



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



IM 04 SYLLABUS

ART

2026

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Introduction

This syllabus is based on the curriculum principles outlined in *The National Curriculum Framework for All (NCF)* which was translated into law in 2012 and designed using the *Learning Outcomes Framework* that identify what students should know and be able to achieve by the end of their compulsory education.

As a learning outcomes-based syllabus, it addresses the holistic development of all learners and advocates a quality education for all as part of a coherent strategy for lifelong learning. It ensures that all candidates can obtain the necessary skills and attitudes to be future active citizens and to succeed at work and in society irrespective of socio-economic, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, gender and sexual status. This syllabus provides equitable opportunities for all learners to achieve educational outcomes at the end of their schooling which will enable them to participate in lifelong and adult learning, reduce the high incidence of early school leaving and ensure that all learners attain key twenty-first century competences.

This programme also embeds learning outcomes related to cross-curricular themes, namely digital literacy; diversity; entrepreneurship creativity and innovation; sustainable development; learning to learn and cooperative learning and literacy. In this way students will be fully equipped with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed to further learning, work, life and citizenship.

List of Subject Foci

1. Aesthetic sensibility, visual awareness and analytical skills
2. Technical proficiency and application of diverse media
3. A critical and reflective approach in the understanding of own and other artists' works
4. A personal response through the process of research, development and creative practice
5. Knowledge and critical understanding of Art History and familiarity with its various contexts

List of Learning Outcomes

At the end of the programme, I can:

- LO 1. Demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of art and design through effective compositions
- LO 2. Evaluate my own work and that of other artists through a contextual and analytic understanding
- LO 3. Confidently experiment with a range of conventional and new media, materials, processes, techniques and technologies
- LO 4. Develop problem solving skills through creative and critical thinking
- LO 5. Creates a reflective journal to document and annotate ongoing work with a critical awareness of other practitioners, environments and cultures

- LO 6. Respond to and interpret ideas from primary and secondary sources and personal experience throughout the creative process
- LO 7. Identify, understand and analyse the dynamic and evolutionary nature of art and artists

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Subject Focus:	Aesthetic sensibility, visual awareness and analytical skills
Learning Outcome 1:	Demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles of art and design through effective compositions

Topic / Skill	Sub-topic	Assessment Criteria
1.1 Practice Work	1.1.1 Work from Observation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Illustrate a proficient application of the basic elements and principles of art and design 2. Create a well-balanced and organised composition 3. Illustrate the tactile qualities of different reflective and textural surfaces 4. Demonstrate shape and form through a range of tonal, contrasting and chromatic values 5. Apply a sensitive and varied weighting of line 6. Demonstrate scale, proportion and structure
1.2 History of Art	1.2.1 Formal engagement with Works of Art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe the compositional arrangement of forms in a work of art 2. Analyse the elements of art and design in a work of art 3. Analyse the principles of art in a work of art

Subject Focus:	Aesthetic sensibility, visual awareness and analytical skills
Learning Outcome 2:	Evaluate my own work and that of other artists through a contextual and analytic understanding.

Topic / Skill	Sub-topic	Assessment Criteria
2.1 Practice Work	2.1.1 Work from Observation	1. Evaluate my own practice based on the proper application of the elements and principles of art and design
	2.1.2 Project-work	2. Evaluate my original intentions and concepts 3. Reflect on previous artistic production with similar themes
2.2 History of Art		1. Discuss the context of the works of art under study 2. Using appropriate art-historical terminology

Subject Focus:	Technical proficiency and application of diverse media
Learning Outcome 3:	Confidently experiment with a range of conventional and new media, materials, processes, techniques and technologies.

Topic / Skill	Sub-topic	Assessment Criteria
3.1 Practice Work		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce works which reflect expressive and experimental qualities 2. Apply the right medium, material, process, technique to reach my intent 3. Demonstrate a creative application of media through a variety of artistic processes 4. Develop drawing and painting skills in a variety of media, processes and techniques
3.2 History of Art		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate an understanding of artistic processes and media

Subject Focus:	A critical and reflective approach in the understanding of own and other artists' works
Learning Outcome 4:	Develop problem solving skills through creative and critical thinking.

Topic / Skill	Sub-topic	Assessment Criteria
4.1 Practice Work		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore new visual possibilities to my thinking process 2. Formulate ideas related to the explored themes and concepts
4.2 History of Art		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives and thinking processes

Subject Focus:	A personal response through the process of research, development and creative practice
Learning Outcome 5:	Creates a reflective journal to document and annotate ongoing work with a critical awareness of other practitioners, environments and cultures.

