



L-Università  
ta' Malta

MATSEC  
Examinations Board



# Examiners' Report

## SEC Religious Knowledge

Main Session 2024

## Examiners' Report (2024): SEC Religious Knowledge

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## A. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The total number of candidates who registered to sit for Religious Knowledge was **2990**, which is **151** more candidates than in 2023. Of these registrations, **1751** opted for Paper IIA and **1239** opted for Paper IIB.

Table 1 shows the distribution of grades for the Main 2024 session of the examination

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	87	239	529	295	237	-	-	299	65	1751
PAPER B	-	-	-	243	139	174	131	334	217	1237
TOTAL	87	239	529	538	376	174	131	634	282	2990
% OF TOTAL	2.9	8.0	17.7	18.0	12.6	5.8	4.4	21.2	9.4	100.0

*Table 1: Distribution of grades for Religious Knowledge 2024 Main Session*

## B. GENERAL REMARKS

### General Remarks on the Written Examination

It is very positive to note that candidates were asked questions which they had to answer through definitions and expressions of knowledge and they did so clearly and positively. On the other hand, a number of candidates lack the knowledge needed to reach the standard required at this level.

Candidates were also asked to answer questions through the application of passages from the Gospels and also through the teachings of the Church. By so doing the four Strands of Religious Knowledge, namely the Religious Language, the Spiritual Dimension, the Word of God and the Personal Catholic Worldview were tested both in knowledge and application. The questions in Paper 1 and Paper 2 took the candidates on a journey throughout the whole Syllabus (covering the two books which candidates have at Year 10 and Year 11).

## C. COMMENTS ON PAPER I AND PAPER II

### Paper I

#### Section A

The questions were formulated to test the candidate's familiarity with the Bible, and Christian Dogma, Morality and the Liturgy and in the use of various skills: analytical, recall, evaluation, comparison, defining, describing, narrating, listing and so on. The Paper contained factual, short and rather direct questions on basic elements. The setting of the papers was student-friendly with clear instructions.

Both Paper A and B offered candidates the opportunity to assess themselves in the thematic study of Religion and their responses in the light of faith. There was a noticeable difference between the level of Paper A and Paper B candidates. Many candidates sitting for Paper B showed insufficient knowledge about the subject. Overall performance was average.

#### Question 1

Generally correct. Most candidates referred to the Bible or the Catholic Church.

#### Question 2

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Generally wrong. Most candidates do not know that Nostra Aetate is about respect towards non-Christian religions.

### *Question 3*

Generally correct.

### *Question 4a*

Generally correct.

### *Question 4b*

Generally correct. Some confused the name of the holy book of the Muslims with that of the Jews.

### *Question 5*

Although there were many correct answers, some still don't know the difference between monotheism and atheism.

### *Question 6*

Generally correct. Some mentioned the person rather than the event itself.

### *Question 7*

Generally correct. Most wrote about the preparation for the Messiah.

### *Question 8a*

Generally correct.

### *Question 8b*

Generally correct. Original Sin is forgiven during the Sacrament of Baptism and not Confession.

### *Question 9a*

Generally correct.

### *Question 9b*

Generally correct. Man is created in the image and likeness of God.

### *Question 10a*

Generally wrong answers were provided by candidates, such as peer pressure and others, highlighting that the entire context of the narrative was not kept in mind.

### *Question 10b*

Generally wrong answers, with many stating that it was the punishable act of God on humanity.

### *Question 11*

Most answers mentioned the Ten Commandments, with only a few referencing the Sinai Covenant.

### *Question 12*

Many answers were very generic, such as stating the importance of showing respect and care.

### *Question 13*

Some answers reflected the notion of salvation, while others stated that is the righteous thing for Christians to do.

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### *Question 14*

Many correct answers. Most candidates primarily mentioned forgiving sins, preaching the word of God, and baptising in the name of the Lord.

### *Question 15*

Most answers referred to the Church as a building rather than recognizing it as the community of faith, the children of God.

### *Question 16a*

Almost all answers were correct. Some incorrect answers referred to the sixth commandment

### *Question 16b*

Generally wrong.

### *Question 17*

Most candidates answered with references to the Day of the Lord or the Day of Rest, rather than mentioning the resurrection of Jesus Christ from death.

### *Question 18a*

Generally wrong. Most candidates mentioned the catechism.

### *Question 18b*

Generally incorrect answers, usually referring to the water or the person receiving the sacrament.

### *Question 19*

Generally correct.

### *Question 20*

Few correct answers. Candidate wrote about Mary, rather than how a Christian can emulate her.

