



L-Università ta' Malta  
Institute for European Studies

# Undergraduate Programme

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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# Contents

5

**Welcome Note**

6

**Institute Staff & Website**

8

**Institute Location**

9

**General Course Information**

- |    |                                     |    |  |
|----|-------------------------------------|----|--|
| 9  | Year I                              | 12 | Compensated Passes   |
| 9  | Year II                             | 12 | Assessment Opportunities and Eligibility for re-assessment |
| 9  | Year III                            | 13 | Revision of Assessment                                     |
| 9  | French Language and Culture         | 14 | Placement Programme  |
| 10 | EU-languages                        | 16 | Erasmus+ Programme   |
| 10 | The ECTS credit system              | 18 | The Undergraduate Dissertation                             |
| 10 | Compulsory and Elective Study Units | 19 | Gozo Dissertation Workshop                                 |
| 10 | Assessment and grading system       | 20 | Classification of the degree                               |

22

**General Information about your Status as a Student at UM**

- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 22 | Language Used                            | 22 | Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)                       |
| 22 | Referencing System                       | 23 | Electronic Student Information Management System (eSims) |
| 22 | Lecture Attendance and General Behaviour | 23 | Degree+  |

24

**The Institute for European Studies Library**

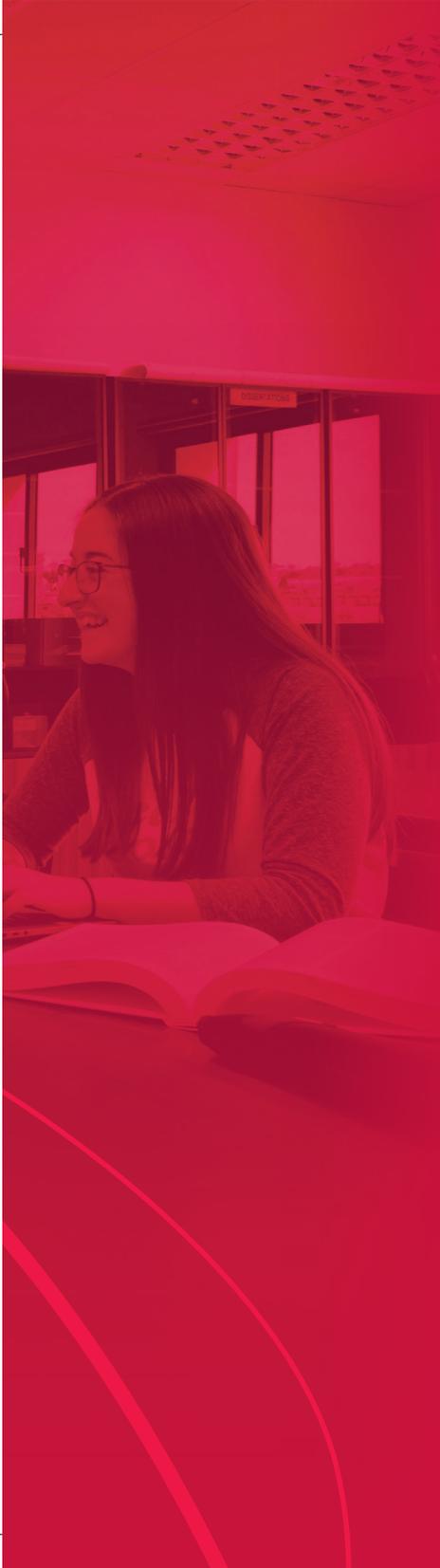
- 24 Opening hours
- 24 Contact person

25

**Student Support**

- 25 Provisions for Students with a Disability
- 25 Health and Wellness Centre





# Welcome

On behalf of the academic and administrative staff at the Institute for European Studies, we would like to welcome you to our course. The aim of this handbook is to provide you with important information you will find useful as you study with us. This information relates both specifically to your course with the Institute for European Studies as well as your status as a student at the University of Malta.