Topic / Skill	Sub-topic	Assessment Criteria
5.1 Practice Work		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate concepts and themes through research and ongoing studies of various sources 2. Develop studies based on direct observation from life 3. Reflect on my personal thoughts through annotations¹ integrated with images 4. Demonstrate awareness of other artistic practitioners and relate them to my own work 5. Create a series of experiments and a variety of perspectives and media 6. Demonstrate progress of ideas

¹ Brief reflective notes.

Subject Focus:	A personal response through the process of research, development and creative practice
Learning Outcome 6:	Respond to and interpret ideas from primary and secondary sources and personal experience throughout the creative process.

Topic / Skill	Sub-topic	Assessment Criteria
6.1 Practice Work		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce work inspired from varied primary and secondary sources 2. Use personal experiences as a basis for development of work 3. Analyse concepts through experimental practice and annotation

Subject Focus:	Knowledge and critical understanding of Art History and familiarity with its various contexts
Learning Outcome 7:	Identify, understand and analyse the dynamic and evolutionary nature of art and artists.

Topic / Skill	Sub-topic	Assessment Criteria
7.1 Practice Work	7.1.2 Coursework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyse through visuals and annotations the work of a variety of artists 2. Interpret the artistic output of different artists' processes, techniques and media across the ages
7.2 History of Art		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate familiarity with different artists to show knowledge of the characteristics of various art periods 2. Apply art-historical terminology as a tool to understand and explain art-historical principles 3. Show knowledge of the evolutionary progress of art

Scheme of Assessment

The examination consists of **Coursework** and **Controlled Task**.

The assessment, set over a two-year course programme, consists of:

Component 1 - Coursework: 20%:

- Portfolio (10%);
- Visual Journal (10%).

Component 2 - Controlled Task: 80%

- Part I: Personal Study (20%).
- Part II: The examination consists of one 3-hour written and practical examination:
 - Section A - Work from Observation - 2 hours (30%);
 - Section B - History of Art - 1 hour (30%), which comprises 2 essays of a critical-analytical nature.

Candidates

All work presented should be entirely carried out by the candidate, and must not include the submission of self-portraits.

School Candidates	Private Candidates
<p>School candidates are to submit the 'Portfolio' and 'Visual Journal' in a folder to their respective schools, and the 'Personal Study' in a separate folder to MATSEC. All folders are to be provided by the candidates themselves, properly labelled with their name, surname and ID number.</p> <p>Submission dates of the 'Coursework' and 'Personal Study' folder are issued on MATSEC's timetable.</p>	<p>Private candidates are to submit the 'Portfolio', 'Visual Journal' and 'Personal Study' in one folder provided by the candidates themselves, properly labelled with their name, surname and ID number. The folder must be divided into two sections and marked accordingly: 'Coursework' and 'Personal Study'.</p> <p>Submission dates of the 'Coursework' and 'Personal Study' folder are issued on MATSEC's timetable.</p>

All candidates:

All submitted sheets are to be duly numbered for both the 'Coursework' and 'Personal Study' folders. A 'List of Contents' (including title of work and medium) indicating all the works must be provided with the 'Portfolio' in the 'Coursework' folder.

Candidates may submit work in any medium and may choose to submit **ONE** work in three-dimensional media for any of the practical sections. Media such as hypodermic needles, syringes, broken glass, barbed wire, raw plaster, unfired clay, fresh organic matter, razor blades, and any media that might constitute a potential hazard are not permissible and must not be included. Candidates wishing to submit any three-dimensional work must pack it in a box not exceeding 500 mm x 500 mm x 500 mm. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the work is appropriately packed so as to avoid breakage. The work should be packed in such a way as to facilitate easy re-packing by the assessors. **Boxes not adhering strictly to the rules and regulations will not be accepted.**

Candidates submitting three-dimensional work should also submit supporting documentation on the 'Visual Journal' or 'Personal Study'. Photographic documentation of larger work may also be submitted.

All candidates are to present a submission form (downloadable from the MATSEC website) when presenting the folder to MATSEC.

Instructions on the folder to be submitted for the Personal Study section of the exam:

The folder must be a standard, commercially available one. The folder should not exceed 720 mm (width) x 530 mm (height) x 40 mm (depth) in size, and should not be altered in any way. The folder should be handed in to MATSEC properly closed.

The folder should be handed in to MATSEC on the date, time and venue indicated by MATSEC. **Folders not adhering strictly to the rules and regulations will not be accepted.**

Component 1 - Coursework:

(Total: 20 Marks)

Portfolio

(10 Marks)

The candidates must submit a selection of **SIX** works which they consider to be the best representation of the work they carried out during their course of studies. The selection must include work from observation as well as other work related to research and development. All processes leading to these works are to be submitted in the Visual Journal.