### *Question 21*

Most answers were correct and indicated that Christians receive the Holy Body of Christ through the sacrament of the Eucharist.

### *Question 22*

Most of the answers referred to work as a means of livelihood. A few mentioned 'work' as a means of personal development and through it the human person is fully participating in God's creation and plan for mankind.

### *Question 23*

Generally correct.

### *Question 24*

Most answers related to heaven as the meaning of the question, while some referred to it as the eternal reward for all people to attain in the afterlife.

### *Question 25*

Mostly correct. However, some mentioned the apostles or other saints.

## Section B

In this section, performance was mixed and marks varied. Overall, Paper A candidates answered most questions correctly with a high percentage of them obtaining more than 15 marks out of 25. Paper B candidates answered in brief, without giving too much detail to explain the answer given.

### *Question 1*

Many candidates did not read the question carefully, listing the principles the Christian should keep in mind when reading the Bible. Only few answered correctly.

### *Question 2*

Most of the candidates managed to express the main points of the message of Jesus was conveyed through his behaviour, particularly by dining with publicans and sinners.

### *Question 3*

Most of the episodes mentioned were the Annunciation by Angel Gabriel, depicting Mother Mary as obedient and ready to fulfil the mission bestowed upon her by God. Another frequently mentioned episode was Mary visiting her cousin Elizabeth while pregnant, illustrating Mary as altruistic, empathetic, and compassionate towards others.

### *Question 4*

Generally correct. Common answers included suicide, euthanasia, and abortion. Some candidates were very general in their responses, mentioning reckless behaviour or putting oneself and others in dangerous positions, which did not directly address the question.

### *Question 5*

Several candidates did not know the Pentecost event, hence writing about stories from the Old Testament, such as the Passover meal.

## Section C

### *General Remarks*

This section revolved around the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick and Jesus' apparition to his disciples.

### *First Text*

- a) Most candidates answered correctly.
- b) Most candidates answered correctly.
- c) Generally correct, although some mentioned only one aspect.
- d) Answers generally correct.
- e) Many candidates answered correctly mentioned the priest, the Bishop and even the Pope. Other students said that the Church has the authority without specifying the person/s.

### *Second Text*

- a) Most candidates answered correctly, although some did not give a full answer.
- b) Answers generally correct.
- c) Answers generally correct.
- d) Answers generally correct, although some wrote the wrong citation.

e) Answers generally correct.

## Paper IIA and Paper IIB

### Paper IIA

#### General Remarks on Paper IIA

The paper covered five of the main areas of the syllabus, giving an opportunity to all candidates to show their knowledge of the subject. Although a higher level of Religious Knowledge and better essay-writing skills are desirable, most of the candidates were well prepared. Regrettably, the biggest factor in losing marks is irrelevance or treating the topic from purely non-religious aspects (even though at times, these would be very appropriate).

The questions were divided in parts. Some candidates did not read the question properly and went out of point. In some open-ended questions which were meant to help the candidates express their thoughts, many struggled to express themselves consistently. This affected their performance.

#### *Question 1*

- a. Overall, candidates who answered this question, did so in a lengthy and elaborate way. In this part of the question, a number of candidates wrote about how Christians should approach the Word of God, that is, through respect and open mind. In the second part of the question candidates clearly underlined the principles that should be kept in mind, when reading the Bible that was written by humans, and thus, a divinely inspired human text.
- b. Many candidates correctly elaborated on three persons, notably Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David. With Abraham, the idea of 'faith' was expected to be mentioned.
- c. Generally correct. A number of candidates also took on a literal interpretation, in writing that the paper of the Bible should be handled with care. Interestingly, many candidates also referred to the fact that youth today do not attend Church, and thus, it's justifiable and reasonable to make use of Bible apps, rather than having to travel to a church.

#### *Question 2*

- a. Many answers were simply an elaboration of how God had spoken to Moses in the burning bush.
- b. Many candidates explained how Moses was perceived by God to be a great noble figure and a role model for others, and thus, was chosen by God to carry out this intensive task. For the second part, mostly explained that one should not be afraid to do good and avoid evil.
- c. Many candidates wrote about how to live true friendship with others, while others referred to being friends with the Jewish people. Not all answers showed ways how the Christian should follow the Commandments.

#### *Question 3*

- a. Few candidates answered this question correctly. Candidates who got a correct answer were more likely to indicate two and even more names of non-Christian texts. A small number listed the Koran as a text which shows that Jesus really existed, but the Koran was written long after the existence of Jesus.

