



**From:** Mr Dario Pirotta  
Director, MATSEC Support Unit

**To:** College Principals  
Heads of School

**Subject:** SEC and SEAC Vocational Subjects

**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> September 2019

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### 1. Policy Document

An updated version of the Policy Document 2019 reflecting changes in SEC Vocational subjects has been uploaded on the MATSEC website [<https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/assessment/resources>]. Schools are expected to refer and abide by all the clauses within this document in planning and implementing vocational subjects.

The SEC Vocational Policy Document 2017, shall apply for Year 10 [Form 4] and Year 11 [Form 5] students. The Policy document has been updated with the following clauses:

#### 1) Section 2 (Initial Registration) – Late and Very Late Registrations:

- Students can register for a Subject qualification after the closing date of the initial registration period, only if the deadline of Unit 2 – Assignment 2 has not been exceeded.
- Students registering after the closing date of the initial registration period should be aware of the following assessment options:

Period of Late Registration	Assessment
Before the deadline of Unit 1 – Assignment 1	Students are allowed to attempt all Coursework and the Controlled assessment.
After the deadline of Assignment 1 of Unit 1 or Unit 2 and Before the deadline of Assignment 2 of Unit 1 or Unit 2	Any marks achieved in remaining Coursework for that Unit shall not be considered by MATSEC and students are requested to sit for the Synoptic assessment, with the maximum obtainable mark in that unit being <b>60</b> .
After the deadline of Assignment 2 for any unit	Students are <b>NOT ALLOWED</b> to attempt any assessment for the unit.

- Students registering after the closing date of the initial registration period:
  - (i) are to obtain written approval from the school stating that they will be allowed to study the subject following consultation between MATSEC and the school;
  - (ii) are to present this written approval to MATSEC;
  - (iii) will incur Late and/or Very late registration charges.

*2) Assessment Policy – Section 9 (Submissions)*

- Students should submit their work in the format requested through the mode of assessment being used; other formats should not be accepted for marking.
- Students are to submit their work by the deadline/s specified by the teacher in the assignment brief. No work should be accepted after the task/assignment deadline if there is no approved extenuating circumstance. **This supersedes existing clauses 9.3 and 9.6.**

*3) Verification Policy – Section 4 (Internal Verification Assessment Decision)*

- The minimum sample of corrected assignments that should be verified in each class is six if the teacher or the internal verifier has at least one year experience in teaching the unit.
- All corrected assignments should be internally verified if:
  - a. The amount of students in a class is less than six; or
  - b. The teacher and the internal verifier are new to the unit.
- If there are disagreements between the teacher and the internal verifier, the head of school should be involved, and the issue should be resolved prior to the external verification visit, following consultation with MATSEC if necessary. **This supersedes existing clause 4.8.**

*4) Verification Policy – Section 8 (External Verification Visit)*

- The external verifier may hold an interview with students at his/her discretion during the visit to ascertain the authenticity of submitted work, particularly if there is lack of evidence suggesting so.
- In situations where MATSEC practices and procedures guiding Subject delivery and/or assessment are not adhered to, MATSEC shall block the qualification and/or take necessary actions. Schools will be charged for any additional visits required by the external verifier to re-check material related to blocked qualifications. **This supersedes existing clause 8.8.**

*5) Plagiarism Policy – Section 5 (Procedures and Sanctions)*

The following two clauses supersede existing clause 5.2:

- Where plagiarism is suspected after a task/assignment deadline:
  - a. The teacher should make the student/s fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the suspicion;
  - b. The teacher should give the student/s the opportunity to answer to the allegations made;
  - c. The teacher will inform the internal verifier and the head of school about this incident in writing indicating which part of the assignment was plagiarised, the extent of the plagiarism, potential sources from where the material was copied, and the reasons provided by the student/s when informed of the misconduct. A copy of this report should be kept in the Masterfile.
  - d. The student should be called in by the head of school who should communicate a date and time for a viva to be conducted in relation to the case. The head of school together with the teacher and the internal verifier should be present for the viva.

- e. The teacher should prepare a list of questions and a marking scheme for the viva. These have to be internally verified before the viva.
  - f. During the viva, the teacher should ask the questions and give enough time for the student to answer. After the viva, the teacher and the internal verifier should agree on a common mark and document the reasons for awarding this mark.
  - g. The final viva documentation should be attached to the original assignment. The viva should be video recorded as evidence.
- Where there is enough evidence that confirms plagiarism after a task/assignment deadline:
    - a. If the answer in attempting one assessment criterion is plagiarised, all the marks for that criterion are completely lost. The student is issued with a written warning and legal guardians are informed.
    - b. If the answers in attempting more than two assessment criteria are plagiarised, marks for the whole assignment are lost. The student is issued with a written warning and legal guardians are informed.

## **2. Syllabi**

The SEC 2022 and SEAC 2022 vocational syllabi were updated and are available for download through our website. Teachers are requested to use the latest syllabi versions.

## **3. Assessment in Hospitality and Health and Social Care**

It has come to our attention that some schools were assessing practical criteria involving communication and interaction by having students act on a prepared script. Such practice cannot be considered as a valid assessment. Assessment of such criteria should be based on spontaneous communication, ensuring that students are given ample time to practise their skills before the assessment session.

## **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 new and existing cohorts. 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 second External Verification visit.

## **5. Appeals and Synoptic Assessment**

Registrations for appeals and synoptic assessments will be accepted at the MATSEC Support Unit or the Gozo Examinations Centre on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October and Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019 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 Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October and Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019. 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. Registration of new students

Students who will start studying SEC and/or SEAC Vocational subjects during the scholastic year 2019–2020 are to register online with the MATSEC Support Unit through the following link: <https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/applyvoc> between Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> and Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Late and very late application fees will apply following this period of registration.

Schools are requested to forward the list of students studying vocational subjects on the prepared template by Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2019. 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.

## 7. External Verification visits

The first external verification visit will take place between Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 and Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020. During this visit, external verifiers will follow up any essential actions that were indicated in previous reports and review the first corrected and internally verified assignment. The external verifier will also verify the assignment brief of the remaining assignments.

The second external verification visit will be carried out between Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 and Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020. 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.

## 8. Controlled Assessments

Controlled assessments shall be held during the following periods:

Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> April 2020 – Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2020	Form 5
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 – Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2020	Form 3 and Form 4

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.

## 9. 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, Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020. 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 2019. 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.