



L-Università  
ta' Malta

**MATSEC**  
Examinations Board



**Frequently Asked Questions:  
New SEC and SEAC assessment  
MATSEC**

**2020**

**LIST OF QUESTIONS**

Are the new SEC syllabi and the SEAC syllabi available for download? .....	3
When will the new SEC syllabi start to be implemented?.....	3
How are the new SEC syllabi different from the previous ones? .....	3
How will the new SEC and SEAC non-vocational syllabi be assessed? .....	3
How will the new SEC and SEAC vocational syllabi be assessed?.....	4
What is included in the syllabus document?.....	4
When will moderation of the non-examination assessment take place in schools? .....	4
What will be the role of the moderators?.....	4
Where will the assignments be stored until the end of Year 11? .....	5
Can students sit as private candidates for the SEC examinations? .....	5
What happens when students miss a substantial number of school days due to extenuating circumstances in Years 9, 10 or 11? .....	5
Are teachers expected to repeat tasks in class for students who are absent or away from school when the tasks are done? .....	6
Will access arrangements apply when students conduct tasks in class? .....	6
Will the assignments as part of continuous assessment be provided by the MATSEC Examinations Board? .....	6
Can assignments be repeated from one scholastic year to the next? .....	6
Can the assignment be coordinated amongst several teachers or schools? .....	6
How will the SEC syllabi be assessed? .....	7
Can a student who does all or some of the assignments at Level 1 and 2, sit for the controlled paper at Level 2 - 3? .....	7
When will students register for the SEC examinations? .....	7
When will students choose whether to sit for the Level 2 & 3 or level 1 & 2 of the controlled assessment at the end of Year 11? .....	8
Will MATSEC be keeping the same grading system?.....	8
What are the percentage weightings of the continuous assessment in schools and the controlled assessment at the end of Year 11 for each SEC subject? .....	9
What are the percentage weightings of the continuous assessment in schools and the controlled assessment at the end of Year 11 for each SEAC subject? .....	9
Will SEC resits still take place? .....	10
Can students ask for a revision of paper? .....	10
Where can teachers seek support concerning the new syllabi? .....	10
Will parents be informed about the changes in SEC assessment?.....	10
Will students pay for the SEC examination or resits? .....	10

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**Are the new SEC syllabi and the SEAC syllabi available for download?**

The new SEC syllabi for the year 2023 may be accessed through

<https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/syllabus/secsyllabi2023>

The SEAC syllabi for the year 2023 may be accessed through

<https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/syllabus/seaclevel2023>

**When will the new SEC syllabi start to be implemented?**

SEAC syllabi and SEC vocational syllabi were introduced in Year 9 [Form 3] in some schools as from September 2019. The revised SEC syllabi will start being taught in Year 9 (Form 3) as from September 2020. This implementation will continue in Year 10 (Form 4) in September 2021 and in Year 11 (Form 5) in September 2022. The final controlled examination for school candidates will take place at the end of Year 11, in May/June 2023. Private candidates will have an additional controlled assessment which shall be scheduled in a period before May/June.

**How are the new SEC syllabi different from the previous ones?**

The new SEC syllabi are based upon the previous ones. The new syllabi may be more relevant to today's realities. In most subjects, parts of the present syllabi were replaced by more relevant and innovative material.

The new SEC syllabi are written using learning outcomes and assessment criteria. These clarify learning goals for both students and teachers. Moreover, the new SEC syllabi are divided into three levels and allow for progression, hence widening the range of abilities which are assessed by the MATSEC Examinations Board. Coursework, which is work set and assessed by teachers as per instructions in the relevant syllabus, contributes to a percentage of the global mark in all subjects.

**How will the new SEC and SEAC non-vocational syllabi be assessed?**

The implementation of the new SEC syllabi will consist of a number of assignments that will be conducted during Years 9, 10 and 11. The assignments may be done during lessons in schools or assigned as homework. Teachers will conduct 3 to 5 assignments throughout Years 9, 10 and 11, as per syllabus of each SEC subject. A final controlled assessment will take place at the end of Year 11. This final, controlled assessment will be set and marked by the MATSEC Examination Board. The final SEC mark for each subject will be based on a combination of the mark of the final controlled assessment and the non-examination assessment [coursework]. In most cases the controlled assessment has the highest proportion of marks. The proportion of marks between the controlled assessment and the non-examination assessment [coursework] is indicated in the relevant subject syllabus.

**How will the new SEC and SEAC vocational syllabi be assessed?**

The SEC and SEAC vocational subjects will have no change in the way they are assessed. Vocational subjects will be assessed through two assignments and a controlled assessment annually. The controlled assessment is set by the MATSEC Examinations Board. The assessments are internally and externally verified.

**What is included in the syllabus document?**

Each document has an introduction to the subject, the content [learning outcomes and assessment criteria set at different levels, and a specimen paper of each examination paper together with a relative marking scheme. The syllabi also have samples of each type of assignment tool, together with a marking scheme to illustrate how consistency in marking can be maintained across schools.

