

This Policy Document will no longer apply to
any Cohort after 2025



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



Policy Document

SEAC Vocational Subjects

2019

Updated July 2024

version 2

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1. TERMINOLOGY

Term	Definition
Assessment Criteria	A description of what a candidate is expected to do in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved.
Assessor	The person responsible to grade the candidate's work, issue a mark and determine the candidate's final grade.
Competences	Each competence is defined as a combination of knowledge and skills and is associated with the level of autonomy and responsibility that the person is expected to have at that level.
Controlled Assessment	An assessment set by MATSEC which may include written and/or practical tasks as specified in the syllabus. This may be a take-home assessment or carried out under controlled conditions.
Coursework	A number of assignments set by teachers and given to the candidate during the course as specified in the syllabus.
Knowledge	Knowledge refers to the understanding of basic, factual and theoretical information, which is traditionally associated with formal learning but can also be acquired from informal and non-formal learning.
Learning Outcome	Learning Outcomes are statements which describe what a qualification represents in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) defines a learning outcome as what the candidate understands and is capable of doing at the end of the learning process.
Malta Qualification Framework	The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) provides an indication of the level of difficulty as a benchmark for a qualification, which needs to be assigned a level and mapped to the framework. The MQF has level descriptors from Level 1 to 8. The level descriptors are useful for education and training providers as they describe the Knowledge, Skills and Competences and a set of Learning Outcomes, which indicate to the candidate the end of a learning process.
Quality Assurance	A continuous process to assure the standards and quality of the learning assessment programme.
Sample of Work	A sample of work is a percentage of the candidate's work gathered as a representative sample for the internal or external verifier.
Skills	Skills imply the application of acquired knowledge and understanding in different contexts. A skill may be the result of formal learning or of repetitive work in an informal setting.
Synoptic Assessment	An assessment in the form of a written examination and conducted under controlled conditions covering all learning outcomes and the majority of Knowledge and Comprehension assessment criteria in a given unit.
Unit Content	The unit content is the content required to be communicated and given to the candidate per learning outcome. Each learning outcome must have content related to it, which content must be delivered to provide the candidate with the tools necessary to achieve that outcome.

2. PREAMBLE

Introduction

2.01. The aim of this handbook is to gather all policies and procedures to be followed by schools, teachers and students who intend to teach and assess/learn one or more of the following vocational subjects:

- SEAC 01 Retail
- SEAC 02 Health and Social Care
- SEAC 03 Engineering Technology
- SEAC 04 Hospitality
- SEAC 05 Information Technology
- SEAC 06 Media Literacy Education
- SEAC 07 Agribusiness
- SEAC 08 Hairdressing and Beauty
- SEAC 09 Fashion and Textiles

2.02. Applied vocational subjects are directly related to the work place. Students will be assessed on the theory and practical skills indicated in the respective subject syllabi. The syllabi of these subjects are available on the MATSEC website.

Structure

2.03. These subjects have a modular format. Each subject consists of three units each of which is delivered and assessed in a scholastic year; Unit 1 is to be covered in Year 9 (Form 3), Unit 2 is to be covered in Year 10 (Form 4) and Unit 3 is to be covered in Year 11 (Form 5).

2.04. Each unit has between three and six learning outcomes. These are brief, general statements that describe what the students are expected to achieve as a result of instruction. The focus is on students' learning.

2.05. Each unit will be assessed through three assessments; two Coursework and one Controlled assessment which will be set by MATSEC, and administered and marked by teachers, covering all unit Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application assessment criteria as follows:

Criteria	Number of Assessment Criteria
Knowledge	8
Comprehension	3
Application	5

2.06. Two Synoptic assessment sessions are held for each unit.

3. REGISTRATIONS

Aim

- 3.01.** This section outlines the policies concerning:
- Registrations for Subject qualification;
 - Registrations for Synoptic assessment;
 - Registrations for Appeals;
 - Registrations for Access Arrangements.

Initial Student Registration

- 3.02.** In order to obtain a SEAC qualification in a vocational subject, students need to be registered with MATSEC as school candidates within a secondary school where such subject is being delivered.
- 3.03.** MATSEC shall inform schools offering vocational subjects about registration dates, which information should be relayed to students opting for the subjects.
- 3.04.** Students are to register at the beginning of Year 9 (Form 3), by the deadline announced by MATSEC.
- 3.05.** Students registering for a SEAC vocational subject cannot register for a SEC award in the same vocational subject.
- 3.06.** Students who are repeating their first year in a vocational subject are required to register again for the same subject.
- 3.07.** Students are to ensure that details provided on registration are complete and correct. An administration fee shall apply for any changes requested.

Late and Very Late Student Registrations

- 3.08.** 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.
- 3.09.** 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	Only marks achieved in the Application criteria through the student's second Coursework and Controlled assessment for that unit are to be submitted to MATSEC. The students are allowed to sit for the Synoptic assessment and the maximum obtainable mark in that unit is 60 .
After the deadline of Assignment 2 for any unit	Students are NOT ALLOWED to attempt any assessment for the unit.

- 3.10.** 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.

Registration for the Synoptic assessment

- 3.11.** Registered students are eligible to sit for the first Synoptic assessment session if they:
- (i) failed to pass the unit (as per clause 5.66), **AND/OR**
 - (ii) did not attempt any of, or all unit assignments for a justified reason, **AND**
 - (iii) had attended for the majority of lessons.
- 3.12.** Registered students are eligible to sit for the second Synoptic assessment session if they:
- (i) were eligible to sit for the first Synoptic assessment, but did not register and/or sit for it, **OR**
 - (ii) failed to pass the unit after sitting for the first Synoptic assessment.
- 3.13.** Registered students who are **NOT** eligible to sit for the Synoptic assessment are those who:
- (i) passed the unit (as per clause 5.66) **OR**
 - (ii) did not attend for the majority of lessons.
- 3.14.** Eligible students must first register with MATSEC in order to sit for the Synoptic assessment.
- 3.15.** Students registering for a Synoptic assessment session should be aware of the following assessment outcomes:

Reason for Synoptic	Assessment Outcomes
Student did not pass the unit after attempting all three assignments.	Maximum unit mark that can be achieved is 60 .
Student did not attempt any of, or all assignments for a justified reason, but attended the majority of the lessons.	Maximum unit mark that can be achieved is 60 .

