



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



MATSEC Regulations

Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) Regulations

2025

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Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) Regulations

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred upon him by articles 74 (5) and 75 (6) of the Education Act (Cap. 327), the Chancellor of the University of Malta has promulgated the following regulations made by the Senate of the University of Malta by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by articles 75 (3) and 79 (b) of the said Act:

Citation and Interpretation

1. (1) These regulations are cited from the Secondary Education Certificate Examination Regulations, 2023 (published as L.N. 86 of 2023) with amendments from the Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Amendment) Regulations, 2024 (published as L.N. 247 of 2024).
- (2) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires - “the Examination” means the Secondary Education Certificate Examination; and “the MATSEC Board” means the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board.
- (3) The MATSEC Board retains to itself the interpretation of the regulations and syllabuses relating to its examinations.

Applicability

2. (1) These regulations shall apply to the Examination held from January 2025 onwards.
- (2) The Examination shall also be subject to the Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations, 2013, published as Legal Notice 132 of 2013, and to any other relevant statutes, regulations and byelaws of the University.

Sessions and Time-Tables

3. There shall be two sessions of the Examination: The Main Session and the Supplementary Session. There shall also be continuous assessment as specified in the syllabi and learning and assessment programmes approved by the MATSEC Board.

Subjects of the Examination

4. (1) In the Main Session the subjects offered shall be the following:

Accounting, Agribusiness*, Arabic, Art, Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Chinese, Computing, Core Science, Dance, Design & Technology, Economics, English Language, English Literature, Engineering Technology*, Environmental Studies, Ethics, European Studies, Fashion and Textiles*, French, Geography, German, Graphical Communication, Greek, History, Hairdressing and Beauty*, Health and Social Care*, Home Economics, Hospitality*, Information Technology*, Italian, Latin, Maltese, Maltese as a Foreign Language, Mathematics, Media Literacy Education*, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Religious Knowledge, Retail*, Social Studies, Spanish and Theatre.

- (2) In the Supplementary Session, subject to the provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) of regulation 5, the subjects offered shall be the following:

English Language, Maltese, Mathematics, and, subject to the provisions of paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 5, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Choice of Subjects

5. (1) No subject may be taken in both the Secondary Education Certificate Examination, Secondary Education Applied Certificate and the Matriculation Certificate Examination at Advanced or Intermediate Level in the same session.

(2) With the exception of subjects marked with an asterisk in paragraph (1) of regulation 4, candidates are eligible to register for the Supplementary Session in any of the subjects in paragraph (2) of regulation 4 only if, in the Main Session of that same year, they had obtained a Level 2 or lower, or if they were absent, except for Biology, Chemistry and Physics which are regulated by paragraph (3) of this regulation.

(3) In the Supplementary Session, candidates may sit for only one examination in either Biology, or Chemistry or Physics, provided that they did not already obtain a Level 3 in any of these three subjects.

Structure of the Examination

6. (1) With the exception of the subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4 (1) and SEC Greek and SEC Latin, candidates may register for the Examination as school or private candidates. Candidates may only register for SEC Greek and Latin as private candidates.

(2) With the exception of the subjects marked with an asterisk in paragraph (1) of regulation 4 the Examination in all other subjects shall consist of two papers: Paper I and Paper II as specified in the respective syllabi.

(3) Paper I for school candidates shall consist of unmoderated school-based assessment that is to be set and assessed by the school. Paper I for private candidates shall be a controlled assessment and shall mainly focus on the learning outcomes marked in the respective syllabi as suggested for school-based assessment.

(4) Paper I for private candidates shall be a controlled assessment assessing levels 1, 2 and 3 as described in the respective syllabus and set and marked by MATSEC.

(5) Paper II shall be a controlled assessment set and marked by MATSEC and is common to school and private candidates. This paper shall focus on the learning outcomes as prescribed by the syllabus.

(6) With the exception of SEC Mathematics, all Paper II controlled assessments shall be tiered at two levels: levels 1-2 and levels 2-3. Paper I for school candidates may be tiered at either levels 1-2-3 or levels 1-2 according to the respective MATSEC syllabus.

(7) Paper II for SEC Mathematics shall be tiered at three levels: levels 1-2, levels 2-3 and levels 3-3*.

(8) Candidates shall be required to indicate on their application form whether they wish to sit for their Paper II assessment at: levels 1-2 or levels 2-3 or levels 3-3* [for SEC Mathematics only].

(9) In the Supplementary Session, only levels 2-3 shall be offered for Paper II and as indicated in paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 5.

(10) In all subjects marked with an asterisk in paragraph (1) of regulation 4 there shall be continuous assessment by the class teachers with internal verification by peers and external verification by the MATSEC Board.

