

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

**THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

**CLASSICAL STUDIES
MAY 2016**

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**IM CLASSICAL STUDIES
MAY 2016 SESSION
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Part 1: Statistical Information

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

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	abs	TOTAL
NUMBER	2	2	5	8	3	8	4	32
% OF TOTAL	6.3	6.3	15.6	25.0	9.4	25.0	12.5	100

Part 2: Comments regarding candidates' performance

This year, 28 students sat for the Intermediate Level in Classical Studies. This was an increase from last year by 9.

The original purpose of Classical Studies as a subject was to bridge 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. students 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 not there to frighten students, but only to introduce them to reading Classics from the original.

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 translate 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). It needs to be emphasized that the sentences are all easy to translate. The comprehension test (Section B) is lifted from the syllabus, and each student was expected to have studied those passages, not only in terms of meaning, but also of their 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 name of author, title of work, name of genre, geographical question and a historical question (background).

In the civilization and culture section, students have a choice of either a long essay in a topic which the teacher is expected to have covered in his or her lectures, or two short essays in general topics. This choice is given for the benefit of students who have a general knowledge in Classics and its application to modern life, but who may have missed the content of the formal lectures.

24 students out of 28 got a pass grade. This means that 85.71% passed, An immense improvement from last year (52.63%). Eight students failed.

7 students (25%) got a reasonably good mark n A1, which is a translation of five English sentences into Latin; 8 students performed well in A2, a translation of five English sentences into Greek: one student got full marks (15/15), and another got (12/15); 9 did well in Section B, which is a comprehension test.

22 students did well in the essay section.

It is clear from the above that the students could have prepared themselves better for the language part. It is remarkable that once again students have performed better in Greek than in Latin. Of the

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comprehension test, the last question carries 18/30, and it is a translation. Only 9 did well in this translation question. 9 students (32.14%) did not attempt the translation.

Of the 28 students, 24 (85.71%) chose the longer essay, while 4 (14.29%) chose the shorter essays. It is confirmed also from this year that students who opt for Question 5 (the general shorter essays) are the weaker students. Of the 24 who chose the longer essay, none attempted questions c and e (the circumstances of the Roman Republic which led to the Gracchian revolutions, and how social unrest and confrontation in Rome in the first century B.C. led to civil war); only 1 student attempted question d (the age of Pericles), and only 1 question f (Greek tragedy). Of the rest, 15 attempted question a (Heracles), and 7 question b (Zeus and the Olympian gods). Of the 4 students who opted for the shorter essays, all chose question 5a (Classical mythology), 2 question 5b (the influence from Classical literature), and 1 5c (on film reception). This means that one left one of the two questions unanswered. It is evident from all this how much students prefer topics on mythology and the gods to all other options.

**Chairperson
Examination Panel 2016**