- 3.16.** The date and venue of the Synoptic assessment will be communicated to students by MATSEC.
- 3.17.** No other re-sit will be allowed for any unit after the second Synoptic assessment.

Registration for Appeals

- 3.18.** Students who are not satisfied with the unit mark, or the mark obtained through a Synoptic assessment, may appeal from that mark.
- 3.19.** Students have to register with MATSEC for the appeal by the published date.
- 3.20.** The relevant revision of paper fee applies.
- 3.21.** MATSEC will inform students about the appeal's outcome.
- 3.22.** The outcome of appeals is final.

Registration for Access Arrangements

- 3.23.** Students who require access arrangements must register through the school between October and January of Year 9 (Form 3).
- 3.24.** Applications are to be submitted through the appropriate form and include all relevant reports. For further information one can refer to the Access Arrangements section on the MATSEC website <https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/Access>.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS WITHIN SCHOOLS

Aim

- 4.01.** The aim of this policy is to aid Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) in ensuring that the required administrative structure for Vocational subjects is in place within the school.

Definition

- 4.02.** Administration is a process involving a system of interwoven elements including (1) Planning, (2) Organisation, (3) Management, and (4) Appraisal and Control.

Planning

- 4.03.** Schools should inform MATSEC by not later than the end of September before the commencement of Year 9 of their intention to offer vocational subjects. An administration fee will be charged if they fail to apply by the given date.
- 4.04.** Schools should set up an initial meeting with MATSEC representatives to discuss this policy document and clarify any issues before offering vocational subjects for the first time. Student registrations from schools who fail to set or attend this meeting may not be accepted by MATSEC.
- 4.05.** The head of school is expected to be familiar with the relevant vocational syllabi available on the MATSEC website, and keep them in the Masterfile (see 4.18 below).
- 4.06.** The head of school should be familiar with the contents of this policy document, all the documentation and templates provided by MATSEC, and make them available to teachers, internal verifiers and students.
- 4.07.** The head of school should ensure that the school has the physical resources to deliver and assess the vocational subject/s, including the assessment of psychomotor (Application) criteria and taking into consideration any access arrangements granted by the ADSC. A list of minimum required teaching resources is found within the respective syllabi.
- 4.08.** The head of school should ensure that the school has all the necessary human resources to deliver the vocational subject/s.
- 4.09.** The head of school is responsible for the quality assurance of the vocational subject/s delivered in the school. However, they can nominate a member of the SLT to deputise for him/her.

Organisation and Management

The head of school is responsible for:

- 4.10.** Keeping regular contact with MATSEC and discussing any difficulties encountered by the school.
- 4.11.** Ensuring that the student recruitment process is carried out with full integrity, meaning that students and their guardians are made aware of the content and assessment requirements of each vocational subject. Any potential difficulties which could be encountered during assessment due to any disability or condition should be communicated in writing to students and their guardians prior to choosing the subject. A copy of this communication should be kept in the Masterfile. Should the student still wish to pursue studies in the vocational subject/s, s/he should not be stopped from doing so provided that the assessment tool is still objectively designed by the teachers to reflect the content found in the syllabus. The assessment should not be engineered in a way that facilitates a particular student or group of students, ensuring that students have understood the knowledge required and are able to apply it. If a student is unable to fulfil an assessment objective, due to his/her additional needs, the schools should ask MATSEC for special consideration.

- 4.12.** Informing students about registration and making sure they have the necessary support to register with MATSEC for the vocational subject/s that they would like to follow.
- 4.13.** Informing MATSEC of any changes in the cohort/s of students following the vocational subject/s within the school.
- 4.14.** Informing MATSEC of any students who decide to repeat a scholastic year. In such cases the head of school should inform the student and his/her legal guardian/s that the unit mark obtained in the previous academic year will be deleted and all assessments have to be repeated.
- 4.15.** Keeping regular contact with the teachers and internal verifiers to make sure that the standard expected by MATSEC is adhered to. It is suggested that meetings are held during the scholastic year at the planning stage to compile the Unit distribution plan, and prior to external verification visits to ensure that all documentation and material is in place.
- 4.16.** Making sure that assignment deadlines are being respected by the students and an extension of the assignment deadline is given only in extenuating circumstances.
- 4.17.** Addressing reports by teacher/s about students falling behind in their assignments and commitments. In such cases all action taken including communication with legal guardian/s is to be logged in the Masterfile.
- 4.18.** Making sure that a hard-copy of the General Masterfile and a Subject Masterfile for each SEAC subject offered by the school is kept up-to-date. The General Masterfile and each Subject Masterfile per student cohort (covering Years 9, 10 and 11) should be kept, including the following information:

General Masterfile

- a. Policy Document
- b. Latest version of the syllabi being delivered
- c. Students' Handbook (prepared by the school)

Subject Masterfile

- a. List of students registered with MATSEC
- b. Unit distribution plan
- c. Scheme of work and Record of work
- d. Assignments: assignment brief front sheets, the assignment briefs and marking schemes
- e. Internal verification: assignment briefs verification records and internal verification assessment decisions records
- f. Access Arrangements granted by MATSEC
- g. Minutes taken during meetings with students, legal guardian/s and teachers
- h. Deadline Extension forms
- i. Communication from/to MATSEC
- j. External Verification Reports
- k. Result slips signed by the parents/guardians (Appendix 1)
- l. Other relevant documentation (e.g. actions taken to ensure fair assessment if teacher is related to candidate, report stating which measures have been adopted to ensure no plagiarism occurred, etc.)

