

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

**To:** College Principals  
Heads of School

**Subject:** Vocational Subjects: Beginning of Year 2023 – 2024

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

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

### 1. Synoptic Session 2023

Synoptic assessments for all SEC and SEAC Vocational subjects will be held as follows:

Date	SEC & SEAC Subjects	Time	
		Unit 1 and Unit 3	Unit 2
<b>Wednesday</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> November 2023</b>	Hospitality	08:30 – 10:35	11:30 – 13:35
	Information Technology Retail	14:30 – 16:35	17:30 – 19:35
<b>Thursday</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023</b>	Agribusiness Fashion and Textiles Media Literacy Education	08:30 – 10:35	11:30 – 13:35
	Engineering Technology Hairdressing and Beauty	14:30 – 16:35	17:30 – 19:35
<b>Friday</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023</b>	Health and Social Care	14:30 – 16:35	17:30 – 19:35

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.

## 2. Year 9 Registration

Schools are kindly requested to register Year 9 SEC Vocational subjects candidates in the 2023-2026 cohort through [um.edu.mt/matsec/register](http://um.edu.mt/matsec/register) following the same procedure used last year. **A new template (Excel sheet) should be downloaded from this page since last year's file will not work for import purposes.** Detailed instructions are also available on the same page.

Additionally, the Heads of School (and/or the person delegated with handling the system) may wish to attend a support meeting that will be held on **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 09:00** outlining the overall process and the slight changes that were implemented. If data is collated in the template by this date, it can be imported during this meeting. Registration for this meeting can be done through this link: <https://universityofmalta.zoom.us/j/91234567890>

Please contact us at your earliest possible if there are any changes in the user details of members of staff who will access the online system. The compiled Excel sheet data should be imported through the online system **between Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 09:00 and Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 noon**. Late and very late application fees will apply following this registration period.

Late applications will be received in-person by candidates at MATSEC **on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023 from 09:00 till 16:00 and on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023 from 09:00 till noon**. The application form ([https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/432507/verylate.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/432507/verylate.pdf)) should be used and submitted together with the payment (by card, or by cheque payable to the University of Malta).

Kindly note that MATSEC is no longer accepting registrations for new SEAC cohorts.

## 3. Access Arrangements

Schools are to apply on behalf of SEC Year 9/10 and SEAC Year 10 candidates who request access arrangements for the assessment of Vocational subjects, by **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024**, through the same online system referred-to above. 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 2023. 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 their cohorts throughout the year **using this online form** (<http://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.

## 5. Tracking Sheets

A new set of Tracking Sheets, including all candidates registered for Vocational subjects in each cohort, shall be forwarded to schools at a later stage. **Last year's Tracking Sheets should not be used during this scholastic year.**

The following aspects need to be emphasised:

- a. **Schools are to seek official confirmation from MATSEC prior to adding late/very late candidates, removing existing candidates, or modifying any information in the 'DATA' worksheet within the Tracking Sheets.**
- b. It is of utmost important 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. **Microsoft Office 365** users might need to first right-click on the file > Select 'Properties' > and tick 'Unblock' in the lower part of the General tab, in order to enable macros.
- d. An **underscore ( \_ )** should be inputted for any criterion which has not been attempted or submitted. If an entire assignment has not been submitted/attempted, then the total mark should indicate an underscore too.
- e. A **zero (0)** mark should denote an attempt which did not satisfy the criterion requirements. This also applies in cases where 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. Hereafter, 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.

## 6. Front Sheets and Assessor's Feedback

As per scholastic year 2022-2023, 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.

Similar to last year, 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 running cohorts.

## 7. Internal Verification of Briefs and Assessment Decisions

As per scholastic year 2022-2023, 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 running cohorts.

