	20	4	20	12.6	3.1
Q4	184	68.9%	20	1	20	11.2	5.1
Q5	24	9%	20	1	19	9	4.6

### Section A

This section was divided into 10 short questions where candidates were asked to answer in brief, paragraph form. The following is an in-depth analysis of how the candidates answered each question in this section, and some general comments on this section at the very end.

#### **Question 1: Who is the Holy Spirit?**

Most candidates answered this question correctly, or partially correct. They defined the Trinity as three distinct Divine Persons in one God and also mentioned the fact that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Most of them also mentioned the gifts of the Spirit, his role in the sacraments, his role of strengthening the theological virtues in those who are open to him, and his role in the Holy Scriptures and in the history of salvation. Almost no one referred to the dynamics of the relationship between the three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

#### **Question 2: Why does the Prophet Isaiah compare Jesus to the Suffering Servant of God?**

Most answers to this question were correct. Candidates mentioned the fact that Jesus was the Son of God who became man to save humanity from sin and the chains of evil. And this became possible through Christ's life, especially the suffering he passed through in the Passion and crucifixion. He died for us and for our sins, despite being innocent of all the crimes he was accused of. However, most candidates were unaware of who the '*suffering servant*' mentioned by the Prophet Isaiah was. Some also think that this '*suffering servant*' was the prophet himself.

**Question 3: What is the Apostolic Tradition?**

Most candidates answered this question correctly or partially so. The large majority said that the Apostolic Tradition consists of what has been handed down by the Apostles and their followers / disciples from one generation to the next. Most mentioned the transmission of Christ's message to future generations through the Apostles, and then, through their successors, mainly the Pope and the Bishops. However, not all of these candidates are aware of the fact that this transmission occurred both orally and in writing, and includes preaching, bearing witness in different ways, institutions, worship, and inspired writings. Some candidates even think that the Apostolic Tradition consists of the canon in the Holy Scriptures.

**Question 4: Why is the Church called the "Bride of Christ"?**

Most candidates had partially correct answers to this question. They mentioned the fact that Christ himself referred to the Church as his "*Bride*". Some of them also emphasized that the Lord's love for the Church is so strong that it binds Him to Her in an everlasting Covenant. This love also made him give himself up to purify Her with his blood. Some candidates also referred to the Church as the 'Body of Christ', but most of these are unaware that such a metaphor comes from the writings of St Paul, and was not used by Christ himself.

**Question 5: What does "hallowed be thy name" in the Our Father mean?**

Most candidates answered this question correctly, saying that through this part of the 'Our Father' we are praising God and adoring His name, and acknowledging his Holiness, Divinity and Omnipotence.

**Question 6: Although human beings are morally responsible for their actions, mention 4 circumstances in which guilt is reduced or is totally extinguished.**

Only a few candidates gave a fully correct answer to this question. There were some candidates who did not understand the question and their answers were completely out of point. Quite a few other candidates mentioned specific situations as examples of actions in which people are exempt from guilt, without using the words ignorance, violence, fear vices and/or psychological and social factors that reduce moral guilt. However, even if not many, there were some candidates who specifically mentioned all these circumstances using the appropriate words.

**Question 7: What is chastity? Mention one principal sin against chastity.**

Quite a few candidates answered this question correctly, saying that chastity is the positive integration of one's sexuality, irrespective of the person's choice of state in life: married, religious, single, ordained ...etc. Many of these even elaborated on such a notion, saying that sexuality becomes truly human when it is integrated appropriately into the relationship of one person to another, not only on a personal level. Very few candidates mentioned the fact that chastity is a moral virtue, a gift from God and/or a fruit of the Spirit. The large majority of candidates gave correct examples of sins that go against chastity. The most common answers specified masturbation, pornography, adultery, fornication, prostitution and rape as such sins. However, there were also some candidates who confuse chastity with celibacy and others for whom chastity is something that pertains only to priests and/or religious people.

