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To: College Principals
Heads of School

Subject: Vocational Subjects: Beginning of Year 2024 – 2025

Date: 16 September 2024

Please take note of the following aspects in relation to SEC and SEAC Vocational Subjects and direct your colleagues and students accordingly.

1. New Assessment Model for Cohort 2027

MATSEC would like to remind all Schools that as from this scholastic year, the **new assessment model for vocational subjects should be followed** for those students who will start studying SEC Vocational Subjects in **Year 9** and hereafter. This model is outlined in the **2027 Syllabi** (<https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/syllabi>) and the **MATSEC Assessment Code of Practice 2027** (<https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/guidelines-policies/generalpolicies>).

May we therefore highlight the importance of ensuring that the correct syllabi and procedures are being implemented by the respective school community members to avoid any confusion between the new cohorts (2027 onwards) following the 2027 Code of Practice, and those of the ongoing cohorts (2025 and 2026) following the SEC and SEAC 2019 Vocational Subjects Policy Documents.

**THE ASPECTS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE REST OF THIS COMMUNICATION
RELATE TO THE ONGOING 2025 AND 2026 COHORTS
THAT FOLLOW THE SEC AND SEAC 2019 VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS POLICY DOCUMENTS.**

2. Synoptic Session 2024

Synoptic assessments for all SEC and SEAC Vocational subjects will be held on the dates and times indicated below.

Individual timetables, including the index number, the specific day, the time, and the venue of each exam, will be sent by post in October by MATSEC to candidates who have applied for synoptic assessments. Any candidate who does not receive the timetable by the week of the synoptic session is kindly asked to contact MATSEC as soon as possible.

Candidates who are 14 years or older are required to present their ID Card/Passport on the day of the actual exam/s. Meanwhile, candidates who are younger than 14 years, and who do not have an ID Card/Passport, are to present a valid document which includes their Name, Surname and recent photo (such as a Student Tallinja Card). Baby books, birth certificates, and any other documents which do not include their personal details and a recent photo shall **NOT** be accepted.

Candidates who do not present any of the above-mentioned identification documents, together with their individual timetable, on the day of the exam, will NOT be allowed to sit for the exam.

Schools are to inform candidates sitting for their SEC or SEAC Engineering Technology synoptic assessment that they may need to use a non-programmable calculator, ruler, compass and protractor in carrying out their exam.

Date	SEC & SEAC Subjects	Time	
		Unit 1 and Unit 3	Unit 2
Friday 1 November 2024	Engineering Technology Hairdressing and Beauty Media Literacy Education	08:30 – 10:35	11:30 – 13:35
	Hospitality	14:30 – 16:35	17:30 – 19:35
Monday 4 November 2024	Fashion and Textiles Health and Social Care Retail	08:30 – 10:35	11:30 – 13:35
	Agribusiness Information Technology	14:30 – 16:35	17:30 – 19:35

Synoptic Session 2024 – Dates and Times

3. Access Arrangements

Schools are to apply on behalf of SEC Year 10 students who request access arrangements for the assessment of Vocational subjects, by **Friday 31 January 2025**, through the portal (<https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/register>). For the registration to be completed, 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 January 2024. Access arrangements granted on this basis will be given for all Vocational assessments across all years, and examinations in all other subjects. Candidates who do not present an updated report will not be eligible for access arrangements.

4. Student Movements

Schools are to immediately communicate to MATSEC any transfer and/or resignation of candidates in the 2025 and 2026 cohorts, throughout the year as soon as these occur, **using this online form** (<https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/movement>). This will enable MATSEC to affect any required changes in due time and set up the necessary logistics for a smooth conduct of controlled assessments and data processing.

5. Tracking Sheets

Last year's Tracking Sheets should not be used during this scholastic year. A new set of Tracking Sheets for the ongoing 2025 and 2026 cohorts shall be forwarded to schools at a later stage.