## 8. External Verification Visits

The following External Verification visits are planned for 2024 in relation to all SEC Units, SEAC Units 2 and SEAC Unit 3:

Qualifications Offered	Number of Visits	January Visit	March Visit	June Visit
Schools offering <b>both SEC and SEAC</b> OR <b>SEAC only</b>	3	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> January to Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> January	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> February to Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> May to Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> June
Schools offering <b>SEC only</b>	2	N/A	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> February to Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> May to Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> June

In order to facilitate the EV process, it would be greatly appreciated if schools upload the internally verified assignment briefs and any related documents (Marking Scheme, Observations Sheets, etc.) through this link (<https://um.edu.mt/matsec/schoolsupload>) by the following dates:

Assignment 1: **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

Assignment 2: **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

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

January Visit:

- 1) Previous-visit EV Report
- 2) Assignment 1 briefs and any related documents
- 3) Assignment 2 briefs and any related documents (only applicable in instances when the IV process has already been concluded)

March Visit:

- 1) Previous-visit EV Report
- 2) Assignment 1 briefs and any related documents
- 3) Assignment 1 candidates' work after the internal verification of assessment decision process has been concluded
- 4) Tracking Sheets complete with Assignment 1 marks
- 5) Assignment 2 briefs and any related documents

June Visit:

- 1) Previous-visit EV Report
- 2) Assignment 2 candidates' work after the internal verification of assessment decision process has been concluded
- 3) Controlled assessment candidates' work (except for SEAC Unit 3) after the internal verification of assessment decision process has been concluded
- 4) Tracking Sheets **locked during the previous visit** complete with all assessment marks

As per last scholastic year's clarification dated 13<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the Masterfile for VET Subjects no longer needs to be presented for any external verification visit.

## 9. Controlled Assessments 2024

Controlled assessments will be held as follows:

SEC Unit 3	
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Agribusiness Fashion and Textiles
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Health and Social Care
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Media Literacy Education
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Retail
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2024	Information Technology
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2024	Hospitality
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Engineering Technology Hairdressing and Beauty

SEC Unit 1 and Unit 2	
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> May to Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	Specific dates will be communicated at a later stage

SEAC Unit 2	
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	Issue of controlled assignments for all subjects on our website
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	Deadline for submission of controlled assignments for all subjects

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 student malpractice).

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

## 10. Unit Results for Scholastic Year 2023-2024

The mark achieved by candidates in Unit 3 by the end of scholastic year 2023-2024 will not be final, given the reduction in content as per communication dated 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Hence, in July 2024, MATSEC will be communicating to schools the results (Pass/Synoptic) of SEC and SEAC Unit 3 following the pro-rating exercise. Unless otherwise indicated by MATSEC, schools are to refer to the Result Slips within the externally verified Tracking Sheets for Unit 1 and Unit 2 results.

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 2024, to be able to do so. We would also like to remind schools about the conditions for Unit Achievement of running cohorts, as detailed in the respective 2019 Policy Documents:

SEC	SEAC
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attempt <b>ALL</b> unit assessments (Coursework &amp; Controlled)</li> <li>2. Obtain <b>26 marks</b> through <b>Coursework</b> assignments</li> <li>3. Obtain <b>19 marks</b> through the <b>Controlled</b> assessment</li> <li>4. Attain <b>50 marks</b> in the unit</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attempt <b>ALL</b> unit assignments</li> <li>2. Obtain <b>25 marks</b> through the combination of <b>Knowledge and Comprehension</b> criteria</li> <li>3. Obtain <b>25 marks</b> through <b>Application</b> criteria</li> <li>4. Attain <b>50 marks</b> in the unit</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <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></li> <li>• <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></li> </ul>	

### 11. Main Session Appeals and Synoptic Session 2024 Registration

Registration for **Synoptic 2 of Unit 1** of **SEAC** candidates currently in Year 10, will only be accepted, in-person at MATSEC, on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 from 08:00 till 12:00 noon and from 13:30 till 16:00**. No late registrations for this unit will be accepted after this date.

Registration for Appeals and Synoptics of the other SEC and SEAC units (apart from Synoptic 2 of SEAC Unit 1) will be received from **09:00 till 12:00 noon** on the following dates:

*Main Session Appeals*                      **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024**  
No late registrations for appeals will be accepted.

*Synoptics*                                      **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August to Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024**  
Late registrations will only be accepted against payment from Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September to Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2024 noon.

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.