

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA  
THE MATRICULATION EXAMINATION**

**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL  
ITALIAN**

**MAY 2017**

**EXAMINERS' REPORT**

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

**IM ITALIAN  
MAY 2017 SESSION  
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**Statistics**

The table below shows the number of candidates who registered for the Italian examination at Intermediate Level in May sessions between 2014 and 2017 included.

	May 2014	%	May 2015	%	May 2016	%	May 2017	%
No. of Candidates	116	100	139	100	121	100	91	100
Grades A - C	53	45.7	83	59.7	72	59.5	53	58.2
Grades A - E	96	82.8	120	86.3	105	86.8	74	81.3
Grade A	7	6	7	5	5	4.1	4	4.4
Grade B	17	14.7	30	21.6	23	19.0	14	15.4
Grade C	29	25	46	33.1	44	36.4	35	38.5
Grade D	26	22.4	19	13.7	19	15.7	14	15.4
Grade E	17	14.7	18	13	14	11.6	7	7.7
Failed	20	17.2	12	8.6	14	11.6	13	14.3
Absent	0	0.00	7	5	2	1.7	4	4.4

The figures above mark a drastic decrease, when compared to last year, in the number of candidates who sat for this exam and which sums up to over 30 if you consider the absentees. This means that the number has gone down by practically 25%. The overall performance does not show great changes except for a fall in grade B that shifted to Grade C and another fall in Grade E that led to an increase in the percentage of failures.

**Remarks****Part I : Oral**

Out of 91 candidates who applied for the exam, 6 missed the oral exam while another 2 sat only for the oral exam. The topics were chosen from the list provided in the syllabus.

**Listening comprehension**

The majority of candidates have shown that they have the ability to grasp the gist of the passage. A very small group of candidates found it difficult to answer the questions correctly. From the amplitude of notes pencilled in on the blank space on page 2, it is evident that the majority of candidates have not mastered the skill of note taking in listening comprehension exercises. The tendency to jot down information as though the task in hand is a dictation activity turns a listening comprehension into an orthographic test. One of the main strategies used to score marks was to give lengthy answers in the hope that they would contain the answer the examiner is seeking to award the mark. Most elementary grammatical mistakes were avoided and apart from the orthographic rendering of the word "Laureata" as *l'auriata*, *aureata*, *arata* and *leriata*, the majority of the words were slightly modified and were easily legible and identifiable. Finally, it is highly recommended that candidates write neatly and clearly, avoiding interlinear cramming as much as possible, as this hinders comprehension and possibly leads to loss of marks.

## Part II – Written

### Comprehensions

Candidates had two comprehensions, one about Social Media and the other about E books, topics with which candidates are quite familiar. The texts were quite easy in language and topic, and yet it was evident that the candidates struggled to answer. It is very evident that candidates need to be equipped with much more reading skills and at least try to answer all the questions, using as much as possible their own words and not just copying parts of the text. Candidates have to be more conscious of the fact that answering questions of a comprehension text is not just finding the answers from the text but understanding and giving one's own interpretation in relation to the content in the text.

### Essay

Although, through such a task, candidates are expected to attest a good working knowledge of the written language, a lot of spelling mistakes were encountered. Grammar mistakes were also very common, thus giving evidence of a limited knowledge of Italian, which obviously cannot be tolerated at Intermediate level. Besides many also expressed themselves poorly and showed a limited range of functional vocabulary. However, it must also be stated that there was also an encouraging number of candidates who performed quite well and obtained above average results.

Most candidates chose title A which was about the challenges young people have to face nowadays and avoided titles that dealt with immigration, financial crisis and social integration- issues that are really worrying in today's society. This resulted in essays which were extremely repetitive, most of all saying the same things over and over again. Some essays were too long, thus resulting in more mistakes in grammar. Some were much shorter than the word limit established and it was worrying to see the poor level of written Italian by most of the candidates who found it very difficult to express themselves in a fluent way, mixing up tenses, using the wrong '*lessico*' and forgetting or ignoring all rules on '*concordanza*' and correct use of pronouns. Their proficiency in the written language was very poor and at times it was very difficult to understand or follow their line of thought. Some candidates tend to use very long sentences (6-10 lines long!), with a whole paragraph made up of just one sentence.

The following are examples of the most common mistakes: (i) puerile mistakes in the article: ***una problema, la cinema, il stress, la sistema***; (ii) the difference between the apostrophe and the accent; (iii) the difference between *e / è / é* and *a / ha / à*; the differences between *gli / li, dà/ da, qui / cui* and *c'è* and *ci sono*.

Candidates need to be more conscious of the fact that for the successful completion of this section, it is not enough if they demonstrate that they possess basic language skills, but they must also show the ability to organise and structure their language into an effective and appropriate response to the topic chosen for discussion.

### Literature: Ammaniti / Cassola /Benni

The second text was more popular among the candidates than the first one when it came to Ammaniti's *Io non ho paura*. It was evident that many candidates had not read the book and some did not even understand the question. To be more specific, here are some examples: Brano 2 Q.d, most candidates described the mother but did not expand further on the female figure in the book and did not make a contrast with the Scardaccione. For Q.g of the same brano, most did not understand exactly what the '*dura prova di Michele*' was, which after all is the main theme of the book and for Q.j few knew to whom '*sei una femmina*' was referring in the other chapter of the book, although this is not just a mocking phrase but it connects various themes in the book. There were similar examples even in Brano 1: for Q.g where the candidates gave a very poor description of the style and for Q.j some candidates did not even know why the author is retelling the story.

Brano 3 and Brano 4 on *La ragazza di Bube* of Carlo Cassola were the two texts chosen by the vast majority of the candidates. However, most only had a superficial knowledge of the themes and

protagonists presented in the book. In fact, at times, candidates just skimmed from one aspect to the other without delving deeply in the most important aspects and/or themes specified in the questions.

Only very few candidates attempted questions on Brano 5 and Brano 6, set on *Margherita Dolcevita*. Candidates answering the set questions showed they were well-prepared and had a good understanding of the set text by producing appropriate answers to most of the points at issue. They also used evidence to support their point by giving cross reference to different parts of the narrative. Most candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the plot and characters by highlighting their exposure of the anecdotes and discussing the circumstances in a coherent and methodical manner. A good number of candidates gave accurate answers, using correct spelling and punctuation, even though at times, the grammar could have been more appropriate and the phrasing more concise.

*Chairperson  
Examination Panel 2017*