**Question 8: What is concupiscence?**

A considerable amount of answers to this question were correct, explaining the term as a natural inclination for sinful actions, an inclination that is a direct consequence of Original Sin. However, quite a few candidates confused the term with '*conscience*' and/or with something positive, a positive drive, such as the attraction between a man and a woman in marriage.

**Question 9: Apart from the dove, mention 4 other symbols used to represent the Holy Spirit.**

In their answer to this question, the large majority of candidates mentioned water, anointing with oil, fire and the imposition of hands as symbols that are used to represent the Holy Spirit. Others mentioned light and clouds without specifying their source or context, be it Biblical or not.

**Question 10: In what way does the Holy Trinity work in the Liturgy?**

This question was not answered correctly by many candidates. Many of them did not understand the question at all and others misinterpreted or misunderstood it, specifying the roles of each Person of the Trinity in the Holy Scriptures and/or in the whole history and economy of salvation. This may show that most candidates do not understand what the 'Liturgy' is and/or they confuse what happened in salvation history with what happens in the Liturgy. Other answers spoke of the role/s of the Trinity in the Liturgy in a general sense, without specifying the roles of each Person of the Trinity in liturgical celebration.

**General Comments:**

Most candidates were well prepared for the exam. Still, there were a few questions which many candidates did not answer well because they did not have any idea of the meaning of the words or the terms used. Others confused terms. This shows clearly that a considerable number of candidates are selective as to what they read and study, and most of them rely too much on studying by heart.

**Section B**

**Question 1**

This question tested the candidate's knowledge about Christian Faith. In the first part, they were asked to explain the phrase "one Lord, one faith, one baptism". Many lost marks because they did not show the relationship between the three terms, and that we are given a new life in Baptism. Instead, they explained the three terms separately, hence failing to mention the common life in Christ. With reference to the rest of the question, candidates fared well by discussing the characteristics of faith, and providing examples.

**Question 2**

Question 2 was about the Sacrament of Marriage. Whilst a good number of candidates seemed prepared for such a question as nearly 70% attempted it however when it came to explaining the meaning of married love very few answered that the meaning of married love is in the unity between the spouses and their openness to new life. Many explained only the commitment for indissolubility. With regards to what makes a good marriage many kept on what one usually hears in marriage homilies rather than giving the virtues pertaining to the Sacrament of Matrimony. Some candidates also confused question 2a with question 2b.

**Question 3**

Question 3 dealt with the theme of faith, and the living of one's faith in daily life. Although part (a) of this question was straightforward where by candidates were asked to give three examples to demonstrate how a person can believe, hope and love God, some preferred to speak of biblical figures or theological virtues. In this case, candidates were asked to give direct and practical answers in view of living a Christian life. In part (b) the majority of the candidates responded fairly well. Two terms which many candidates seemed to have misunderstood are sacrilege and simony. In part (c) candidates answered fairly well. Nonetheless, there was a lack of reference to the rule of love and one's submission in faith (particularly through the intellect and the will).

**Question 4**

Question 4 was on prayer and one was expected to explain how one listens to God's voice in prayer. Candidates explained in detail what prayer is, but when it came to the forms of prayer although a good number of candidates gave and explained the 6 forms of prayer some mistakenly explained the ways of praying. In reply to part (c), quite a good number of candidates answered that one listens to God's voice through his/her conscience.

**Question 5:**

This question dealt with the theme of social justice. It was a practical question which also included moral reasoning, Biblical knowledge and knowledge about the moral principles of social justice. In the first part, many succeeded to give correct answers, and most of the candidates even mentioned the prophets Amos and Isaiah. Others lost marks because they referred to the teachings of Christ or other figures who are not considered as prophets. With reference to the parable, a good number of candidates gave a good answer. However, there were some who went out of point because they either referred to an account from Jesus' life, or mentioned a parable that is not related to social justice (such as the prodigal son). Finally, candidates did well in last two parts of the question. They listed the four principles and discussed one of them with reference to the pictures provided in the question, where they had to highlight the fact that there is no fair distribution of the common good, and that the rich have a responsibility to look after the poor.

**Chairperson  
Examination Panel 2016**