When will schools be asked to submit the marks of the non-examination assessment [coursework]?

The marks for the assignments in non-vocational subjects given in Year 9 and Year 10, will be inputted by June of the same year. In Year 11, marks shall be inputted by March of that year. Marks will only be inputted once on a digital software provided by the MATSEC Examination Board in coordination with the school.

**When will moderation of the non-examination assessment take place in schools?**

Moderation of assignments set and marked by teachers in schools will be conducted by personnel assigned by the MATSEC Examinations Board. For non-vocational subjects, moderation will take place during the first term of Year 10 for tasks conducted in Year 9; during the first term of Year 11 for tasks conducted in the previous Year10, and during the third term of Year 11 for tasks conducted in Year 11. In most cases, only a selected sample of the students' work will be moderated. Candidates may also be asked to attend an interview related to their work.

**What will be the role of the moderators?**

The primary aim of moderation will be to support teachers so as to ensure standardisation across schools. MATSEC will provide written feedback to the school, following the moderation exercise conducted.

**Where will the assignments be stored until the end of Year 11?**

The assignments are the responsibility of the students. Students are expected to take their assignments to school when requested by the school for moderation purposes. It is up to schools to decide whether students should keep their assignments at home or at school until and if requested by the MATSEC Examination Board.

**Can students sit as private candidates for the SEC examinations?**

All students will be registered as school candidates when they are in Year 9 for the subjects they are studying at school. In Year 11, students who are registered as school candidates may not register as private candidates for any of the subjects they would have studied at school.

Students who are not registered as school candidates in a subject, have left compulsory schooling, or are more than 16 years of age may register as private candidates for SEC non vocational subjects. Private candidates shall sit for the controlled examination paper at the end of Year 11 and an additional paper. Individuals cannot sit as private candidates for vocational subjects.

There may be instances where a candidate may be allowed to sit for the private candidate paper. These include students facing genuine extenuating circumstances such as:

- students who were sick for a long period or away from schools in Year 9 and/or Year 10 and/or Year 11;
- students who did not complete the last three years of secondary education;
- students who enter secondary school late in the 3 year cycle.

In such cases and other very exceptional cases, the school has to make a request to the MATSEC Examination Board for consideration.

**What happens when students miss a substantial number of school days due to extenuating circumstances in Years 9, 10 or 11?**

Such students are still expected to complete the remaining assignments, as all other students. These students will be given the opportunity to sit for the private candidate paper at the end of Year 11. MATSEC will finally consider the higher mark between the mark obtained for non-examination assessment [coursework] or the mark obtained in the private candidate's paper.

**Are teachers expected to repeat tasks in class for students who are absent or away from school when the tasks are done?**

No, this is not expected. Depending upon the nature of the assignment, it is likely that students will carry out similar tasks [same mode] throughout the scholastic year. Teachers may consider these tasks as a replacement to the missed out coursework due to medical or other reasons, if applicable. Teachers shall not correct and mark assignments which have not been conducted under their supervision.

**Will access arrangements apply when students conduct tasks in class?**

The same Access Arrangements which schools provide to students daily should be applied when conducting tasks in class as part of the continuous assessment. Access arrangements during the controlled end of Year 11 examination will continue to be administered by the Access Disability Support Committee of the University of Malta.

Students, however, will be encouraged to register for Examination Access Arrangements at the beginning of Year 9. It is suggested that schools adopt the Examination Access Arrangements recommended by the University of Malta.

**Will the assignments as part of non-exam assessment [coursework] be provided by the MATSEC Examinations Board?**

No. Each SEC syllabus has a number of modes of assessment which may be compulsory and others which one can choose from. Different modes are an opportunity for the teacher to assess in the best possible way they deem fit. Each subject syllabus gives relevant guidance on the development of such assignments.

**Can assignments be repeated from one scholastic year to the next?**

Depending upon the subject syllabus, some assignments may be repeated from one year to another, if it is reasonably guaranteed that no copying takes place by students. Simple variations in the context of the assignment may ensure a higher level of validity for the assessment.

**Can the assignment be coordinated amongst several teachers or schools?**

Yes, teachers within a school or across schools may work and collaborate to set a common set of assignments. Again, all efforts must be done to ensure that this is done in a fair and transparent manner and that students are not advantaged from this arrangement. In such cases, the submission date should be the same for all students.

**How will the SEC syllabi be assessed?**

Assessment of all subjects will consist of two parts: (a) Non-exam assessment [coursework] which takes place in Years 9, 10 and 11 through assignments that are created by teachers as per exemplars set in the syllabi and marked by teachers as per rubrics provided in syllabi; (b) Controlled Assessment at the end of Year 11, set and marked by MATSEC.