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- b. (i) Generally, many correct answers were provided for this question. Many candidates focused on the sentiments of Jesus and his human aspects, as well as his respect towards everyone. Some candidates wrongly included the miracles as indication of his human nature.
- (ii) Again, generally all correct, with the most common answers being the miracles of Jesus (especially at the Wedding of Cana), the healing and forgiveness of sins (the adulteress woman) and the Resurrection from the dead.
- c. On a very positive note, a number of direct Scriptural quotes were provided to back-up the question many candidates.

### *Question 4*

- a. Generally, correct by many candidates. Most common answers included that one becomes a son/daughter of God, a part of Christianity, and that their sins are forgiven. Others simply explained the symbols used in this sacrament.
- b. Here again many mentioned two symbols used, the oil and the water and emphasized that both symbols are used in both sacraments. Only very few candidates mentioned the fact that in Confirmation, one confirms that they want to live as Christians, thus confirming what was promised in Baptism.
- c. Most common answers were that Jesus helps young people to accomplish this by guiding them through praying, or by reading the Bible. Others wrote that Christians should follow a good conscience built on the word of God, or by living the new commandment of love.

### *Question 5*

- a. Many candidates in this question explained in detail the three terms for love, eros, philia and agape, some of them emphasized that Christian love should be built on agape-love. A number of candidates pointed out that Christian marriage is not simply an attraction or relationship between husband and wife, but an invitation to die for oneself and imitate Christ on the cross.
- b. Generally correct. Ample examples were given for this question.
- c. Common answers to this question included attending Mass together, communicating with each other, following the ten commandments, reading the Bible, and cohabiting as way of preparing themselves.

## **Paper IIB**

### **General Remarks on Paper IIB**

Paper 2B covered adequately all the main areas of the syllabus from all the 14 units. The candidates' showed limited religious knowledge in the vast majority of the answers. The answers provided were overall too brief, lacking the expected detail and depth. While a relatively good level of performance was noted among certain candidates, the overall level of performance was below average.

### *Question 1*

Generally correct, however, some candidates focused solely on the Christian religion. Other candidates explained who God is, and the love he has for us, as well as mentioning life after death and punishment for those who disbelieve.

*Question 2*

Nearly all candidates mentioned three religions but some of them assimilated the practice of Buddhism and Hinduism.

*Question 3*

This was generally correct but answered very briefly, showing that most of the students were not familiar with the different aspects of how we should approach the Bible, and the few who knew only mentioned one to two aspects and were not explained in detail.

*Question 4*

Candidates showed insufficient knowledge of the account of when the human being fell into sin, and the few correct answers were that they were banished from the Garden of Eden when they gave in to temptation.

*Question 5*

Most showed they were familiar with the call of Moses and mentioned many details, such as, the ten plagues and the Passover meal

*Question 6*

Mostly correct, with the most common answers being the forgiveness of the adulteress woman, the healing of the blind man, and the death on the cross.

*Question 7*

Almost all candidates opting for this question gave the wrong answer as they could not define the characteristics mentioned in the Creed. Very few of the candidates were able to describe two of the characteristics in detail and correctly.

*Question 8*

Most of the candidates succeeded in narrating the story of the adulterous woman in detail, emphasising that everyone deserves a second chance in life, while very few answered that God forgives our sins and accepts us back and that we should also forgive others.

*Question 9*

Candidates showed insufficient knowledge as to why we refer to Jesus as the Paschal Lamb, many mentioning the lamb as an innocent animal, and that it should thus be compared to Jesus.

*Question 10*

Overall, candidates answered parts of the question correctly. However, many candidates did not mention the afterlife with God as a major part of our success.

*Question 11*

Overall, candidates answered this question correctly. Many answers included the fact that euthanasia is not consonant with the commandments. Additionally, a number of candidates elaborated in detail to justify why the Church does not agree with euthanasia, by describing the voluntary and involuntary types, thereby bringing out the elements of suicide and homicide.

*Question 12*

Many candidates provided quite a number of good examples of how one is destroying the environment, and many also wrote about what we can do to take care and improve the environment.

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### *Question 13*

In the first part the majority mentioned that they need to fight for their rights and what they believe is correct. For the second part there were good answers although not explained in much detail. Unfortunately, there were some candidates who wrote about their rights as workers instead of their duties.

### *Question 14*

Most of candidates focused only on the unitive act, while omitting the procreative act of Christian marriage.

## **D. CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

Most of Paper A candidates fared well. On the contrary, candidates sitting for Paper B showed lack of knowledge in the subject with most of them answering inaccurately, vaguely or just leaving question out altogether.

Chairperson  
Examiners Panel 2024