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To: College Principals
Heads of School

Subject: Further Changes to MATSEC Syllabi

Date: 1st October 2020

1. Syllabi

The following SEC and SEAC vocational syllabi were updated and are available for download through our website.

- a. SEC Information Technology – Unit 2
- b. SEC Fashion and Textiles - Unit 2 and Unit 3
- c. SEC Hairdressing and Beauty – Unit 1
- d. SEC Media Literacy – Unit 1 and Unit 2
- e. SEC Hospitality – Unit 2
- f. SEAC Fashion and textiles – Unit 1 and Unit 2
- g. SEAC Hairdressing and Beauty – Unit 1

Teachers are requested to use the latest syllabi versions.

2. Mitigation Measures

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduction in face-to-face contact time with students the MATSEC Board decided that in all:

- a. **SEC** Vocational subjects **ONE** application criteria in each unit should **NOT** be assessed and full marks should be awarded.
- b. **SEAC** Vocational subjects **TWO** application criteria in each unit should **NOT** be assessed and full marks should be awarded.
- c. **SEAC** Vocational subjects the controlled assessment will **NOT** be held and all knowledge and comprehension criteria will be assessed through the two assignments coursework.

The application criteria that are not going to be assessed in the SEC Vocational subjects should still be included in the Front Sheet of the tracking sheets so that the scheme of assessment and the percentage distribution of each assignment can be adhered to.

The application criteria that are not going to be assessed in the SEAC Vocational subjects should be inputted in the Assignment 3 Front Sheet. The percentage distribution of each of the first **TWO** assignment should be adhered to.

Another communication will be issued in the coming days indicating the application criteria that will not be assessed.

The MATSEC Board also waived clause 5.06 found in the SEAC policy document to provide more flexibility in assessment. Therefore, both in the assessment of SEC and SEAC vocational subjects, teachers can issue assignments with whatever criteria they deem fit as long as the percentage distribution of each assignment is adhered to.

The year 11 (Form 5) controlled assessment of SEC Vocational Subjects shall be held in May 2021, instead of April, together with the year 9 (Form 3) and year 10 (Form 4) controlled assessments.

3. Registration of new students

Students who will start studying SEC and/or SEAC Vocational subjects during the scholastic year 2020–2021 are to register online with the MATSEC Support Unit through this link <https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/applyvoc> between Wednesday 21st and Friday 30th October 2020. Late and very late application fees will apply. Schools will be provided with a unique 6-digit code. This has to be communicated to students. Without this code students will not be able to register for the subject/s that they opted to study.

In order to eliminate as much as possible errors during registration, the registration website was revamped. Students are encouraged to contact MATSEC if they encounter any difficulties.

Schools are requested to forward the list of students studying vocational subjects on the prepared template by Friday 30th October 2020. In this regard a template will be sent to all schools in the coming days. Only lists sent on this template will be accepted. It is essential that the correct data is inputted, particularly in the Name, Surname, ID, Date of Birth and Subject fields.

4. Tracking Sheets

A new set of Microsoft Excel workbooks shall be forwarded to each school at a later date. These workbooks are to be used for the new cohort of students. The files shall include a list of all students registered for vocational subjects. Each teacher should be given a copy of this file containing only the students in class for each subject. Other students not taking the subject should be deleted from the 'Data' sheet, otherwise the Excel file will not be useable. One should also emphasise that criterion marks should not be inputted when a student does not submit anything or does not turn up for practical-based assessments. The system will automatically show an underscore ('_'). If the student returns the assignment sheet with no answers or valid work, a zero ('0') should be awarded, and a comment indicating so should be included in the feedback section on the front sheet. In the Controlled assessment, 'ABS' should only be inputted when students are absent for an approved justified reason. In such cases an e-mail including any supporting evidence should be sent to MATSEC before the third External Verification visit.

The same Microsoft Excel workbooks related to the SEC 2019-2022 cohorts that were distributed last year can be used for students moving on to year 10 (Form 4) and year 11 (Form 5).

New Microsoft Excel workbooks related to the SEAC 2019-2022 cohort will be distributed to reflect the change in assessment as part of mitigation measures described above.

5. Synoptic Assessment

Registrations for the second synoptic assessments will be accepted at the MATSEC Support Unit or the Gozo Examinations Centre on Thursday 8th October and Friday 9th October 2020 from 8:30 am till 12:00 pm and from 1:30 pm till 4:00 pm. More information about this process can be accessed through the following link: <http://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/regulations>. In this regard, students and their parents/guardians should be informed of the unit mark obtained before the date of registration. The synoptic assessment for all subjects will be held between Friday 30th October and Wednesday 4th November 2020. Further details will be communicated to students at a later date. Schools are to inform students sitting for their SEC Engineering Technology Synoptic assessment that they may need to use a ruler, compass and protractor in carrying out their exam.

6. External Verification visits

The first external verification visits for schools offering both SEC and SEAC vocational subjects will not take place this year. The second external verification visit will take place between Monday 1st March

2021 and Wednesday 24th March 2021. During this visit, external verifiers will follow up any essential actions that were indicated in previous reports and review last year's and this year's first corrected and internally verified assignment. It is important that schools do **NOT** return last year's work to students before this visit. The external verifier will also verify the assignment brief of the last assignment. The third external verification visit will be carried out between Tuesday 1st June 2021 and Wednesday 16th June 2021. During this visit, external verifiers will follow up any pending essential action/s from the first report and review the remaining assignments, including the controlled assessment where applicable. It is therefore paramount that the marking and internal verification processes of all assessments are concluded before this visit.

7. Controlled Assessments

Controlled assessments are intended to take place between Monday 10th May and Thursday 20th May 2021 for all forms. Any transfer and/or resignation of students should always be immediately communicated to MATSEC by e-mail so that the necessary logistics can be planned in preparation for controlled assessments. May we remind SLT members that MATSEC should be immediately informed of any issues or irregularities encountered during the preparation (such as the provision of access arrangements for entitled students) and the actual running of controlled assessments (such as student malpractice). The respective forms should be compiled and placed in the Masterfile.

8. Access Arrangements

Students who wish to apply for access arrangements for the assessment of SEC and/or SEAC vocational subjects need to apply by noon, Monday 1st February 2021. Students who require access arrangements for Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and/or AD(H)D and/or Dyspraxia will need to present a full psychological report based on tests made at any time during their education, together with an assessment related to their area of difficulty carried out not earlier than the beginning of July 2020. Access arrangements granted on this basis will be given for all assessments, including SEC examinations for other subjects at Form 4 and Form 5. Students who do not present an updated report will not be eligible for access arrangements