The following aspects need to be emphasised:

- a. **Schools are to seek official confirmation from MATSEC prior to adding any very late candidates (in SEC Unit 2), removing existing candidates, or modifying any information in the 'DATA' worksheet within the Tracking Sheets.**
- b. It is of utmost importance that only Windows-based computers and locally-installed Microsoft Excel (version 2007 and above) are used when working with Tracking Sheets. **MAC and online-based services (such as Microsoft Excel online or Google Sheets) should not be used!**
- c. On computers using **Microsoft Office 365**, the 'Enable Macros' ribbon is no longer available. In order to enable macros – as shown in Figure 1 – one should:
 - i. Make sure the file is closed
 - ii. Right-click on the file > Select Properties
 - iii. Tick **Unblock** at the bottom of the General Tab
 - iv. Click Apply > OK.
- d. An **underscore (_)** denotes any criterion which has not been attempted/submitted. It appears automatically after saving a candidate's record when no mark is entered. When an entire assignment has not been submitted, an underscore (_) will appear automatically as a total after saving the candidate's record.
- e. A **zero (0)** mark should denote an attempt which did not satisfy the criterion requirements. This also applies in cases when candidates return an empty assignment sheet with no answers or valid work.
- f. In the SEC controlled assessment, **ABS** should only be inputted as a mark in all criteria for candidates who were absent for an **approved justified reason. Supporting documented evidence should be kept by the School and presented to MATSEC upon request only.**
- g. The Tracking Sheet version which would have been **locked by the EV** during the March visit should be the one used to input the marks of the subsequent assessment/s.

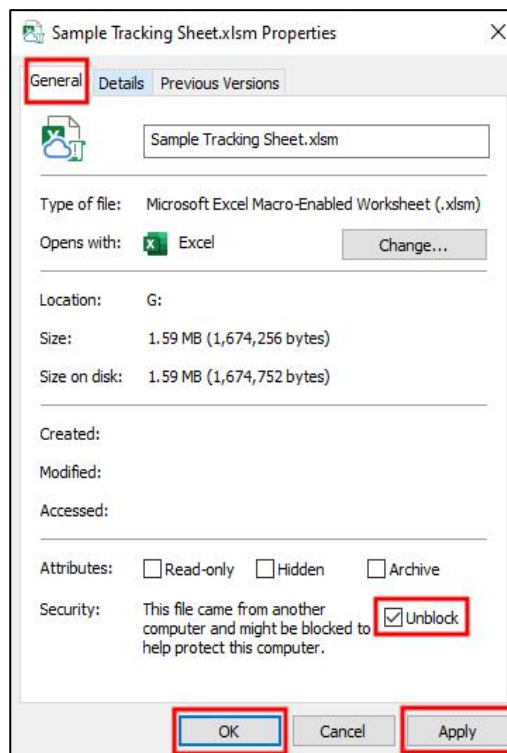


Figure 1

6. Front Sheets and Assessor's Feedback

As per the past two scholastic years, a customisable Word-format front sheet template is being included with this communication. This needs to include the related common details, and then simply photocopied/reproduced with the rest of the assignment brief following approval and signature by the internal verifier, rather than being printed one by one for each candidate. During marking of candidates' work, the mark achieved in every criterion would then just need to be noted on the hard-copy front sheet and correctly reflected in the respective Tracking Sheet. Teachers may still opt to use the front sheets available within the Tracking Sheet for printing purposes.

Assessors may choose to include written feedback either on the candidates' printed work, or in the space provided on the front sheet, as long as this is adequately provided and available for verification.

The above indications supersede the related clauses in the SEC and SEAC 2019 Policy Documents currently in force for the 2025 and 2026 cohorts.