(11) Each of these subjects shall consist of three Units: one Unit for each of Forms 3, 4 and 5 (Years 9, 10 and 11) of the secondary schools; and each Unit shall be assessed by means of three assessment tasks, one of which shall be a controlled assessment set and supervised by the MATSEC Board and shall also include a written component.

(12) The tasks shall be set by the class teachers and shall be verified internally by peers and verified externally by a purposely appointed External Verifier who shall report to the MATSEC Board.

(13) There shall be a synoptic test for each Unit only for candidates who fail the Unit or who are absent for the controlled assessment of that Unit. Candidates who take the synoptic test because they failed the Unit may qualify for a maximum of 60 marks, whilst candidates who take the synoptic test because they were absent for the controlled assessment may qualify for the full 100 marks.

Grades and Levels

7. (1) The attainment in Paper I for school candidates, Paper II and an overall level shall be reported.

(2) Candidates may qualify for an overall level at level 1, 2, or 3. The level shall be determined by the cumulative score of candidates in Paper I and Paper II. The results of candidates who do not achieve at least level 1 shall not have a level awarded and shall be reported by 'NA' which denotes Not Attained.

(3) Paper I shall carry a weighting of 30% of the final overall mark. The mark achieved by school candidates in Paper I shall be reported out of 30, with the highest mark being 30 and lowest being 0, denoting that the submitted work by the candidate was not awarded any marks. The letters 'np' will be reported for when candidates do not submit any work. Private candidates shall have the letters 'PC' reported representing 'private candidate' instead of the score for Paper I. School candidates who would have done their school-based assessment, or part of, at levels 1-2 and sit for their Paper II at

levels 2-3 will have their school-based assessment mark weighted at 60% of its value for the computation of an overall level. In such cases the weighted value shall be reported.

(4) Paper II shall be graded on an eight-point scale, grades 1 to 8. Grade 1 shall be awarded for the highest level of achievement.

(5) Grades in Paper II shall be awarded in accordance with the following criteria:

Grade 1: Indicates an overall excellent grasp of the subject and the level of attainment that is expected of the ablest candidates.

Grade 2: Indicates a very high level of achievement overall.

Grade 3: Indicates a high level of achievement but falls below this level in certain sections of the examination.

Grade 4: Indicates a good overall level.

Grade 5: Indicates a good level, but not overall, and is the minimum level acceptable for further studies in the subject.

Grade 6: Indicates a general grasp of the subject but not a sufficiently deep understanding of it.

Grade 7: Indicates a basic level of attainment.

Grade 8: Indicates a very low level of attainment.

(6) With the exception of SEC Mathematics, candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper II at level 2-3 may qualify for Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7. The results of candidates who do not obtain at least Grade 7 shall remain unclassified and shall be denoted as U.

(7) Candidates sitting for SEC Mathematics Paper I and Paper II at level 2-3 may qualify for Grade 4, 5, 6 or 7 whilst candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper II at level 3-3* may qualify for Grade 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5.

(8) Candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper II at level 1-2 may qualify for Grade 6, 7 or 8. The results of candidates who do not obtain at least Grade 8 shall remain unclassified and shall be denoted as U.

(9) Candidates taking the subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4 (1) may qualify for Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8. The results of candidates who do not obtain at least Grade 8 shall remain unclassified and shall be denoted as U.

(10) With the exception of subjects marked with an asterisk, candidates are to satisfy the examiner in Paper I and Paper II to obtain a level higher than 1.

(11) For subjects marked with an asterisk, candidates are to satisfy the examiner in the school-based assessment and the controlled assessment according to the current MATSEC policy document referring to these subjects to obtain a level higher than 1.

Registration

8. (1) Only candidates who have completed their studies in Year 11 (Form V) of secondary education or who attain the age of sixteen by 31 December of the year of certification shall be allowed to register for the Examination.

(2) With the exception of the subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4 (1), registration for the Main Session of the Examination, on the appropriate application form and accompanied by the relevant fee (if applicable), must be made by the closing date as published in the notice for registration. Applications submitted after the closing date but by the published date for late applications shall be accepted if the relevant fee for late registrations fee is paid.

(3) The Executive Director may, at his/her discretion, accept applications for registration for the Main Session at a later date against the payment of an additional fee.

(4) Registration for the Supplementary Session shall be made during the dates published by MATSEC. Candidates shall be allowed to register for the Supplementary Session only if they registered for the Main Session of the examination in the corresponding year and subject to the provisions of paragraphs (2) and (3) of regulation 5.

(5) Registration for the subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4 (1) shall be made by the closing date as published in the notice for registration when the candidates are commencing studies at the beginning of Form 3 (Year 9). Registration must be made on the appropriate form and accompanied by the relevant fee. There shall be no private candidates for these subjects.

