



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



Examiners' Report

IM Systems of Knowledge

First Session 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	2
B.	COMMENTS ON PAPER	2
	Section A	2
	Section B	2
	Section C	3
	Section D	3
C.	CONCLUDING REMARKS	4

A. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

A total of 1589 candidates registered for the First Session of the Systems of Knowledge examination in May 2023. This is significantly less than the 1932 candidates who registered for the examination in 2022, that is, a decrease of 17.8%. The grade distribution of results of 2023 examination is shown in the table below. This distribution shows that 56.8% of the candidates (N = 816) achieved Grades A – C, while 8.3% (N = 90) were absent. The percentage of absentees is 0.7% higher than in the same session of examinations last year.

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	ABS	TOTAL
NUMBER	96	256	551	270	90	194	132	1589
% OF TOTAL	6.0	16.1	34.7	17.0	5.7	12.2	8.3	100

Table 1: Distribution of grades for IM SOK, First Session 2023

B. COMMENTS ON PAPER

Section A

Question A1

The majority of candidates answered this question on the advantages and disadvantages of lowering the voting age in Malta, giving examples and taking a stance on why they agree or disagree with this legislative amendment. Generally, candidates showed good knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages but struggled when giving relevant examples. Very few candidates presented a deeper view on how lowering of the voting age relates to the wider issues of inclusive voting, rights and freedoms, free and fair elections, and the strengthening of the democratic process through the widening of checks and balances on government by citizens.

Question A2

Only a small percentage of candidates answered this question. Many of the responses provided did not correctly explain the difference between individualistic and communitarian cultures and most of the time a general essay on democracy and active citizenship was provided. Most of the essays misinterpreted communitarian societies as dictatorial societies and consequently did not refer to the values of communitarian cultures. It was also noted that in their arguments candidates did not question the spread of some negative individualistic values in Western societies, nor did they associate this individualism with wider neoliberal trends.

Section B

Question B1

This question on the relationship between the physical beauty and the moral beauty of a work of art with a focus on morality in the arts was only chosen by a third of the candidates. In most cases the essays presented by the candidates did not relate to the specific demands of the question. Most essays demonstrated a vague understanding of 'morality' and 'culture'. Many candidates mixed up art work with

artists' names and vaguely referred to works from all art periods. Some candidates wrongly mentioned that sculptural art was banned in the Middle Ages. Sculpture was still taking place, representing Christian motifs by means of reliefs on columns in chapels and churches, and wooden sculptures of Madonna and Child, saints, and others.

Question B2

The majority of candidates answered this question on the questionable merits of reproductions of a work of art, however perfect they may be. Similarly, to question B1, most of the answers provided did not answer the set question. In many cases, the answers were short or inaccurate. Many essays were simply one page long or slightly longer while some were incredibly short. Examples of art that were regularly cited include Michelangelo's Sistine chapel and Leonardo's Mona Lisa. Examiners note that candidates need to explore a wider choice of art works.

Section C

Question C1

This question on the generation of waste and how it affects our quality of life and sustainable living was chosen by few candidates. The majority of candidates could differentiate between the three different types and sources of waste mentioned in the question. Adequate measures that an individual can adopt to reduce waste were also mentioned. However, some candidates presented a weak and superficial discussion of possible measures that can be taken at national level to reduce waste. Moreover, several candidates omitted the part of the question which asked about the effect of waste on the quality of life.

Question C2

Although this was the most chosen question in this section, many of the candidates' performance was unsatisfactory. The question asked candidates to explain global warming and its effect on the world's climate by giving two examples, how the Industrial Revolution affected global warming, and the effect of global warming on Malta now and in the future. Many candidates knew about global warming and its effect on climate change but their discussion did not show any awareness that the greenhouse effect is a natural phenomenon and that it is unbalanced because of the excessive emission of greenhouse gases by the needs of modern societies. Some candidates incorrectly stated that global warming is the effect of depletion of the ozone layer and that it causes earthquakes and tsunamis. Several candidates gave irrelevant examples of the effects of global warming on Malta, such as the melting of glaciers and the depletion of the habitat of polar bears.

Section D

Question D1

Almost 43% of the candidates answered this question which asked them to write an essay on whether science and subjectivity are mutually exclusive or mutually inclusive. Most candidates argued that science and subjectivity are mutually exclusive and they explained that subjectivity undermines the acquisition of truth. Others focused on examples how science and subjectivity are connected though some candidates

could only give one example of this connection. Generally, the discussion was superficial and showed a misunderstanding of subjectivity as simply the thought process of scientists or researchers. Few candidates elaborated on the effect of objectivity on the scientific process. It would have been useful had the candidates began their essay by explaining what is meant by subjectivity and objectivity.

Question D2

This question asked candidates to give an account of the development of science and technology starting from the Industrial Revolution to the Information Revolution and their impact on society in general supported by one example from each revolution. Most candidates identified the periods of revolution quite well and were aware of the main changes occurring during each period. However, the explanations of the link between technology and the advance of science were weak. Moreover, several essays did not meet the requirements of the question as they did not answer the set question. Intriguingly, the effects of the revolutions on society were discussed from a moral point of view, that is, whether they were right or wrong. There was little discussion of the physical and economic effects, such as, economic growth, comfort, increased communication, and globalization.

C. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The examiners would like to make a few points, which are often neglected by the candidates. Firstly, the examiners would like to advise prospective candidates to take time to improve the organisation and structure of their essays. It is important to analyse the questions, identify what it being asked, and then plan the essay to answer the specific demands of the question. Structure the essay to include an introduction, different paragraphs for each argument made, and end with a conclusion. Secondly, use simple language, appropriate sentence structure, legible handwriting, and be careful about spelling. Thirdly, short, one-page or slightly longer essays are not sufficient to explain the required answers in sufficient detail.

Chairperson

Examination Panel 2023