



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



Examiners' Report

IM Religious Knowledge

First Session 2024

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A. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The total number of candidates who registered to sit for IM Religious Knowledge was **137** which is **26** candidates more than the previous year in 2023.

19 candidates were absent during the examination, resulting in an absentee rate of **13.9%**. This absentee rate was **3.2%** lower than the rate recorded in 2023, which stood at **17.1%**.

GRADE	A	B	C	D	E	F	abs	TOTAL
NUMBER	10	15	27	24	16	26	19	137
% OF TOTAL	7.3	10.9	19.7	17.5	11.7	19.0	13.9	100

Table 1: Distribution of grades for IM Religious Knowledge, First Session 2024

B. COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

The Intermediate Examination in Religious Knowledge was structured as a three-hour paper.

Section A comprised **10** short questions. Each question in this section was worth **4** marks, collectively accounting for 40% of the total mark allocation.

Section B presented **5** questions, and candidates were instructed to answer **3** questions in detail. This section constituted 60% of the overall marks, with each question weighing **20** marks.

Section A

Question 1

This question assessed the candidates understanding of the canons of scripture. The majority of the responses correctly pointed out that these are books in scripture recognised as divinely inspired. Only a few responses were incorrect.

Question 2

The question sought to elicit from candidates that faith is a personal response to God and that it is also expressed in community as a Church. The majority of the responses explained the first part of the question although several responses required a better explanation. Only a few responses answered the second part of the question.

Question 3

This question required candidates to explain God's omnipotence and omniscience. Only about half of the responses provided were correct. The remaining responses were very poor.

Question 4

This question assessed the candidate's ability to differentiate between God as creator and his creation. Very few knew how to express this difference. The majority of the responses incorrectly claimed that God created a perfect world.

Question 5

Most responses correctly mentioned that the soul comes from God but only a few pointed out that the soul is given by God at conception. Some responses incorrectly claimed that the soul is received at baptism.

Question 6

This question required the candidates to explain the importance of the Incarnation. Most responses correctly mentioned that Jesus is God made man who saved us from sin but the majority of the answers provided stopped there. Most responses did not mention other important aspects such as enabling us to join in the divine nature of God or that through Jesus the rift in our relationship with God the father is healed.

Question 7

This question asked candidates to explain what it means that a Christian has to carry their cross in life. The majority of the responses provided were correct.

Question 8

Candidates were tested on their understanding of the belief that Jesus ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. The majority of the responses provided were incorrect. A few responses referred to the Trinity and only a few responses correctly mentioned that Jesus ascended to heaven in his glorified body.

Question 9

Candidates were required to explain what 'charisms' mean. Most of the responses provided were correct.

Question 10

Candidates were asked to list and explain two symbols by which the Holy Spirit is represented. The majority answered this question correctly.

Section B

This section comprised **5** questions, with candidates required to answer **3** in detail. Each question carried a weight of **20** marks, leading to a maximum potential score of **60**. The following analysis evaluates the responses of the candidates to each question in this section.

Question 11

Most of the responses provided in part (a) mentioned that Christians need to express belief in the Son of God and adherence to the teachings of the Lord. The least mentioned aspects were the participation of the individual in the Eucharistic celebration and the intrinsic motivation of the human person to seek eternal life, rather than merely focusing on material goods. A significant number of responses in part (b) deviated from the main point in this question. Instead of addressing the question directly, the responses provided focused solely on the origin of sin and how it occurred. They did not mention original sin or refer to the

Genesis story. Instead, they only discussed how God sent His only Son to save humanity from death. As a result, concentrating on Jesus's death rather than on original sin. Part (c) was mostly correctly answered, recognizing that purgatory is a state of purification that allows the departed to attain eternal glory once this stage is completed. However, the explanation was sometimes lacking. While a good number of responses obtained high marks, some of the responses provided were completely off-topic by referring to limbo instead of purgatory.

Question 12

Candidates were tested on their knowledge of what constitutes the Church, its work and the Holy Spirit. The majority of the responses correctly explained that Jesus is the head of the Church and all the baptised are its members. A few of the responses were incorrectly answered because they referred to the actual building where worship is conducted rather than the living Church, whilst other responses were out of point by discussing the Eucharist. The majority of responses correctly discussed apostolic succession in the Church and what we mean when we refer to the Church as "One". Many responses however could not articulate properly what it means that Christians are a Temple of the Holy Spirit and only a couple of responses made the connection between the Old and New Testament.

Question 13

Candidates were required to answer questions on the Liturgy and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Quite a few responses explained what the Liturgy is but further detail was required. The discussion of how Jesus Christ is present in the Liturgy in different ways was mostly correct. Unfortunately, not all responses mentioned the connection between the Passover meal of the Jews in the book of Exodus and the Last Supper in the New Testament.

Question 14

In part (a) very few responses mentioned exorcism as part of Jesus's healing ministry, which might be overlooked as an aspect of healing. One of the main mistakes in this section was recalling episodes of Jesus resurrecting people from the dead, such as Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus. This is incorrect, as resurrection is considered a miracle, not an episode of healing, resulting in the loss of all marks for this section. Part (b) was mostly correctly answered, however only a few responses made reference to Vatican Council II. It was after this time that the intention of the sacrament was restored to its original purpose of healing, rather than solely focusing on death per se. Part (c) was mostly correctly answered. Most of the responses provided in the first part of the question were adequate but left the final part regarding the sacrament's effect on the human person unanswered, resulting in the loss of marks.

Question 15

Most of the responses provided in part (a) were poor and excluded the perspective of the 5th Commandment, "Thou shall not kill." For instance, most responses emphasized aspects like respecting neighbours and refraining from foul language. Others focused extensively on abortion, suicide, and euthanasia, providing detailed descriptions and definitions of these practices and only arrived at the actual answer later in their responses. Most of the responses provided did not explain why these actions are considered wrong in the very first place. In part (b) most of the responses mentioned that as Christians, it is

simply wrong to exert capital punishment because by killing the person, one is committing the same deed as the perpetrator. Few mentioned that modern prisons are highly secure, making it nearly impossible for the perpetrator to pose a threat to society. This perspective also emphasises that individuals are given the opportunity to reform and change their attitudes. Very few responses noted that resorting to capital punishment instils a vengeful nature in people. The most commonly mentioned viewpoint was that even a murderer possesses dignity, and allowing them to live, despite their crime, upholds their human dignity. In part (c) most of the responses provided emphasized that euthanasia lacks respect because it contradicts God's sovereignty over human destiny; by resorting to ending a life, individuals are perceived as acting against God Himself. However, many responses did not explicitly address the viewpoint that euthanasia diminishes the dignity of the person at the end of their life. This aspect was occasionally mentioned indirectly or omitted entirely in the responses provided.

C. OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

In summary, the overall performance of the candidates in Section A was commendable. Many candidates provided comprehensive answers, while others, although more concise, still delivered satisfactory responses

In Section B, the majority of candidates followed the instruction to answer three questions and provided relevant and well-structured responses of adequate length. Regrettably, a few candidates still struggled with organizing their answers into distinct paragraphs, making it difficult to discern which part of the question they were addressing. It is essential for candidates to clearly identify the specific question or sub-question they are answering to enhance clarity. While high-scoring candidates demonstrated a strong grasp of the language of choice, structured their responses, and correctly understood the questions, there is room for further improvement. A considerable number of candidates exhibited weaknesses in their language proficiency and encountered challenges in expressing themselves in writing. As observed in prior years, the examiners express concern that the development of crucial analysis and evaluation skills may not be receiving adequate emphasis and instruction.

Chairperson
Examiners Panel 2024