The Institute for European Studies, originally the European Documentation and Research Centre, was created in 1991 and offers various degree programmes, including the Bachelors, the Masters (both taught and by research) as well as a doctoral programme. Over 1,000 students have graduated from the Institute and have gone on to become key public servants both here in Malta (Permanent Secretaries, Directors, EU Fund Managers amongst others) and abroad (Ambassadors, Heads of Mission, Consulates) as well as working for NGOs, in the media and with private industry. Some have also entered politics (former students have occupied (and continue to occupy) the position of Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of the Maltese Parliament as well as Members of the European Parliament). Our internal motto is that, through our alumni, the Institute has helped make Maltese membership of the EU a success.

**We welcome you to our Institute**

*The information in this handbook is provided as a guide but may change over the duration of your course so you should always refer to the University's website to ensure that you are aware of the University's most recent regulations and byelaws.*

# Institute Staff & Website

## Our team

The Institute for European Studies has 8 full-time academic staff members and 5 administrative staff members. Additionally, we have 25 additional lecturers who teach on our courses.

### ACADEMIC STAFF *(in alphabetical order)*



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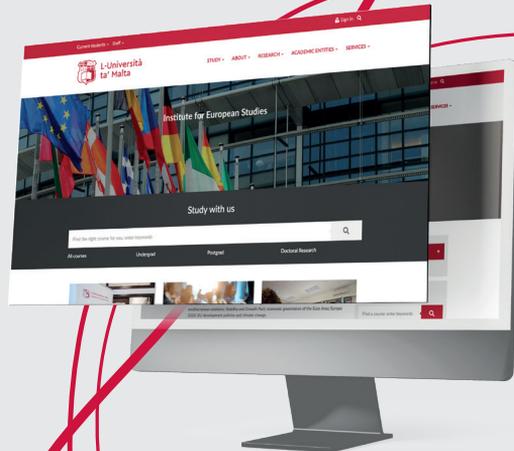
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### Institute Website

Please refer to our website for all the information you will need, including timetables, contact details and registration details:

➤ [um.edu.mt/europeanstudies](http://um.edu.mt/europeanstudies)





## Institute Location

The Institute is situated on the second floor of the first building to your left as you enter University from the main entrance facing Mater Dei Hospital. We are situated next to the Campus Hub. The Institute is clearly visible and signage can be found on all sides of the building indicating our location. We encourage you to visit the Institute and our library.



Find us on the  
UM Campus Map  
**BUILDING 4**



Find us on  
Google Maps



## General Course Information

The course programmes offered by the Institute for European Studies are governed by the General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards and the specific bye-laws for the Degree of Bachelor European Studies (Honours or General). These regulations are available on the website of the University of Malta and also on the website of the Institute for European Studies. Students should be aware of these regulations, information from which will also be provided in this handbook.

The undergraduate course is a multidisciplinary course which builds an understanding of modern Europe by analysing the politics, economics and legal dimensions of European integration:

### Year I

First year students will focus on core topics in all three disciplines so as to provide a substantive understanding of the concepts that underpin European Studies. Assessments are primarily exam-based to ensure continuity from the mode of assessment provided in secondary education.

### Year II

In the second year, a substantial number of units are electives so the student can choose more specialised knowledge while the modes of assessment also become more varied, including presentations and simulation. Second year students also have the opportunity to undertake a placement outside campus, giving them the chance to work in a professional environment and gain practical skills in areas related to the EU.

### Year III

The third and last year of the course is primarily electives. Students are provided with the opportunity to go on Erasmus+ in the third year and those studying for the Honours degree must also complete a thesis. By the end of the course students should have a strong grounding in the politics, economics and law of the EU and should be able to work in any EU-related area.

### French Language and Culture

Students registered to read European Studies as a main area of study are encouraged to gain proficiency in the French language and culture (with French being one of the main working languages of the EU). To facilitate this, the Department of French of the Faculty of Arts offers the possibility of registering for specific French study units, see Programme of Study. They are to start at the level appropriate to their qualifications as guided by the Department of French. A total of not less than 8 and not more than 10 ECTS credits taken during the second and third year will count as part of the European Studies component.