7. Internal Verification of Briefs and Assessment Decisions

As per the past two scholastic years, MATSEC is no longer requiring the internal verification of briefs and the internal verification of assessment decision processes, to be documented. Instead, these processes will be confirmed as follows:

- a) *Internal Verification of Assignment Briefs:* After agreeing to the final version of the assignment brief and all related documents (such as the Front Sheet, Marking Scheme, etc.) – and seeing that any issues have been rectified and necessary changes carried out in consultation with the teacher – internal verifiers are to sign and date the related front sheet indicating their approval, prior to the assignment being issued. This signed front sheet, as described earlier, will then be the one photocopied/reproduced for all candidates.
- b) *Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions:* After agreeing to the marks of the sampled assessments as written on the front sheet and recorded in the tracking sheet – and seeing that any issues have been rectified and necessary changes carried out in consultation with the assessor – internal verifiers are to sign and date only those front sheets of candidates whose work has been sampled indicating their approval, prior to the assessment material being handed to candidates for feedback.

The above indications supersede the related clauses – in terms of documentation – as specified in the SEC and SEAC 2019 Policy Documents currently in force for the 2025 and 2026 cohorts.

8. External Verification Visits

The following **TWO** External Verification visits are planned in relation to SEC Unit 2, SEC Unit 3 and SEAC Unit 3:

Qualifications Offered	Number of Visits	March Visit	June Visit
SEC, SEAC or both	2	Thursday 6 March to Wednesday 26 March	Wednesday 28 May to Friday 13 June

In order to facilitate the EV process, it would be greatly appreciated if schools upload the internally verified Assignment 1 and Assignment 2 Briefs, together with the Marking Schemes, through this link (<https://um.edu.mt/matsec/schoolsupload>) by **Friday 7 February 2025**.

The necessary material should be prepared by the School in relation to the above-mentioned units and qualifications offered, and made available to ensure the proper conduct of each visit which shall focus on the following aspects:

- March Visit:**
- 1) Previous-visit EV Report
 - 2) Assignment 1 briefs and marking schemes after internal verification
 - 3) Assignment 1 candidates' work after the internal verification of assessment decisions process has been concluded
 - 4) Tracking Sheets complete with Assignment 1 marks
 - 5) Assignment 2 briefs and marking schemes after internal verification

- June Visit:**
- 1) Previous-visit EV Report
 - 2) Assignment 2 candidates' work after the internal verification of assessment decisions process has been concluded
 - 3) Controlled assessment candidates' work for SEC Unit 2 and Unit 3 after the internal verification of assessment decision process has been concluded
 - 4) Tracking Sheets **locked during the March visit** complete with all assessment marks

As per MATSEC’s clarification communication dated 13 January 2023, the Masterfile for Vocational Subjects no longer needs to be presented for any external verification visit.

It is very important that during each EV visit, the marks recorded in the tracking sheets after being locked by the external verifier, are checked to ensure that these are correctly being reported for all candidates as also shown on the printed External Verification Assessment Sampling Sheet. Administrative fees will apply for any changes that MATSEC might consider accepting after the EV visit has been concluded.

May we also kindly remind Schools to directly contact MATSEC for any MATSEC assessments-related issues encountered before or after the EV visit date, rather than the external verifiers themselves.

9. Controlled Assessments 2025

Controlled assessments will be held on the following dates:

SEC Unit 3	
Tuesday 1 April 2025	Retail
Wednesday 2 April 2025	Health and Social Care
Thursday 3 April 2025	Information Technology
Friday 4 April 2025	Engineering Technology Hairdressing and Beauty
Monday 7 April 2025	Hospitality
Tuesday 8 April 2025	Media Literacy Education
Wednesday 9 April 2025	Agribusiness Fashion and Textiles

SEC Unit 2	
Monday 5 May 2025	Agribusiness Fashion and Textiles
Tuesday 6 May 2025	Engineering Technology Hairdressing and Beauty
Wednesday 7 May 2025	Health and Social Care
Thursday 8 May 2025	Hospitality
Friday 9 May 2025	Media Literacy Education
Monday 12 May 2025	Retail
Tuesday 13 May 2025	Information Technology

All assessments are to start at **10.00 am** and are 90 minutes long.