- 4.19.** Liaising with MATSEC to determine the date of the external verification visits and providing an adequate space for this process. It should:
- Be quiet and free of distractions;
 - Be large enough to allow the selected Coursework to be externally verified;
 - Have internet access.
- 4.20.** Ensuring that during external verification visits:
- No activities are planned by the school which may clash with the visit and disrupt the process;
 - Teachers, internal verifiers, members of the SLT and students are available when requested by the external verifier during the process.
- 4.21.** Collaborating with the external verifier so that the visits run as smoothly as possible.
- 4.22.** Liaising with the Examinations Department for the provision of the necessary invigilation staff during all assessments.
- 4.23.** Ensuring that the Controlled assessment is brought to the attention of all teachers delivering and assessing each vocational unit.
- 4.24.** Making sure that the results of the whole unit are issued on time, signed by the legal guardian/s by the end of September of the following academic year, and filed in the Masterfile.
- 4.25.** Informing those students who are eligible for the Synoptic assessment of their right to register with MATSEC for this assessment;
- 4.26.** Informing students and their legal guardian/s about the students' right to appeal a unit mark.

Appraisal and Control

The head of school is also responsible for:

- 4.27.** Providing feedback to MATSEC regarding any issues met during the delivery cycle of vocational subjects.
- 4.28.** Ensuring that the recommendations made by the external verifier are duly implemented.
- 4.29.** Ensuring that assignments are returned to students in February of the following scholastic year and filing the signed assignment front sheets in the Masterfile;
- 4.30.** Making sure that all documentation is kept in the Masterfile and that this is safely stored for two years after the completion of studies by each cohort.

5. ASSESSMENT POLICY

Aim

5.01. The aim of this policy is to provide a consistent approach to assessment across vocational subjects and schools.

Underlying Principles

5.02. All assessments should be fair, reliable, valid and manageable.

5.03. Vocational subjects are assessed through Coursework and Controlled assessments.

5.04. All assignments issued shall be exclusively based on the prescribed syllabi published on the MATSEC website.

5.05. Students are expected to present work that is authentic, sufficient and valid.

Scheme of Assessment: Coursework and Controlled

5.06. Each unit will be assessed through three assignments; two Coursework and one Controlled assessment. All assignments shall include at least one Knowledge criterion and one Application criterion.

5.07. A variety of modes of assessment should be used in the Coursework assignments to gather and interpret evidence of students' attainment.

5.08. Each one of the two Coursework assignments may be divided into different tasks; however, tasks should be related in such a way that the compilation of all tasks make up one whole assignment.

5.09. Knowledge criteria and any Comprehension criteria present in the Controlled assignment will be assessed through a written task/s, whereas Application criteria will be assessed through a practical task/s.

5.10. Criteria that will be assessed through the Controlled assessment shall be indicated in the respective subject syllabi.

5.11. Each SEAC vocational unit shall be assessed by means of Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application criteria. Each Knowledge assessment criterion carries 4 marks, each Comprehension criterion carries 6 marks and each Application criterion carries 10 marks for a total of 100 marks. Unit criteria are distributed as follows:

SEAC Vocational Subjects			
Criteria	Marks per criterion	Number of Criteria per unit	Total Marks per unit
Knowledge	4	8	32
Comprehension	6	3	18
Application	10	5	50

5.12. Each SEAC vocational unit shall consist of three to six learning outcomes. Each learning outcome has assessment criteria at MQF Level 1, MQF Level 2 and MQF Level 3. All assessment criteria shall be assessed to provide the student with the opportunity to achieve an MQF Level 3. Marks for each criterion are distributed by MQF Level as follows:

Criteria	MQF Level 1	MQF Level 2	MQF Level 3
Knowledge	1	1	2
Comprehension	2	2	2
Application	3	3	4

5.13. Marks are distributed across assignments as per table below:

Assignment Number	Assignment Type	Percentage distribution
1	Coursework	24 – 42%
2	Coursework	24 – 42%
3	Controlled	24 – 42%

Scheme of Assessment: Synoptic

- 5.14. MATSEC is responsible for developing and marking the Synoptic assessment. MATSEC is also responsible for communicating the results of the Synoptic assessment to the students and the schools.
- 5.15. The Synoptic assessment for SEAC vocational subjects shall cover all learning outcomes and the majority of Knowledge and Comprehension assessment criteria (theory aspect) defined in the unit. The marks achieved in the Application criteria through the Coursework and Controlled assessment shall be carried forward and added to the mark achieved through the Synoptic assessment.
- 5.16. The Synoptic assessment session shall be 2 hours long.

Assignment Preparation

- 5.17. Each Coursework assignment brief must be developed by the teacher according to the unit criteria, respecting each active verb used, as explained in the *Glossary of Terms* accessible through the MATSEC website <https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/examiners>.
- 5.18. Any criterion should be assessed only once.
- 5.19. The language used in writing all assessments should be the same as the one used throughout the syllabus. Candidates can answer questions in English or Maltese unless the assignment brief specifies otherwise due to the nature of the criterion being assessed.
- 5.20. Measures should be taken to ensure that repetition of assignment briefs and plagiarism are avoided. This includes, for example, the changing of the context, scenario and/or mode of assessment for any particular assignment.
- 5.21. All necessary logistical arrangements are to be made for tasks whereby the presence of students during assessment of other peers would jeopardise the fairness and reliability of the assessment tool used.
- 5.22. Each assignment shall have an assignment brief front sheet (Appendix 3) and a marking scheme.
- 5.23. All fields on the assignment brief front sheet should be duly filled in.
- 5.24. Students shall be given adequate time to complete an assignment.
- 5.25. All Coursework assignment briefs, front sheets and marking schemes shall be internally verified before the assignment is distributed to students. Internal Verifiers shall fill in the template (Appendix 4) as an official record of this process.
- 5.26. The final version of the assignment brief together with the assignment brief front sheet shall be printed and given to the students. All versions of the assignment brief front sheet, assignment brief and marking scheme shall be kept in the Masterfile.