## **EU-languages**

In total the EU has 24 official languages, including Maltese. Three of these languages (French, English and German) are considered 'working languages' but all official languages of the EU have equal status and students are encouraged to check the electives and optionals available from the departments teaching these languages.

## **The ECTS credit system**

ECTS is short for the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System and is a system adopted across all countries in the EU to allow the fair comparison of the amount of work carried out for each course. A single ECTS credit is the equivalent of a total of 25 hours of study, including lectures.

The number of credits assigned to a study unit is indicated in the program of studies as well as in the study unit description.

## **Compulsory and Elective Study Units**

The programme of studies offers a mix of compulsory and elective study units. Compulsory study units are those units that the Institute believes are necessary for students to graduate with a broad understanding of the politics, economics and law of European integration. Elective study units, allow you to choose the topics you want to further your knowledge in within the area of study you have selected. The programme of studies clearly indicates the study units which are compulsory as well as the number of elective study units that you are expected to follow.

Moreover, a list of elective study units is given in the programme of studies. You can read the study unit descriptors to obtain an understanding of what the unit entails before making your decision. Each unit's descriptor will also list the pre-requisite study units. These are the study-units that you should have to take before you can follow a particular study-unit. You should take note of these pre-requisites in determining the elective study units you want to follow.

## **Assessment and grading system**

Study units are assessed using a variety of methods, including examination, project work (including posters), presentations, simulations. The method of assessment and the weight that each assessment carries are indicated in the study unit description for each study unit.

The final mark assigned to each study unit will be the weighted average of each assessment component. In addition to the mark, each study unit is assigned a grade as follows:

<b>DESCRIPTOR</b>	<b>MARK RANGE</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
<p><b>Work displaying exceptional quality</b></p> <p>Exceptional performance showing comprehensive and critical understanding, and application of the subject matter. Evidence of extensive additional reading/research/work.</p>	<b>90–100%</b>	<b>A+</b>
<p><b>Work displaying comprehensive and critical understanding</b></p> <p>Superior performance showing a comprehensive and critical understanding of the subject matter. Evidence of considerable additional reading/research/work.</p>	<b>80–89%</b>	<b>A</b>
<p><b>Work displaying comprehensive understanding</b></p> <p>Performance showing a very good working knowledge of the subject matter. Evidence of a moderate amount of additional reading/research/work.</p>	<b>75–79%</b>	<b>B+</b>
<p><b>Work displaying substantial understanding</b></p> <p>Above-average performance, with a working knowledge of the subject matter. Evidence of some additional reading/research/work.</p>	<b>70–74%</b>	<b>B</b>
<p><b>Work displaying sound understanding</b></p> <p>Average performance. Evidence of little additional reading/research/work.</p>	<b>60–69%</b>	<b>C+</b>
<p><b>Work displaying satisfactory understanding</b></p> <p>Adequate performance. No evidence of additional reading/research/work.</p>	<b>55–59%</b>	<b>C</b>
<p><b>Work displaying satisfactory understanding with shortcomings</b></p> <p>Adequate but inconsistent performance. No evidence of additional reading/research/work.</p>	<b>50–54%</b>	<b>D+</b>
<p><b>Work displaying basic understanding</b></p> <p>Marginal performance, satisfying minimum criteria.</p>	<b>45–49%</b>	<b>D</b>
<p><b>Work displaying inadequate understanding to varying degrees</b></p>	<b>0–44%</b>	<b>F</b>

(see note below)

**Note:** If mark obtained is between 35% and 44% in *Compensatable* Study-Units, and is compensated by good performance in other Study-Units, a Compensated Pass (CP) shall be awarded (vide regulation 48).