The continuous assessment assignments can be set at Levels 1, 2 and 3 or at Levels 1 and 2. The controlled assessment at the end of Year 11 will also have two tiers, one at Levels 2 and 3 and one at Levels 1 and 2. Students will be requested to choose their option for the controlled paper in year 11.

Private candidates shall sit for another controlled assessment paper to make up for the continuous assessment.

This system thus caters for the attainment levels of a wide range of ability of students and will enable students to achieve their full potential in each subject.

The current SEC system consisting of a common Paper 1 and a tiered Paper 2 (A or B) will be replaced by the above system.

**Can a student who does all or some of the assignments at Level 1 and 2, sit for the controlled paper at Level 2 - 3?**

Yes. However, in such a case, 60% of the mark obtained in the non-exam assessment [coursework] assignments set at Level 1 - 2 will be considered for grading purpose.

**When will students register for the SEC examinations?**

Students will register for the SEC examination during the first term of Year 9, for all the subjects that they are learning at school.

**When will students choose whether to sit for the Level 3 & 2 or level 2 & 1 of the controlled assessment at the end of Year 11?**

Students will make this choice in the first term of Year 11.

**Will MATSEC be keeping the same grading system?**

In SEC subjects, candidates who sit for the controlled assessment at Levels 2 - 3 may obtain Grades 1 - 7 or U, with 1 being the highest attainable grade. Candidates sitting for the controlled assessment at Levels 1 - 2 may obtain Grades 6 - 8 or U. In SEAC subjects, students will not be awarded a grade and their achievement will be indicated by level.

Each syllabus contains the knowledge, applications and reasoning skills linked to each marking grade.

A student is required to satisfy the examiners in both the coursework conducted in Years 9 to 11 and in the controlled assessment at the end of Year 11, to obtain grades 1 to 7 (equivalent to level 2 and 3).

Grade	Level
1	Level 3
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	Level 2
7	
8	Level 1

*Table 1: Grading Structure for SEC Subjects*

**What are the percentage weightings of the non-examination assessment in schools and the controlled assessment at the end of Year 11, for each SEC subject?**

All SEC non-vocational syllabi have non-examination assessments conducted in Years 9 to 11 and a controlled assessment at the end of Year 11. Vocational syllabi on the other hand will have a non – examination assessments and controlled assessments annually. The following table gives the percentage weighting of most SEC subjects syllabi.

<b>SEC Subject</b>	<b>Continuous Assessment</b>	<b>Controlled Assessment</b>
Italian, French, Spanish, German	20%	80%
Physical Education	25%	75%
Religious Studies, Environmental Studies, Mathematics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, English Language, English Literature, Maltese, Maltese as a foreign language, Graphical Communication	30%	70%
Accounting, Economics, Business Studies, History, Geography, Social Studies, Ethics, Computing, Home Economics	40%	60%
Agribusiness, Health and social care, Engineering technology, Hospitality, Information technology, Media literacy education, Retail, Hairdressing and beauty, Fashion and textiles	60%	40%

*Table 2: Weighting of Coursework and Controlled Assessment in SEC Subjects*

**What are the percentage weightings of the non-examination assessment in schools and the controlled assessment at the end of Year 11, for each SEAC subject?**

The following table gives the percentage weighting of most SEAC subjects syllabi.

<b>SEAC Subject</b>	<b>Continuous Assessment</b>	<b>Controlled Assessment</b>
Agribusiness, Health and social care, Engineering technology, Hospitality, Information technology, Media literacy education, Retail, Hairdressing and beauty, Fashion and textiles	70%	30%
Malti għall-komunikazzjoni, English and communication, Mathematics, Science	60%	40%

*Table 3: Weighting of Coursework and Controlled Assessment in SEAC Subjects*

**Will SEC resits still take place?**

Yes. SEC resits of the core subjects will be set by MATSEC, as is current practice.

**Can students ask for a revision of paper?**

In non-vocational subjects, students may ask for a revision of paper in the controlled assessment only following the publication of results and on dates published by the MATSEC Examination Board. In vocational subjects students may appeal the unit mark. In such cases students are to apply for the appeal in the same year of the assessment and on dates published by the MATSEC Examination Board.

**Where can teachers seek support concerning the new syllabi?**

Teachers may contact the MATSEC Support Unit on [matsec@um.edu.mt](mailto:matsec@um.edu.mt) or 2340 2814/5/6 for any issues or support with regard to assessment and moderation. Teachers may also seek support from Education Officers, Heads of Department and colleagues according to the type of support that is required. Teachers may also email at [dg.dcle.mede@gov.mt](mailto:dg.dcle.mede@gov.mt) for support.

**Will parents be informed about the changes in SEC assessment?**

Yes. Different communication channels will be used to inform parents about these changes. Information meetings, short clips on the social media, and FAQ for parents together with a printed leaflet will be the main channels of communication with parents.

**Will students pay for the SEC examination or resits?**

No, registration for SEC examinations does not carry a fee if done within the registration period as issued by MATSEC.