Group Assignments

- 5.27.** One or more of the assessment criteria of a unit may be assessed through group-work. This shall be clearly stated in the assignment brief.
- 5.28.** Group assignments should be set only if it is possible for teachers to identify and assess each individual's contribution in the work submitted for assessment.
- 5.29.** The assignment brief should clearly state:
 - a. How groups will be formed (e.g. self-selecting or pre-assigned);
 - b. The minimum and maximum size of the group;
 - c. The procedure to be followed by groups if any member is not contributing.
- 5.30.** Each member of each group must attempt all grading criteria being covered through the group assignment/task. Where this is not possible or viable, due to the nature of the subject, the criteria or the task, group-work should not be considered as a mode of assessment.
- 5.31.** A declaration stating the students' own claims to their contributions shall accompany the final work submitted. This shall be countersigned by all the team members to indicate that they are all in agreement with each student's claim. The teacher/s may still wish to verify claims through a viva voce and/or further supporting evidence.
- 5.32.** Irrespective of the nature of the work expected, individual contributions will be assessed separately. Students will be held individually accountable for their contribution to the project.
- 5.33.** Feedback for both formative and summative work shall be made available to all individual members of the group.

Practical Tasks

- 5.34.** All Application criteria should be assessed through a practical task.
- 5.35.** It is highly recommended that practical tasks are carried out during school hours.
- 5.36.** Practical tasks that are held in class should be documented by teachers by filling in structured observation sheets of each individual student's work. These observations are to be complemented by video, following a written approval by legal guardians.
- 5.37.** In the case of practical tasks not held in class, the final product does not suffice as proof of one's competence. This should be supplemented by further evidence, such as videos, photographs, and/or voice recordings.

Submission of Assignments

- 5.38.** Students are to be informed of the submission date as written on the assignment brief front sheet.
- 5.39.** Work submitted after the set deadline/s without a justifiable reason must not be accepted and/or assessed.
- 5.40.** Teachers may split the assignment into different tasks with individual task deadlines, as long as it is still presented to students and has the form of one assignment.
- 5.41.** Students are to submit their work by the deadline/s specified in the assignment brief.
- 5.42.** No feedback, whether verbal or written, should be provided to students after work has been submitted or carried out for any given task, before the complete assignment marking and internal verification of assessment decision process has been concluded.

- 5.43.** Students should submit their work in the format requested through the mode of assessment being used; other formats should not be accepted for marking.
- 5.44.** No resubmissions shall be permitted after the assignment/task deadline.
- 5.45.** Teachers are to hold an appropriate record of all assignments received.
- 5.46.** Teachers should support candidates in accessing and understanding the assignment task and mode of presentation.
- 5.47.** Candidates may seek feedback and support from their teachers as long as:
- Communication is verbal, although the candidate may write notes;
 - Detailed indications of errors or omissions are not provided by the teacher;
 - Specific improvements to meet the assessment criteria are not identified;
 - A draft version of an assignment is not collected for marking;
 - Parts are neither added nor removed from an assignment following submission.
- 5.48.** The school is to direct legal guardians that if candidates seek support from them to complete Coursework they:
- Should urge their children to allocate time for their Coursework, planning ahead wherever possible;
 - May suggest additional resources to complete their task;
 - May discuss the Coursework but should not give specific indications on the content that should and/or should not be included;
 - Should encourage their children to speak to their teacher/s.

Extenuating Circumstances

- 5.49.** Students who do not meet the deadline for the submission of an assignment due to extenuating circumstances may be allowed to present the assignment after the deadline provided that the circumstances incurred by the student are accepted by the head of school in agreement with MATSEC.
- 5.50.** The head of school is to record all requests for extensions (whether approved or not), by filling in the template found in Appendix 2 and filing it in the Masterfile.
- 5.51.** Examples of reasons which may be considered as justifiable include the following:
- Student/s taking part in international events, such as sport events in which they represent the country;
 - Justified medical illnesses;
 - Death or hospitalisation of a close family member;
 - Student injury and/or hospitalisation which affects his/her ability to complete the assignment in the given timeframe;
 - Personal or psychological problems for which the student has been referred to or is already receiving aid from a qualified practitioner/s.
- 5.52.** Examples of reasons which are not to be considered as justifiable include the following:
- Holidays;
 - Computer problems, corrupt data, lost files, etc.;
 - Time management problems;
 - Other appointments and/or commitments;
 - Sporting events in which students are not representing Malta on an international level.

Marking and Feedback

- 5.53. All three unit assessments are to be marked by the school teachers.
- 5.54. Marking should seek the application of a standard and fair procedure in assessing students' work, avoiding any bias in awarding marks.
- 5.55. The active verb of each assessment criterion should be respected throughout the marking, with no further breakdown of marks being allowed for lower-quality answers submitted (e.g. no marks should be awarded for identification and/or outline of items if the criterion verb states 'Describe').
- 5.56. Individual feedback by the teacher shall be given to students on the assignment front sheet. This has to be done electronically.
- 5.57. The teacher's feedback shall state the mark awarded for each grading criterion and possible areas for development.
- 5.58. Students shall be informed of the assignment marks achieved and receive formal feedback, only once the internal verification of assessment decisions process of the complete assignment has been concluded.
- 5.59. Students should be made aware that marks can change as a result of external verification.
- 5.60. All students have to sign on the assignment front sheet to confirm that they have seen the corrected assignment. This should be carried out before the external verification visit.