Unjustified absence for an assessment when a valid reason for absence is required, or failure to hand in assigned work on time, or ineligibility to take assessment due to unapproved absence from lectures shall be assigned an F with 0 marks in the calculation of the year average mark.

### Compensated Passes

Some of the study units in the course programme are considered *compensatable*. This means that if the student has a good year average, but failed one such unit, then that unit can still be awarded a compensated pass and the unit will not need to be re-assessed. In other words, the knowledge gained by the student in other study units, compensate for the poorer performance in other study units. For a unit to be *compensatable*, the student must achieve a mark that is not less than 35% and must have a Year Average Mark of at least 50%.

Units that are not *compensatable* will have (NC) written next to them in the programme of studies.

Note that the year average mark is calculated on the marks obtained by the student in all study units at the end of the year. Note also, that the year average is calculated as the weighted average of the grades obtained for each study unit, where the weight is determined by the unit's credit value.

### Assessment Opportunities and Eligibility for re-assessment

If a student does not pass a study unit, then they may be re-assessed for the failed component of the study unit. The part of the assessment which can be re-assessed is clearly indicated in the study unit description under the column Resit Availability in the section describing the Method of Assessment.

For study units, with a component marked as "resit available" students are given four opportunities to obtain a pass grade in the assessment of that component. The first opportunity is at the end of the semester assessment session. If the student is absent or fails this first opportunity, then they are entitled to be assessed again during the September assessment session. This will be the second opportunity.

If the student, for any reason, still does not obtain a pass grade in either of these two opportunities, the study unit is marked as an Incomplete Study Unit and the student is eligible to either refer this unit to the next year of the course, or to take an extension year of studies. In both cases, the assessment would take place at the end of the semester when the assessment is next scheduled (e.g. if the unit is usually scheduled to be assessed in the second semester, then the assessment will take place during the June examination session). This will be considered as the third opportunity for assessment.

If the student, for any reason, does not obtain a passing grade in this third opportunity, then they are eligible for a fourth and final opportunity during the following September assessment session.

If a study unit has a component for which re-assessment is not possible, then the original mark of this component is retained to count towards the overall mark of that study unit.

Note that during the September assessment session of any academic year, students shall only be eligible to be assessed in Incomplete Study-Units, whether due to failure or absence if the total of Incomplete Study-Units does not amount to more than 20 ECTS.

If a student fails more than 20 ECTS, then the student will be required to repeat the year. Note that repeating a year is only allowed once during the course.

When a unit is being re-assessed, the maximum overall mark/grade that may be awarded to the Study Unit shall be 45%, grade D.

### **Revision of Assessment**

Students may request that any work submitted for assessment is reviewed to ascertain that no error was made in the award of marks. Students may make an additional request that the decision of the revision is elaborated by a detailed report. The request for this revision must be made within one week from the publication of the result of the assessment. The revision will be carried out by a reviewer appointed by Senate and who had not participated in the marking of the original paper.



*Institute Quiz Night 2022*

### Placement Programme

As part of your academic programme, students have the possibility to carry out work placements. The placements are offered as an elective study unit in Semester II, to second and third year undergraduate students as well as post-graduate students. The placements involve practical work in various public and private entities, which have signed agreements with the Institute and are partners in this placement programme. These include the European Parliament Office in Malta, the Ministry for Finance and Employment, the Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division, the EU Coordination Department, *Servizzi Ewropej f'Malta*, Malta Business Bureau, the Malta Chamber of SMEs, the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ernst and Young and Zaar Crowdfunding platform. During their placements, students carry out different tasks, depending on the core activities of the entity where they were placed, including research activities and report writing on current EU topics, assisting in the completing of applications and in the management of EU funded projects, providing support in relation to public relations and the management of social media platforms. Through these placements, the Institute's students have the opportunity to gain practical work experience, in the area of European studies, thus facilitating their future employment.

Since the number of placement opportunities are limited, students are selected by means of an interview. At the end of the placement, another short interview is held where the supervisor from the respective entity provides the student with feedback, in the presence of academic staff from the Institute.



## STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

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### **MATTHEW COLE**

*An alumnus of the Institute of European Studies who conducted his placement at the Ministry for Finance*



Being given the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in your studies in the actual workplace is arguably the best way to understand and refine the skills and knowledge provided by your degree. This year I was fortunate enough in being chosen to undertake a work placement at the Ministry for Finance within the Research Unit. Aware that the work placement at the Ministry for Finance would be demanding, I nonetheless approached each and every placement with an open mind, considering it as an opportunity rather than a chore.

At the Ministry for Finance I found a very welcoming environment composed of individuals with a desire to constantly learn and refine their knowledge; a team which is eager to work together with the intention to deliver at the highest level in various European political fora and a group of individuals who are enthusiastic about teaching and sharing their experience in order to allow collective reflection and give room for debate. The placement at the Ministry for Finance has been very constructive at an academic level and has helped me understand certain areas relating to the Economic and Monetary Union which I had studied for my degree, in a better way. Nevertheless, the factor which struck me most out of this experience was the opportunity to engage in discussions. This has not only helped me become more confident about expressing my views and tested my knowledge on certain areas, but most of all has exposed me to the arguments of other individuals which on a personal level, is very constructive.

With this in mind, I recommend other students to consider taking on this opportunity of a placement in European Studies, since, despite the challenges it might entail, it is the ideal stepping stone for students wanting self-betterment and to pursue a career in this field.

*(IES Newsletter 2018)*

### **Erasmus+ Programme**

The Erasmus+ programme is a European Community Action Scheme for Mobility of Students and is part of the drive by the European Union to ensure that graduates within its member countries have different opportunities to undertake a study or traineeship mobility. The aim is to improve your inter-cultural soft skills, employability, language skills so as to increase your opportunities to function on a Union-wide basis within the single European market.

The period of study mobility designated for our students is the first semester of the third year. Credits are awarded for overseas study just as they would be in Malta and are normally awarded once transcripts are received from the partner institution.

A supplementary grant is provided by the Erasmus+ scheme to help toward travel and living costs.

#### **The procedure to apply for an Erasmus+ exchange is outlined below:**

- Ⓧ Read upon general information on the Erasmus+ website section of the International Office of the University of Malta.
- Ⓧ Start looking into which university you would like to visit from the list of available universities: the Institute has agreements with universities in many EU (and non-EU) countries, including France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.
- Ⓧ Go through the universities' websites to find details on their study-units.
- Ⓧ Keep in mind that you should find a university where you will be doing, as much as possible, similar subjects to what you would be doing in Malta during the exchange period. If you are following the general degree, it is important that the University that you choose offers also study units in your other area of study (besides European Studies).
- Ⓧ Selection is based on academic performance: students are more likely to be assigned their preferred university if they have achieved marks which place them in the higher ranking of their student cohort.
- Ⓧ At the same time contact the International Office, Administration Building as it is this office that manages the whole process.
- Ⓧ As an Institute our primary input is academic for when you come to select what units you will study while abroad, as these need to be approved by the Institute's Erasmus+ co-ordinator.

Besides the student mobility for studies, all UM students also have the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ mobility for traineeship, where students can carry out research or a work experience abroad. Further details are available on the Erasmus+ website section of the International and EU Office of the University of Malta.



## STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

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### **BRIANA MIFSUD**

*An alumna of the Institute of European Studies who went on the Erasmus+ exchange to the Netherlands*



When I got the email that I was accepted to the Hague University in the Netherlands for my Erasmus+ exchange, I was over the moon. Many of those close to me voiced their concerns about the prospect of going abroad for an extended period mid-pandemic, but I had faith that the experience would still be a fruitful one.