You are kindly asked to take all the provisions necessary for the smooth running of these assessments in your school. Invigilators and support staff required for access arrangements will be provided by the Examinations Department. MATSEC will be communicating accommodation details to Heads of School in due time.

May we remind you that school teachers are not to invigilate their students. Similarly, LSEs who are assigned to Vocational subjects students during the scholastic year, are not to stay with them during these assessments.

Kindly note that only students who are officially registered with MATSEC as Vocational subjects candidates should be allowed to sit for the SEC controlled assessment.

MATSEC should be immediately informed by the Head of School of any issues or irregularities encountered during the preparation (such as the provision of access arrangements) and the actual running of controlled assessments (such as candidates' malpractice).

10. Unit Results for Scholastic Year 2024-2025

Unless otherwise indicated by MATSEC, schools are to refer to the Result Slips within the externally verified Tracking Sheets for SEC Unit 2 results.

The mark achieved by candidates in Unit 3 by the end of scholastic year 2024-2025 will not be final, given the reduction in content as per communication dated 19 September 2022. Hence, in July 2025, MATSEC will be communicating to schools the results (Pass/Synoptic) of SEC and SEAC Unit 3 following the pro-rating exercise.

Schools are to communicate to candidates the results they obtained in due time, for those who are eligible and wish to register for a synoptic in 2025 to be able to do so. We would also like to remind schools about the conditions for Unit Achievement of the running 2025 and 2026 cohorts, as detailed in the respective 2019 Policy Documents:

SEC	SEAC
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attempt ALL unit assessments (Coursework & Controlled) 2. Obtain 26 marks through Coursework assignments 3. Obtain 19 marks through the Controlled assessment 4. Attain 50 marks in the unit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attempt ALL unit assignments 2. Obtain 25 marks through the combination of Knowledge and Comprehension criteria 3. Obtain 25 marks through Application criteria 4. Attain 50 marks in the unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Candidates who obtain a 'Pass' in a unit can potentially qualify for Grades 1 to 5 (SEC), or a Level 3 (SEAC) Certification, subject to their performance in the other units throughout the Subject.</i> • <i>Candidates who do not obtain a 'Pass' in a unit can still potentially qualify for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 (SEC), or a Level 2 or Level 1 (SEAC) Certification, subject to their performance in the other units throughout the Subject. Eligible students may register to sit for a Synoptic assessment to attempt passing the unit.</i> 	

11. Main Session 2025 Appeals and Synoptic Session 2025 Registration

Synoptic 2 registration for **SEC Unit 1** by candidates who are currently in Year 10, and **SEAC Unit 2** by candidates who are currently in Year 11, will only be accepted in-person at MATSEC as follows:

Wednesday 8 January to Friday 10 January 2025
from **07:30** till **12:00 noon** and from **13:15** till **16:00**.

Candidates are required to present their ID Card/Passport.
Registrations by Gozo candidates will be received at the University Gozo Campus, Xewkija.

LATE REGISTRATIONS FOR THESE UNITS MAY BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS PERIOD ONLY IN SOME SUBJECTS, AND AGAINST PAYMENT OF AN ADMINISTRATIVE FEE.

Registration for Appeals and Synoptics of the other SEC and SEAC units (**apart from Synoptic 2 of SEC Unit 1 and SEAC Unit 2 as per above**) will be received from **07:30** till **12:00 noon** as follows:

Main Session Appeals

Monday 18 August to Wednesday 20 August 2025

A fee of EUR 35 (payable by card or cheque) per Subject Unit applies.
No late registrations for appeals will be accepted.

Synoptics

Monday 18 August to Wednesday 3 September 2025

Late registrations will only be accepted against payment of a fee of EUR 35 (payable by card or cheque) per Subject Unit from Thursday 4 September to Friday 5 September 2025 noon.

Candidates are required to present their ID Card/Passport. Registrations by Gozo candidates will be received at the University Gozo Campus, Xewkija. Further details will be published by MATSEC in due time.

We take this opportunity to wish a good scholastic year to all educators and students, while thanking you for your cooperation.