Appeals

- 5.61. Students who are not satisfied with the result awarded to them in the unit may request a review of their assessment by a Reviser within the period specified by MATSEC and against a fee as determined by the University of Malta. Students may only appeal from a unit mark of the completed unit in the previous scholastic year.
- 5.62. After receiving the appeal, MATSEC shall appoint a Reviser whose role will be to make sure that the school has followed this assessment policy and other official MATSEC documentation in marking the student's work fairly according to the set marking scheme.
- 5.63. MATSEC shall communicate the outcome of the appeals in writing to the student and the school.
- 5.64. The student can only appeal once for a unit, and one time after every Synoptic session of that particular unit.
- 5.65. The result of the appeal is final.

Unit Achievement

- 5.66. For a student to achieve a Pass in a SEAC vocational unit, at least **50 marks** should be attained after attempting all Unit assignments, out of which at least **25 marks** must be obtained through the combination of Knowledge and Comprehension criteria, and **25 marks** through Application criteria.
- 5.67. In order to pass the Synoptic assessment students must **satisfy the examiner in the theory aspect** (Knowledge and Comprehension criteria) and attain at least **50 marks**, including marks obtained through the Application criteria carried forward from the Coursework.

Subject Certification

- 5.68.** Students can only qualify for an MQF Level 3 certificate if they pass each unit with a total of at least **150 marks** throughout the Subject, after having attempted all assessments as described above.
- 5.69.** Students can qualify for an MQF Level 2 certificate if they pass any two units and have a total score of at least **120 marks** throughout the Subject **or** have at total score of at least **120 marks** throughout the Subject and at least **40 marks** in each of the three units.
- 5.70.** Students can qualify for an MQF Level 1 certificate if they score at least **60 marks** throughout the Subject achieved through at least **20 marks** in each of any two units.
- 5.71.** Students not scoring at least **20 marks** in each of any two units **or** obtaining less than **60 marks** throughout the Subject will remain Unclassified (U).
- 5.72.** Conditions for certification are summarised as follows:

Conditions for Certification		
Award	Marks throughout the Subject	Unit achievement
MQF Level 3	≥ 150	Pass the three units
MQF Level 2	≥ 120	Pass any two units
MQF Level 2	≥ 120	≥ 40 in each of the three units
MQF Level 1	≥ 60	≥ 20 in each of any two units
U	≥ 60	< 20 in each of any two units
	< 60	-

- 5.73.** A result slip showing the MQF Level achieved on completion of the three-year programme following the Main session, shall be posted by MATSEC to each student.
- 5.74.** A result slip showing the MQF Level achieved on completion of the three-year programme following any Supplementary (Synoptic) sessions, shall be separately posted by MATSEC to each student.
- 5.75.** Certificates showing the MQF Level achieved in any session shall be collected from the school once these have been issued by MATSEC.

6. VERIFICATION POLICY

Aim

- 6.01.** The aim of this policy is to establish an internal and external quality assurance system to make sure that the standard required by MATSEC is being achieved.

Verification

- 6.02.** There will be two processes of verification: internal and external.
- 6.03.** Internal verification is carried out by an internal verifier, who is another teacher knowledgeable of the subject area and of the processes related to vocational subjects.
- 6.04.** External verification is carried out by an external verifier appointed by MATSEC. The external verifier shall normally conduct three school visits during a scholastic year to make sure that all systems are in place for the delivery of the qualification, and that assessments are fair and graded at the expected level throughout.

Internal Verification

Definition

- 6.05.** Internal verification is a supportive process intended to encourage teachers to develop good practice and to ensure that:
- a. Assignments are fit for purpose by enabling students to produce evidence which meets the targeted assessment criteria;
 - b. Marking schemes are consistent with the assessment criteria being assessed within the assignment, give a detailed indication of how marks shall be allocated, and provide examples of correct answers;
 - c. Assessment decisions accurately judge students' evidence against the assessment criteria.

Internal Verification - Assignment Briefs

- 6.06.** Assignment briefs must be internally verified before being issued to students. If any issues are identified by the internal verifier, these should be addressed by the teacher prior to distribution to students. This should ensure that:
- a. All information present on the assignment brief front sheet is correct (has accurate unit details, has accurate programme details, has clear deadlines, shows all relevant unit assessment criteria covered in the assignment, etc.);
 - b. The assignment brief is fit for purpose and students are given an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and competences according to the assessment criteria and content specifications;
 - c. Each task clearly states which criteria is being assessed;
 - d. The assignment brief is written in a clear and accessible language;
 - e. The marks allocated are fairly distributed and based on sound professional judgements;
 - f. The students' role and tasks are vocationally relevant and appropriate to the level of the qualification;
 - g. Enough information is present in the marking scheme for consistent and reliable assessment.
- 6.07.** The outcome of internal verification should be recorded on the form provided in Appendix 4 and should be signed and dated by the teacher and the internal verifier.

- 6.08.** If the internal verifier suggests amendments to the assignment brief, the teacher should carry out the amendments and return the brief together with the internal verification – assignment brief form to the internal verifier. Only once the assignment is verified as fit for purpose, may it be issued to students.
- 6.09.** Internal verifiers cannot internally verify assignment briefs which they have written themselves.
- 6.10.** Where there are two or more parallel classes in the same school, with two or more teachers delivering the same unit to different classes, they may verify each other's assignment brief provided that one teacher develops the assignment brief and the other/s act/s as an internal verifier.