Upon arriving, restrictions were quite strict, having to quarantine upon arrival and getting used to a 9PM curfew. The situation gradually improved and it was made easier by the friendships I made with fellow international students as we were all in the same boat. I truly believe that had it not been for the pandemic, we international students would not have united as much as we did. Living in an apartment where I had to do everything myself was a learning curve, but also allowed me a newfound independence. Another element of independence I enjoyed was found in the bike I rented, as it is a safe and common way for people to commute via bike in the Netherlands.

Some of the highlights of my Erasmus+ experience include travelling across the Netherlands, my first experience at a theme park, going on a canal cruise in The Hague and getting to see various paintings from renowned artists in museums across the country. Academically, I enjoyed how most of my study units had an assignment as a means of assessment, which usually entailed groupwork and enabled new connections with both home and exchange students. Apart from that, I liked how the university was ambitious in adding a new study unit which analysed how the pandemic impacted local communities on a European scale. For those students who are interested in going on Erasmus+ but are discouraged by the pandemic, I would still recommend going as you will learn more about what you are capable of on your own and make lasting friendships from across the continent.

*(IES Newsletter 2021)*

### The Undergraduate Dissertation

The dissertation is a compulsory element of the B. European Studies (Hons).

The proposed research topic must be within the areas of study covered by the course and must be relevant to European Studies. Before submitting a title, you are to verify that a thesis by a similar title has not already been submitted in the recent past or is in the process of being written. In preparing your proposal ensure that the title of the dissertation is such that a full-time or part-time member of the Institute for European Studies' academic staff can advise you. In many cases the same member of the academic staff will also be appointed as your supervisor although this is not automatic. The dissertation proposal is part of the assessment of the undergraduate Research Methods study unit and you will be guided on the process of formulating your proposal as part of that study unit.

#### The dissertation proposal must include the following main elements:

- ⊕ A title that must be clear and focused.
- ⊕ A set of research questions which the researcher will try to answer when writing the dissertation.
- ⊕ A clear description of the methodology that would be applied.
- ⊕ A list of those individuals (both academic and technical) consulted in the drafting of the proposal.
- ⊕ The proposal must be accompanied by an initial bibliography giving proof that the student has already reviewed the relevant literature when preparing his/her dissertation proposal.

Students are to ensure that they consult their supervisor continuously throughout the writing period and that the supervisor has seen a complete copy of the final dissertation in good time before its submission.

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to present the draft parts of the dissertation to their tutor in as complete and clear writing style as possible. They are to ensure that drafts are thoroughly spell-checked and that they are presented in a coherent form.

The dissertation must be between 10,000 and 12,000 words long including footnotes but excluding the bibliography. In addition, the dissertation should include an Abstract of not more than 500 words, Contents Page, Acknowledgment of about 50 words, and the Declaration of Authenticity form. These are not included in the word count.

Students are required to submit a research ethics application for their dissertation. Students will be guided through this process in their third year. The Institute is associated with the Faculty Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy.



### **Gozo Dissertation Workshop**

The Gozo Dissertation Workshop has become an integral part of the Institute's academic calendar. Normally held in February, 3rd year students on the Bachelor's programme travel to Gozo with the academic staff for 2/3 days of intensive discussions regarding their dissertations. Students present to their classmates and the assembled academics their research proposal and discuss any difficulties they have encountered. In addition to being a valuable opportunity for students to gather feedback about their research area and methodology, the workshop has become an opportunity for students to develop their soft skills and a sense of *esprit de corps*.



*Gozo Dissertation Workshop 2020*

### Classification of the degree

The year averages are used to determine the final classification of the degree. There are four different award categories, namely First Class Honours, Upper Second Class Honours, Lower Second Class Honours and Third Class Honours.

These are normally awarded as follows:

<b>MARK RANGE</b>	<b>FINAL CLASSIFICATION OF DEGREE</b>
<b>80% – 100%</b>	<b>First Class Honours</b>
<b>79% – 70%</b>	<b>Upper Second Class Honours</b>
<b>69% – 55%</b>	<b>Lower Second Class Honours</b>
<b>54% – 45%</b>	<b>Third Class Honours</b>

The final classification mark is obtained by taking the weighted average of each year, where each year carries a weighting percentage as follows:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>AVERAGE MARK WEIGHT</b>
<b>First year</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Second year</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Third year</b>	<b>45%</b>

To complete the undergraduate course you must successfully complete **180ECTS**.

