

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION**

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE

MAY 2016

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**IM SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE
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1. General Performance

Two thousand, one hundred and thirty-one candidates (2131) registered for the Intermediate Matriculation Systems of Knowledge examination. The table below outlines the candidates' performance:

Table 1: Candidates' performance per grade

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	Abs	Total
Number of Candidates	174	352	757	392	85	334	37	2131
% of Total	8.17	16.52	35.52	18.40	3.99	15.67	1.74	100

2. Comments on the Candidates' Responses

2.1 Section A

The majority of candidates answered question one rather than question two. Some candidates could not point out any specific deficiencies exhibited by democracies at all. However, the majority of candidates did manage to expose these deficiencies and some candidates also gave examples to help further support their argument. Some of the candidates also managed to quote other famous individuals from history who had also criticised democracy and compared it to what Churchill said about democracies during his time. This is highly encouraged. Some, however, attributed the quotes they mentioned to the wrong person/s. With regard to the second part of the question, a fair number of candidates were at a loss about how democracies try to minimise such deficiencies nowadays. Quite a number of candidates seemed to lack knowledge about constitutionality or the separation of powers. This also means that the candidates who exhibited a lack of knowledge in the second part of the question, inevitably did not do well in the third part of the question that was closely linked to the previous section. Of the candidates who managed to tackle the second part of the question successfully, quite a few still did not manage to explain how the means mentioned do in effect minimise the deficiencies of a democracy. This was due to not having any knowledge about how, for example, education helps to increase citizen participation in the life of a democratic country.

As regards question two, while candidates were, in general, able to identify four to five human rights (even if some candidates created their own), discussing them in depth was another matter. It appears that students prefer to study lists but do not go into case studies or at least associate rights with relevant narratives. Nevertheless, the answers to this part of the question were relatively better than those discussing relations between organisations and their members. Features related to the importance of relations between organisations such as the Council of Europe or United Nations bodies and their members, the assistance supplied and the impact felt as a result of these relations, was of a poor quality. There were texts that mistakenly suggested that the Council of Europe was the European Union or part of it.

2.2 Section B

The majority of candidates attempted question B1 but many of them did not manage to address properly the main concerns of the question. This was due to various shortcomings:

1. A considerable number of candidates either did not understand the question or did not have an adequate idea of morality. Some even confused morality with mortality.
2. Many did not provide a working definition of morality and their argumentation remained on a superficial level.
3. Some did not manage to bring into clear focus the main concerns of the question or even went out of point. Some wrote an essay that was more suited for History of Art than Systems of Knowledge. They spent too much time describing the formal features of works without paying proper attention to the impact of morality on those works – this was only mentioned in passing.
4. Few candidates achieved in their essay the right balance between argumentation and illustration.
5. Few candidates situated morality within religion or a given table of values.
6. Finally, while the question explicitly asked for examples from the history of art, music and literature, very few candidates referred to works of literature and music.

Question B2 was much less popular, but candidates who opted for it fared relatively better. Some of the shortcomings listed above were also present here:

1. Very few candidates did not understand the question or went out of point.
2. While many candidates managed to point out examples of political propaganda, only few analysed how such works affected the emotions of those who experienced such works.
3. Some had an idea of political propaganda but were unable to illustrate it properly with detailed examples of art, music and literature.

2.3 Section C

In general, the majority of candidates seem to feel more comfortable answering the questions in English. However, this is not surprising since the texts they use are in English as are many of the lessons/lectures.

The majority of candidates who sat for the May session opted for question 2. This preference is probably due to the fact that this question offers a much wider spectrum since advances in all branches of science have accelerated in the last 50 years. Most of the candidates offered very good examples, citing both the advantages and disadvantages. A number of disadvantages cited were based on Catholic beliefs while others covered various examples of effects on the environment and social development. This showed that most candidates were able to look at issues from different aspects. A small number of candidates spoilt their answer because they focused on one disadvantage as if nothing else mattered. It would be a positive contribution to the candidates' success if they present a balance covering all the required points of the question. There were many instances where the candidate answered part of the question as expected and then included a single sentence to address another part that required the same attention as the first.

Question 1 was more focused and required arguments on the character, characteristics and mind-set of scientists. A good number of candidates did just that. In fact a very encouraging number of them did quite well. They presented a decent number of examples, including historical ones, in order to support their argument.

2.4 Section D

In general most candidates tend to take a general approach towards Module 4. This hinders them from reaching an Intermediate standard. Such an approach is reflected in the lack of precision and detail in most essays. Most essays, also lack clear reference to values and attitudes which should lie at the core of Systems of Knowledge. Candidates generally provide geographical or scientific based information without holding a sustainable argument. Ideas are rarely supported by valid and specific examples. At Intermediate Level, candidates should also be much more conversant with the International Conferences related to the topics in question.

As regards question 1, a substantial number of candidates failed to concentrate on local issues. This is either indicative of the fact that candidates did not read the question well or else that their preparation was not sufficient and applied to actual examples. Candidates also tend to discuss general environmental issues without relating them directly to a specific principle. Most candidates did not seem conversant with the IUCN document nor with more recent processes linked to Environment and Development (Earth summits, SDGs, etc.).

Candidates also tended to focus solely on natural environmental issues and rarely referred to social ones. This indicated that they did not fully embrace the concept of sustainable development. Certain comments about migration also reflect disrespect towards the irregular migrants reaching our shores.

As regards question 2, most candidates encountered difficulties to create a well-balanced and logical argument. In this case, despite the fact that the question did not directly refer to the Maltese situation, most candidates mainly focused on local examples and failed to provide examples of a more Euro-Mediterranean context.

*Chairperson
2016 Examination Panel*