Internal Verification – Assessment Decision

- 6.11.** Corrected assignments shall be reviewed by the internal verifier before marks and feedback are handed to students.
- 6.12.** Internal verification must be carried out in a timely way throughout the year based on the Unit distribution plan established at the beginning of the academic year.
- 6.13.** The internal verifier must review the teacher's judgements, to verify that the:
- Students' work has been assessed according to the marking scheme;
 - Coverage of the unit content through the assessment is in line with the syllabus specifications;
 - Feedback provided to students is accurate and linked to the assessment criteria.
- 6.14.** If any inaccuracies are identified by the internal verifier, these must be corrected by the teacher before results are made known to students. These should also be checked and revised across the whole cohort as necessary. Following re-marking, the assignments should be checked again, signed, and dated by the internal verifier.
- 6.15.** In cases where students do not provide enough evidence to meet the grading criteria because of an error by the teacher (e.g. the teacher explained the assignment brief incorrectly) the students may be requested to re-do or upgrade that part of the assignment following consultation with the head of school and MATSEC.
- 6.16.** The outcome of the internal verification should be recorded on the form provided in Appendix 5 and should be signed and dated by the teacher and the internal verifier. If action is identified by the internal verifier following any inaccuracies met, the teacher should carry out the necessary changes, record them on the form, and return it to the internal verifier for approval. Only when the internal verifier is satisfied with the accurate assessment of work, should assignments be handed back to students for feedback. This form should be kept in the Masterfile.
- 6.17.** 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.
- 6.18.** All corrected assignments should be internally verified if:
- The amount of students in a class is less than six; or
 - The teacher and the internal verifier are new to the unit.
- 6.19.** Where there are two or more parallel classes in the same school, with two or more teachers delivering the same unit to different classes, they may internally verify each other's assessment decisions.
- 6.20.** 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.

- 6.21.** During the course of the programme, sampling of assignments should cover the following as a minimum:
- a. Every teacher;
 - b. Every class;
 - c. Every unit;
 - d. Every assignment.

External Verification

Definition

- 6.22.** External verifiers are appointed for their subject expertise and their knowledge of MATSEC vocational programmes. Their role is to ensure that the assessment and its marking are accurate, consistent and fair across schools.

General Duties

- 6.23.** The main duties of the external verifier are to check that:
- a. Internally verified assignment briefs provide/d the possibility for students to meet the assessment criteria and achieve the outcomes;
 - b. Teachers are assessing and grading the work fairly, accurately, and consistently according to the marking scheme;
 - c. An internal verification system exists and is being properly implemented as specified in this document.
 - d. There are enough good quality resources to support the assessment of each unit.

Timing

- 6.24.** The External verifier normally visits the school three times a year.
- 6.25.** The first visit will take place in January. During this visit, the external verifier shall support the teacher in assessing some candidates' Application criteria covered through the first assignment for any one of the units being delivered. The Masterfiles and internally-verified Coursework assignment briefs shall also be externally verified.
- 6.26.** Another visit will be carried out between the end of February and mid-March. During this visit the external verifier will follow up any essential actions highlighted during the support visit and check the internally-verified marks of the first assignment. Unless the full internal verification process linked to the first assignment has been concluded prior to this visit, the qualification shall be temporarily blocked.
- 6.27.** The third visit will be carried out between the end of May and mid-June. During this visit the external verifier will follow up any essential actions highlighted during the previous visit and check the internally-verified marks of the second and third assignments. Unless the full internal verification process linked to all assignments has been concluded prior to this visit, the qualification shall be blocked.

The Visit

- 6.28.** Before each visit the external verifier will communicate the requirements with the head of school, including any requirements for supporting the assessment of Application criteria.
- 6.29.** On the day of the school visit the external verifier is expected to:
- a. Talk to the head of school, the internal verifier/s, the teacher/s and the students;
 - b. Go through the Masterfile to make sure that all documents are in place;
 - c. Verify that all assignments were issued and assessed according to the standards established by MATSEC;
 - d. Give verbal feedback to the school on the outcome of the visit.
- 6.30.** 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.
- 6.31.** The external verifier can decide to upgrade or lower the mark of students, or ask the school to issue another assignment brief, or part-of, to students if the initial assignment brief was designed in a way that does not meet the assessment criteria set out in the MATSEC syllabus.
- 6.32.** After the visit, the external verifier will produce a written report. This will be handed over to MATSEC which will in turn forward a copy to the head of school. A copy of this report should be discussed with all staff involved in the delivery and assessment of vocational subjects at the school, and stored in the Masterfile for future reference.
- 6.33.** All recommendations/action points highlighted in the external verification visit report should be acted upon by the suggested dates.
- 6.34.** The external verifier is also responsible for carrying out procedures on behalf of MATSEC in relation to Data Management Systems in place at the time of the visit.
- 6.35.** 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.

7. PLAGIARISM POLICY

Aim

- 7.01.** The aim of this policy is to emphasise the fact that using other people's work without acknowledging the source is not acceptable. Ways to avoid this misconduct and possible consequences of not adhering to this policy are highlighted.

Definition

- 7.02.** Plagiarism refers to the appropriation and use of someone else's thoughts, writings, illustrations and/or inventions without acknowledging the source. Students are to make use proper paraphrasing or summarisation of someone else's words, ideas, or data in their assignments, supporting such work with proper referencing.

Types of plagiarism

- 7.03.** There are different forms of plagiarism:

- a. Intentional;
- b. Unintentional.

Both practices are prohibited and will lead to disciplinary action.

- 7.04.** The following may be cited as instances of plagiarism:

- a. Copying whole paragraphs without referring to the sources which may be, for example, books, online sources, newspapers, journals, teacher's notes;
- b. Presenting work carried out by someone else, including parents;
- c. Presenting someone else's assignments from different schools or from previous years instead of doing one's own.

- 7.05.** In those cases where students are not sure of their work's authenticity, they may either opt not to use that material at all or else consult with their teacher on the best way forward to approach the problem.

Responsibilities

- 7.06.** Schools should seek proactive ways to promote a positive culture that encourages students to take individual responsibility for their learning and respect the work of others by:

- a. Using the induction period and students' handbook to inform students about this policy;
- b. Encouraging students to use proper referencing by introducing them to a standard referencing style. For instance, teachers could help students familiarise themselves with the 'References' tool in Microsoft Word or similar word processing applications.
- c. Asking students to declare that their work is their own by filling an Authentication Statement and including it with each assignment.