The works should cover:

- a variety of content:
 - a. Things – natural forms and man-made forms;
 - b. Life – people and/or animals;
 - c. Natural, built and social environment – interior and exterior spaces from a physical and/or social perspective;

which may also include:

- d. Design projects;
 - e. Abstract work.
- a variety of media, techniques and processes in two-dimension and/or three-dimension

Candidates can include work in alternative media and technologies (photography, videography, animation, digital illustration, installation work, amongst other examples). Any form of installation, photography, and digital illustration is to be visually documented and presented in a printed format with a resolution of at least 300 dpi. Video work must be handed in on a USB stick with a clear label (holding the candidate's name, surname and ID number), with a maximum 2 minutes duration, and a resolution of 720p. This is to be submitted in the Coursework folder and clearly listed in its 'List of Contents'.

All portfolio material must be presented on **SIX** A2 sheets (420 mm x 594 mm). The works can be either directly executed on, or affixed to the said sheets, such that the dimensions of the **SIX** chosen works might be smaller in size. Photographs which document large works, three-dimensional works, installations and

other works, can be included. Heavy or decorative mounting, boards thicker than 3mm, frames and canvas stretchers must not be included in the folder, while excessive mounting is not acceptable.

Visual Journal

(10 Marks)

The candidates must submit a journal/s (as long as they fit within the Coursework folder) containing a combination of:

- research work on different project themes;
- Art-historical references;
- sketches;
- first-hand responses;
- mind-maps;
- media trials;
- practice work;
- experiments;
- preparatory studies;
- composition plans;
- photographic documentation of processes.

All work is to be accompanied by annotations testifying to the candidates' investigative and creative processes during the course of studies.

Candidates are encouraged to take up a creative approach in the presentation of their journal by creating varied page layouts (half-page, full-page, double-spread work), using varied surfaces (drawing/painting on used paper, coloured paper, primed paper, amongst others) and applying varied media.

The candidates are free to design the format of their journal but the size should not exceed 450 mm x 450 mm.

Component 2 - Controlled Task:**(Total: 80 Marks)****Part I - Personal Study****(20 Marks)**

The candidates must present work, which may include Design projects, on **ONE** theme related to the three general areas indicated hereunder. The areas are intended to give the candidates ample freedom to choose and develop the theme and ideas that are of interest to them.

The theme should fall under one of the following areas:

- a. Things – natural forms and man-made forms;
- b. Life – people and/or animals;
- c. Natural, built and social environment – interior and exterior spaces from a physical and/or social perspective;
- d. Design projects;
- e. Abstract work.

The personal study is meant to test the candidates' ability to develop a theme of their own choice. The work presented must show the candidates' focused investigation (including Artists of Reference), development, critical analysis, and realisation of the selected theme.

The personal study may also suggest other valid directions of investigation of the theme selected. A final work is **not** compulsory.

The candidates may use any medium but the use of a variety of media, which may include computer-generated images (the work, including backgrounds, must be entirely the candidate's own) is highly recommended. Candidates are required to communicate their understanding and thinking process through integrated images and annotations. The use of a medium of the candidates' choice is acceptable but the use of a variety of media is highly recommended.

All two-dimensional work and supporting documentation pertaining to the personal study must be presented on **FIVE** A2 sheets (420 mm x 594 mm); using one side of the sheet only. The works and the relevant annotations can be carried out directly or pasted on the presentation sheets, which should be numbered and clearly marked accordingly.

Candidates may choose to submit their Controlled Task in digital format using portable media (a USB stick). The USB stick must contain only one PDF file, clearly labelled with the Candidate's ID Number (no brackets, spaces, or additional characters). Digital copies of the Controlled Task work need to be submitted in high resolution images of at least 300 dpi, with the photos of the works being taken with balanced lighting. The essay, images, and any annotations must be compiled into the single PDF document, named using the title of the project. Files, drawings, etc should not contain the candidates' name, index or any other personal details anywhere in the file or in the file properties. Candidates are to review their submission carefully before handing it in to ensure that the file is not corrupted and all guidelines are being followed. Submissions which do not follow these instructions will not be considered and may lead to no marks being assigned for this component.

Part II: Work from Observation

Section A: Still-life or Human Figure (2 hours)

(30 Marks)

This section offers two options:

(i) Still-life (which may include Man-made and Natural Forms)

OR

(ii) The Human Figure

Candidates must choose only **ONE** option indicating their choice on the application form.

This is a supervised two-hour session executed in any quick-drying medium, wet or dry, or a combination of both. Chalk pastels, charcoal, and other material liable to smudge must be fixed.

Candidates availing of one's own A2 size sheets have to be stamped and signed by the invigilator-in-charge at the commencement of the session. The candidate may opt to work on a smaller scale by outlining a clear border that defines the work to a minimum of an A3 size (297mm x 420mm). Furthermore, the candidate must provide their mediums, fixatives, easel, drawing board, and other art-related equipment.

