



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



Examiners' Report

SEC Art

Special September Session 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	STATISTICAL INFORMATION	2
B.	GENERAL REMARKS	2
	Portfolio (Coursework)	2
	Project.....	2
C.	Work from Observation Paper 1.....	3
	This paper is the same for candidates taking the A or B papers.....	3
	Still Life	3
	Life drawing.....	3
D.	Imaginative picture making Paper II	3
	Paper II A.....	3
	Paper II B.....	4

A. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The total number of candidates who registered to sit for Art was 193, which is considerably less than in 2019 and previous years. There were 76 private candidates. Of these registrations, 124 opted for Paper IIA (59 private candidates) and 69 opted for Paper IIB (17 private candidates). This drop in registrations is undoubtedly due to the unusual situation caused by the pandemic. The Art Examination was held in September 2020 instead of May 2020.

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	9	33	20	18	17			25	2	124
PAPER B				18	9	11	10	15	6	69
NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	9	33	20	36	26	11	10	40	8	193
% OF TOTAL	4.66	17.10	10.36	18.65	13.47	5.70	5.18	20.73	4.15	100

Table 1: Distribution of grades for Sec Art Special September Session 2020

B. GENERAL REMARKS

Portfolio (Coursework)

The candidates with the most successful portfolios presented a range of works based on selected themes. These works showed the candidates' skill in carrying out different practices and techniques focusing on drawing and painting but including others such as printing and collage etc. The different media which were used included pencil, charcoal, pastels, poster colours, acrylics, coloured paper etc. The portfolio should contain a balanced selection of imaginative work as well as work from observation. This year there was a good number of candidates sitting for paper A who submitted excellent coursework featuring both imaginative and observation work. The portfolios of a small number of candidates sitting for paper B did not include enough examples of work or included work which was of a standard below what is expected at this level. One example stood out because the standard of work was inconsistent, fluctuating between quite good and very poor. It is advisable to choose the best work to include in a portfolio and refrain from showing weak attempts alongside better ones. Work copied directly from secondary sources such as downloaded images, other artists' work, cartoons etc. should not form part of a portfolio presented for this examination.

Project

Final projects are expected to be focused and personally meaningful to the candidate. They should show a systematic study of a specific theme or idea. There were cases where final projects consisted of very few works which is not enough at this level. The best projects were well presented with a cross-section of interesting studies exploring the chosen theme and included examples of experimentation with different media and techniques. In such cases the final work was very often of a very good standard. Some projects included three-dimensional studies/work. The latter were photographed and/or actually presented in the case of private candidates). It is important that the project is labelled so it can be identified.

C. Work from Observation Paper 1

This paper is the same for candidates taking the A or B papers.

Still Life

The quality of the work presented for this paper in this year's session was on the whole of a very good standard. The majority of candidates used pencil and opted for still-life. Some of the candidates using paint or other media worked in full colour while others worked in monochrome. It is good to point out that it is more challenging to carry out work from observation in full colour than in a monochromatic medium such as pencil. This paper requires that candidates' compositions have to include all of the objects set before them and not a close-up of a few of the objects.

Some candidates' works showed evidence of problems with basic drawing skills and the intelligent use of space, placing very small compositions in the middle of the paper. Some had problems with the shape of the objects, such as that of the bottle rendering it squat and wide or too long and narrow. There were still some cases of inverted perspective in particular when drawing the book. The proportions of the objects were sometimes inaccurate for example, in some cases, the onions were rendered too big or too small compared to the other objects. Some drawings tended to be flat with no variation in tones. The texture of the glass bottle and the material of the duster were quite successfully handled. In some cases candidates made gimmicky use of harsh and lost edges evidently not properly understanding why and when to employ line modulation.

Life drawing

Only a few candidates who opted to tackle the human figure had a good grasp of human anatomy and structure. A number of candidates failed to give a good rendering of the pose of the model. This lack of knowledge of the human figure was also evident in the imaginative papers.

D. Imaginative picture making Paper II

Paper II A

In general, candidates whose coursework showed commitment and evidence of good practice have done well in this paper.

Most candidates made good use of the three weeks prior to the examination to do research and prepare studies and sketches related to the starting points of the general themes. Some candidates tackled one, two or even three starting points. Many of these sketches were intelligently used to create good compositions related to the titles given the examination paper.

A number of candidates prepared actual finished compositions for the general themes and copied these during the examination. This is not an acceptable and original response. The candidates who use their sketches imaginatively to create new work obtain better grades. When doing visual research, it is advisable not to copy downloaded images but to use primary sources to investigate the general themes. Candidates are encouraged to think about the final outcome and use their preparatory sketches intelligently so their composition makes sense and is a valid response to the chosen title.

It is advisable to present the sketches marked with the candidate's index number in a small folder.

There were some interesting compositions in response to the titles posed in the final paper. The work of candidates who chose *At the hairdresser or the barber* and *At the Gym* in response to the general theme of *Personal appearance* featured some interesting interior places brought about by the current COVID19 situation such as figures wearing masks and/or gloves and bottles of sanitisers. There were other successful compositions in response to the general theme of *Village Feast Customs*. Candidates opting for the titles *Children showering confetti from a balcony during a village feast* or *Mechanised Ground Fireworks* came up with very lively and colourful work that captured the feeling and atmosphere of these Maltese customs. Some candidates opting for the general theme Cliffs may have misunderstood the title *At the foot of the cliff* not fully understanding the meaning. *Wind gliding off a cliff* was more successfully rendered by a good number of candidates.

Paper II B

A good number of works presented for paper B showed lack of knowledge of painting and how to create a good composition. A few compositions lacked interest, showed lack of confidence and an unsatisfactory command of the medium being utilised. In some cases interpretation of the subject showed that the candidates did not fully understand the title chosen. Most candidates made good use of the time allotted for the preparatory sketches of the General Themes. However, candidates tackling this paper still tend to rely too much on these sketches, copying them without really thinking about what is being asked of them.

Some candidates choosing the question *Create a Poster inviting parents and children to spend a day at a seaside resort*, responded by creating a painting instead of a poster. Future candidates should familiarise themselves with the requirements of designing a good poster, what text to include and the basics of creating clear readable lettering. The compositions in response to *Design an invitation for a fancy dress party to raise funds for charity* were more skilfully rendered. *Sailing boats* proved to be quite a popular choice and featured a number of pleasing compositions. Most of the work in response to *On the school bus* was quite satisfactory depicting the candidate's first hand experience of such an event. There was one exceptionally successful rendering in response to this title. On the whole paper B candidates are still finding it very difficult to draw and paint figures as was evident in the compositions *We passed our exams....let us celebrate* and *Bus stop.. waiting for the bus*.

The level of the examination work reflected the standard of the candidates' coursework. A very small number of candidates did very well but could not get better grades because they chose to sit for paper B.

Chairperson
Examination Panel 2020