- 7.07.** Teachers should ensure that plagiarism is avoided through the assessment they write by modifying the context, scenario and/or mode for every different cohort of students. In the absence of doing so, they must produce a written report stating which measures have been adopted to ensure that no plagiarism was carried out by students.

- 7.08.** Teachers and internal verifiers are responsible to check for plagiarism when marking the students' work.

Procedures and Sanctions

7.09. Where plagiarism is suspected before a task/assignment deadline, the teacher should:

- a. Make the student/s fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the suspicion;
- b. Give the student/s the opportunity to answer to the allegations made;
- c. Direct the student/s to repeat the work;

with the intent of teaching students that such work cannot be accepted, and support them in using a proper referencing system.

7.10. 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.

7.11. 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 at all MQF levels 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.

7.12. If plagiarism is repeated, the head of school should consult with MATSEC to decide on appropriate action which could lead to an Unclassified (U) grade being awarded in the Subject, overriding any marks already achieved. The head of school should keep a record of the decision taken and this should be kept in the Masterfile.

8. STUDENT ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY

Aim

- 8.01.** The aim of this policy is to:
- a. Ensure that assessment is fair within and across all schools;
 - b. Identify and minimise the risks of malpractice and outline appropriate actions that can be taken if such practices take place.

Definition

8.02. Student malpractice is any action by the student that has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of his/her or other students' work.

- 8.03.** The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of malpractice by students:
- a. Plagiarism of any nature (refer to Plagiarism Policy above);
 - b. Working with friends on a piece of work and then presenting it as an individual assignment;
 - c. Cheating or attempting to cheat during assessment;
 - d. Deliberate alteration or destruction of other students' work;
 - e. Inventing data and figures to support statements included in the assignment;
 - f. False declaration of authenticity in relation to Coursework;
 - g. Impersonation by pretending to be someone else during assessment or making arrangements for such practice;
 - h. Failing to abide by the instructions relating to the assessment rules, regulations and security;
 - i. Being in possession of and/or using unauthorised material during assessment, such as notes, study guides, personal organisers, calculators, dictionaries (when prohibited), personal stereos, mobile phones or other similar electronic devices;
 - j. Obtaining or attempting to obtain, receive, exchange or pass on information during assessment, unless specifically authorised or instructed to do so in the assignment brief.
 - k. Behaving in such a way as to undermine the integrity of the assessment;
 - l. Breaching assessment security measures;
 - m. Making alterations to any results document, including certificates.

Procedure for dealing with allegations of malpractice

- 8.04.** All students, staff and external verifiers have a responsibility to report any suspected incidences of student malpractice to the SLT. All allegations made shall be taken seriously.
- 8.05.** Once an allegation is made, the following procedure shall be followed:
- a. The head of school should ask the person making the allegation to write and sign a report attaching any available supporting evidence.
 - b. An investigation will be initially undertaken by the SLT, which will interview all personnel linked to the allegation to establish the full facts and circumstances.

- c. The student/s and legal guardians are made aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
- d. The student/s is/are given the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.
- e. If malpractice is proven, MATSEC should be informed and *The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations* section 10 will apply, accessible through this link: <https://www.um.edu.mt/matsec/regulations>
- f. A record of all stages of any investigation should be kept and placed in the Masterfile.

9. STAFF ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE POLICY

Aim

- 9.01. The aim of this policy is to ensure the validity and reliability of the students' assessment across all schools and to safeguard the integrity of MATSEC qualifications across different schools.
- 9.02. This policy will outline how alleged staff malpractice will be dealt with in order to ensure transparency and fairness for all students and staff.
- 9.03. This policy will set out the rights and responsibilities of staff.

Definition

- 9.04. Assessment validity and reliability can be put at risk through maladministration and malpractice. Whilst malpractice is a deliberate act, maladministration may be accidental, a result of incompetence or a simple mistake. For the purpose of this policy, the term malpractice will be taken to include both malpractice and maladministration.
- 9.05. Malpractice consists of acts which undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment and certification of a qualification.

Responsibilities

- 9.06. Members of staff have a professional duty to ensure good practice in their assessment procedures. In order to implement this policy:
 - a. New members of staff should be introduced to this policy by the school's SLT;
 - b. A robust quality assurance procedure as detailed in this document should be adopted;
 - c. Members of staff are to actively understand this policy, disseminate it and ensure its correct application as part of their respective duties.

Examples of Malpractice

- 9.07. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of staff malpractice:
 - a. Improper assistance to students in the production of work for assessment, such as the production of parts of, or all the work, for a student
 - b. Misinterpreting the assessment criteria in any way;
 - c. Awarding marks where there is insufficient evidence of the student's achievement;
 - d. Allowing students to plagiarise without taking the necessary actions;
 - e. Failing to securely keep students' Coursework and other assessment evidence;
 - f. Facilitating and/or allowing impersonation;
 - g. Misusing the provision of students' access arrangements;
 - h. Failing to keep assessment papers secure prior to tests or examinations;
 - i. Failing to securely keep sensitive material provided by MATSEC;
 - j. Altering marking schemes without authorisation from MATSEC;
 - k. Failing to keep students' computer files secure;
 - l. Falsifying records through alteration, substitution or any other means to claim certification for a student who has not met all assessment requirements.

Procedure for dealing with allegations of malpractice

- 9.08.** All students, staff and external verifiers have the responsibility to report any suspected incidences of staff malpractice to the SLT. All allegations made shall be taken seriously.
- 9.09.** Once an allegation is made the following procedure shall be followed:
- a. The head of school should ask the person making the allegation to write and sign a report attaching any available supporting evidence.
 - b. An investigation will be initially undertaken by the SLT, which will interview all personnel linked to the allegation to establish the full facts and circumstances.
 - c. The staff member/s is/are made aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
 - d. The staff member/s is/are given the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.
 - e. If malpractice has been proven, MATSEC should be informed. All assessment processes involving the concerned members of staff should be suspended until the investigation is complete.
 - f. A record of all stages of any investigation should be kept.