Still-Life

Candidates must produce work from observation of a group of **FIVE** objects which may include natural and man-made forms. Any additional preparatory sketches done during the examination must be submitted with the final work. The choice of objects and their setup will be carried out by MATSEC.

OR

Human Figure

This section consists of a two-hour pose. Any additional preparatory sketches done during the examination must be submitted with the final work. The model is provided by MATSEC. The pose of the model is set by the supervisor as instructed by MATSEC. The time taken for the model to rest is not included in the two-hour examination time.

Part II: History of Art

Section B: Critical Analysis Essays (1 hour)

(30 Marks)

The candidates must have a good overall knowledge of the various periods in the history of art.

The syllabus provides a list of thirty-five works which is meant to serve as a reference to guide candidates towards an introductory understanding of the history of art.

Four colour plates of artworks selected from the 35 listed works will be provided accompanied with the name of the artist, date of execution and location. Candidates are to write two in-depth critical analyses (half an hour per critique) on **TWO** of the four works presented.

Essential to a satisfactory analysis is a discussion of:

- the general stylistic and historical context;
- the contribution of the particular artist (when known);
- the iconography and meaning;
- formal and technical details.

It is imperative that the candidate goes beyond a mere description of the artworks provided.

List of artworks for Section A:

1. **Prehistory** - *Sleeping Lady*, c.3300-3000 BCE, National Museum of Archaeology, Valletta
2. **Egyptian** - *Menkaure and Khamerernebtj*, c.2525-2470 BCE, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
3. **Greek** - *Riace Bronzes*, c.460-450 BCE, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Reggio Calabria
4. **Roman** - *Trajan's Column*, 113, Trajan Forum, Rome
5. **Early Christian** - *Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus*, c.356, St Peter's Treasury, Rome
6. **Byzantine** - *The Miracle of the Loaves and Fish*, 520, San Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna
7. **Ottoman** - *Bronze Doors of Hildesheim*, 1015, Cathedral Museum, Hildesheim
8. **Romanesque** - Gislebertus, *Last Judgement*, c.1130, St. Lazarus Cathedral, Autun
9. **Gothic** - *Melchisedek, Abraham, Moses, Samuel and David*, 1194, Our Lady of Chartres Cathedral, Chartres
10. **International Gothic Style** - Herman, Paul and Jean de Limbourg, *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, from 1413-16, Musée Condé, Chantilly
11. **Northern Renaissance** - Jan van Eyck, *The Betrothal of the Arnolfini*, 1434, National Gallery, London
12. **Italian Renaissance** - Leonardo da Vinci, *Last Supper*, 1495-1498, Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan
13. **Mannerism** - Tintoretto, *Last Supper*, 1590-1594, San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice
14. **Baroque** - Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Beheading of St John*, 1608, Co-Cathedral of St. John, Valletta
15. **Rococo** - Jean Honoré Fragonard, *The Swing*, 1767, Wallace Collection, London
16. **Neoclassicism** - Jacques-Louis David, *The Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, Musée du Louvre, Paris
17. **Romanticism** - Francisco de Goya, *The Third of May 1808*, 1814, Museo del Prado, Madrid
18. **Realism** - Gustave Courbet, *A Burial at Ornans*, 1849-1850, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
19. **Impressionism** - Claude Monet, *Impression, Sunrise*, 1872, Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris
20. **Post-Impressionism** - Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait*, 1889, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

21. **Cubism** - Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. Version O)*, 1911, MoMA, New York City
22. **German Expressionism** - Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Self-Portrait as a Soldier*, 1915, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio
23. **Fauvism** - Henri Matisse, *Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Stripe)*, 1905, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen
24. **Futurism** - Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, São Paulo
25. **Dada** - Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917, La Galleria Nazionale, Rome
26. **Surrealism** - Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931, MoMA, New York City
27. **Abstraction** - Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VI*, 1913, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg
28. **Abstract Expressionism** - Jackson Pollock, *Number One (Lavender Mist)*, 1950, National Gallery of Art, Washington
29. **Pop Art** - Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Monroe*, 1962, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool
30. **Minimalism** - Robert Morris, *Untitled*, 1965, reconstructed 1971, Tate, London
31. **Land Art** - Andy Goldsworthy, *Rowan Leaves and Hole*, 1987, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, West Bretton
32. **Installation** - Cornelia Parker, *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1991, Tate, London
33. **Video Art** - Vince Briffa, *Hermes*, 1999, 48th Venice Biennale, Malta Pavilion
34. **Performance Art** - Marina Abramovic, *The Artist is Present*, 2010, MoMA, New York City
35. **Gender Art** - Grayson Perry, *Modern Family*, 2014, National Portrait Gallery, London