**B. Euro. Studies  
Graduates**



*The Class of 2020*



*The Class of 2021*

# General Information about your Status as a Student at the UM

## Language Used

Tuition and assessment at the University of Malta are carried out using the English language.

## Referencing System

For written work such as assignments and the dissertation, the Institute uses the Harvard referencing system. Guidelines on how to use Harvard can be found on our website under [▼ Student Resources](#)

## Lecture Attendance and General Behaviour

Lecture attendance is compulsory and you may not be allowed to sit for an assessment if your attendance is not considered satisfactory. Students are reminded that they should conduct themselves appropriately at all times, including being punctual for lectures and meetings, respecting the University's standards and ethics, ensuring University remains a safe space for students and academics and respecting each other at all times.

## Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

The VLE is a web-based learning environment which provides tutors with a range of tools to support students with their studies. Tutors use the VLE to post teaching materials and resources such as course notes, reading lists, online articles, audio and video-clips among others. The VLE supports communication and collaboration between tutors and students through the use of discussion boards and chat rooms, and enables students to submit coursework online. The study-unit areas on the VLE are only accessible to students who are registered to the respective study-units.

You do not need any specific software to access VLE, other than a web browser. It is recommended to use the latest versions of the common web browsers such as Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari or Microsoft Internet Explorer.

### **Electronic Student Information Management System (eSims)**

The eSims provides students with a portal that allows for several administrative tools related to the study units and course. This portal is used to enrol for each academic year, to register for study units, view and update personal details, view academic records including past and latest results, and submit feedback on study units.

The eSims portal may be accessed through the drop-down menu under Current Students on any UM website. When you register for a course, you will be provided with the username and password credentials needed to access eSims.

### **Degree+**

DegreePlus, an initiative of the University of Malta, recognises that the time spent studying at university is a time for personal growth and development. To that end, university strives to provide students with an exciting and diverse range of opportunities to help broaden their academic and non-academic horizons. The areas covered by DegreePlus include voluntary work, entrepreneurship, sport, culture and heritage, languages, music, creative and performing arts and many more.

University of Malta students who actively engage in extracurricular activities on and off campus will have their work listed in their University Transcript and DegreePlus Certificate.

Should you have any queries, please contact the Degree+ Office by email on

✉ [degreeplus@um.edu.mt](mailto:degreeplus@um.edu.mt)



# Student Support

## Provisions for Students with a Disability

Assessment arrangements may be made for students with a disability to enable them to perform to the best of their ability and to be assessed, provided that such students do not gain undue advantage from such assistance, and provided that the integrity and academic standards of the Assessments are not thereby jeopardised.

Such arrangements will be made in line with the guidelines for access arrangements that may be approved by Senate from time to time. Requests for access arrangements should be made in writing to the Registrar, through the Student Officer, and should include the necessary supporting evidence.

Full details on the provisions for students with disabilities can be found in the University Assessment Regulations, specifically item 68 onwards.

## Health and Wellness Centre

The Health and Wellness Centre at the Msida Campus offers services aimed at enhancing the wellness of UM students. More specifically, the Centre offers support in terms of:

- ⊙ ACCESS Disability Support Unit
- ⊙ Chaplaincy
- ⊙ Counselling Services
- ⊙ Student Advisory Services
- ⊙ Drug-related issues
- ⊙ Mental Health Services
- ⊙ Nutritional Advice
- ⊙ Sexual Health Clinic
- ⊙ Tobacco Cessation Support
- ⊙ Traditional Chinese Medicine
- ⊙ Student Solidarity Fund

For more information student can access the following link:

➤ [um.edu.mt/services/health-wellness](https://um.edu.mt/services/health-wellness)



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