APPENDIX 2 – Assignment Deadline Extension Form

 L-Università ta' Malta	SEAC		2019-2022	
	SCHOOL:	13 - ST BENEDICT COLLEGE, SECONDARY SCHOOL, KIRKOP		
	YEAR:	Form 3		
	SUBJECT:			
ASSIGNMENT EXTENSION DEADLINE FORM				
STUDENT'S NAME:				
UNIT TITLE:		UNIT:	1	ASSIGNMENT: 1 of 3
TEACHER'S NAME:	Ms Petra Borg		DATE SET:	1st November 2018
VERIFIER'S NAME:	Mr Gordon Brown		EXTENDED DATE:	
ASSIGNMENT TITLE:	Retail Environments			
REASON FOR LATE SUBMISSION				
RECOMMENDATION BY TUTOR				
HEADMASTER DECISION			APPROVED:	
MEDICAL CERIFICATE:			OTHER EVIDENCE:	
HEADMASTER SIGNATURE:			STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:	
DATE:			DATE:	

APPENDIX 3 – Assignment Brief Front Sheet

 L-Università ta' Malta		SEAC		2019-2022	
		SCHOOL:	13 - ST BENEDICT COLLEGE, SECONDARY SCHOOL, KIRKOP		
		YEAR:	Form 3		
		SUBJECT:			
ASSIGNMENT BRIEF - FRONT SHEET					
SUBMISSION					
STUDENT'S NAME/ID:	Micallef Malcolm-2342204L				
UNIT TITLE:		UNIT:	1	ASSIGNMENT: 1 of 3	
TEACHER'S NAME:	Ms Petra Borg		DATE SET:	1st November 2018	
VERIFIER'S NAME:	Mr Gordon Brown		DATE DUE:	4th February 2019	
ASSIGNMENT-1 TITLE:	Retail Environments				
TEACHER'S FEEDBACK					
MAX POINTS	Knowledge (K) 4 - Comprehension (C) 6 - Application (A) 10				
GRADING CRITERIA	POINTS ACHIEVED	COMMENTS ON CRITERIA			
K1					
K3					
K8					
C3					
A1					
A2					
38	-				
STUDENT'S COMMENTS					
ASSESSOR'S SIGNATURE:			STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:		
DATE			DATE		

APPENDIX 4 – Record of Internal Verification Assignment Brief

 L-Università ta' Malta	SEAC		2019-2022
	SCHOOL:	13 - ST BENEDICT COLLEGE, SECONDARY SCHOOL, KIRKOP	
	YEAR:	Form 3	
	SUBJECT:		
RECORD OF INTERNAL VERIFICATION - ASSIGNMENT BRIEF			
UNIT TITLE:			
UNIT:	1	ASSIGNMENT:	1 of 3
ASSIGNMENT TITLE:	Retail Environments		
TEACHER'S NAME:	Ms Petra Borg		
VERIFIER'S NAME:	Mr Gordon Brown		
Assignment Brief :-			Yes / No
Internal Verifier's Checklist (* please circle correct answer)	1. Has accurate programme and unit details shown		Yes
	2. Has clear deadlines for assessment		
	3. Has time scale set for the tasks which are appropriate		
	4. Shows all relevant grading criteria for the unit/s covered in the assignment		
	5. Has criteria which are actually addressed by tasks		
	6. Indicates relevant grading criteria targeted against each task		
	7. Tasks have a scenario or vocational context		
	8. Has tasks which clearly state what evidence the learner needs to generate		
	9. Has tasks which are likely to generate evidence which is appropriate and sufficient		
	10. Has tasks which are set at the appropriate level & suitable vocational language is used		
	11. Has a clear presentation format		
	12. Has an accompanying marking scheme and marks are appropriately allocated to each question		
	13. Is fit for purpose		
Comments (to incl. strengths of brief, corrective action required & areas for improvement)			
Internal Verifier's Signature		Date	
Teacher's Comments/ Remedial Action:			
Teacher's Signature		Date	
Remedial Action Carried Out (if any was required)			
Teacher's Signature		Date	
Internal Verifier's Signature		Date	
External Verifier's Signature		Date	

APPENDIX 5 – Record of Internal Verification Assessment Decisions

 L-Università ta' Malta	SEAC	2019-2022			
	SCHOOL:	13 - ST BENEDICT COLLEGE, SECONDARY SCHOOL, KIRKOP			
	YEAR:	Form 3			
	SUBJECT:				
RECORD OF INTERNAL VERIFICATION - ASSESSMENT DECISIONS					
UNIT TITLE:					
UNIT:	1	ASSIGNMENT:		1 of 3	
TEACHER'S NAME: Ms Petra Borg					
VERIFIER'S NAME: Mr Gordon Brown					
ASSIGNMENT-1 TITLE: Retail Environments					
Criteria Assessed:	K1-K3-K8-C3-A1-A2				
Name	Surname	ID Card	Mark	Agree / Disagree	Remarks
Amy	Abela	569304L	18		
Malcolm	Micallef	2342204L	22		
John	Muscat	201004L	20		
Has the work been assessed accurately and appropriately according to marking scheme?					
Is the feedback to the learner:					
* Constructive and Supportive?					
* Linked to relevant grading criteria?					
* Identifying areas for improvement?					
Highlight strengths and provide suggestions for remedial action (if required):					
Internal Verifier's Signature				Date	
Teacher's Signature				Date	
Has the Teacher taken on the advice outlined above and amended all assessment decisions and records accordingly?					
Internal Verifier's Signature				Date	
Teacher's Signature				Date	
External Verifier's Signature				Date	



MATSEC

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✉ matsec@um.edu.mt

📞 2340 2814/5/6

🕒 Winter
0815 – 1200hrs
1330 – 1630hrs

🕒 Summer
0800 – 13:30hrs