(6) Registration for the synoptic assessments shall be made during the dates published by MATSEC. Candidates shall be allowed to register for the synoptic assessment only as specified in regulation 6 (11).

(7) The Executive Director may, at his/her discretion, accept late applications for the Supplementary Session and the synoptic assessment after the closing date if an additional fee is paid.

(8) The Executive Director may, at his/her discretion, accept alterations to the application form by the candidate, subject to the same conditions and additional fees applicable for late registration.

Enquiries upon Results

9. (1) The marking of papers, the assessment of assignments and coursework, and the results shall be final and binding for all candidates, and the MATSEC Board shall not, except in its absolute discretion, enter into correspondence about results with candidates or anyone on their behalf or any other person.

Revision of Grade

10. (1) In terms of regulation 10 of The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations, 2013, candidates who are not satisfied with the grade awarded to them in any of the subjects for which they sat, may request a review of their examination scripts by a reviewer appointed by the MATSEC Board, within the period specified by the MATSEC Board and against a fee as determined by the University.

(2) In the subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4 (1), candidates who are not satisfied with the result awarded to them in any of the units may request a review of their assessment by an additional external verifier within the period specified by the MATSEC Board and against a fee as determined by the University.

(3) The revised result shall be final.

Certificates

11.(1) A certificate showing the level obtained in each subject, together with the criteria for the award of the level as laid down in paragraph (2) of regulation 7, shall be issued once only to candidates who obtain levels 1, 2 and 3. The certificate will also show the attainment mark of Paper I and the grade obtained in the Paper II in the respective subject/s.

(2) For subjects being taken privately, the Certificate will show the letters 'PC' instead of the Paper I mark.

(3) An authenticated copy of the result may be obtained from MATSEC against a fee as determined by the University.

Conduct during the Examination

12. (1) The conduct of the examination will be regulated by the MATSEC Examinations Candidate Guidebook, in force at the time, as approved by the MATSEC Examinations Board and Senate, as well as The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations, 2013, published as Legal Notice 132 of 2013 and any statutory or regulatory provisions consolidating, amending, substituting, replacing, supplementing or interpreting Legal Notice 132 of 2013.

School-Based assessment

13. (1) School-based assessment is any type of assessment of a candidate made by the school relevant to the respective SEC syllabus that contributes to the final level awarded in the subject.

(2) The attainment of school-based assessment shall only be accepted from schools approved by the MATSEC Board.

(3) The school-based assessment shall be marked out of 100 each year (9, 10 and 11). The assessment for each year will contribute to 10% of the overall mark and will be reported to MATSEC by the school in Year 11. Therefore, each year will equally contribute to the final mark of the school-based assessment.

- (4) The school-based assessment shall reflect the MATSEC syllabus covered in Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11.
- (5) School-based assessment shall be set at either Level 1-2 only or Level 1-2-3. The highest level shall have a larger allocation of marks.
- (6) The school-based assessment results awarded by the candidates' schools and the respective level at which this was set must reach MATSEC by the date specified by the MATSEC Board.
- (7) School-based assessment results shall be retained for the Supplementary Session.
- (8) School-based assessment results may be retained for not more than five subsequent years from the Examination it was submitted for, unless the respective syllabus states that the set school-based is no longer valid. Candidates are to make a formal request to MATSEC should they wish to retain their school-based assessment mark for subsequent sessions.
- (9) Private candidates are not expected to present school-based assessment. Private candidates shall sit for another controlled paper to make up for the school-based assessment component.

Oral/Aural Components of the Examinations

- 14. (1) Marks obtained in the oral components of an examination during the Main Session shall be retained for the Supplementary Session.
- (2) Candidates who re-sit an examination in subsequent years shall be required to re-take the oral and aural components of that examination.
- (3) A Supplementary Session for the oral component shall be made available to candidates who are marked absent for a justified reason in the Main Session of the oral examination, provided that they are either covered by a medical certificate indicating that the examination by the medical professional was not done later than the day of the assessment and submitted to MATSEC on the day of the missed examination or they are absent for a reason deemed valid by the MATSEC Board. Candidates who are absent for the oral examination in the Main Session without a valid reason shall not be awarded any marks and shall not be entitled to a supplementary oral examination.

Examination Materials

- 15. (1) No texts or dictionaries are permitted in the examination room unless specifically indicated in the syllabus.
- (2) The use of non-programmable electronic calculators is permitted in Mathematics, science subjects and other subjects as specified in the related syllabi.
- (3) Scientific and mathematical formulae shall be provided by the MATSEC Board where appropriate.

(4) All work submitted in connection with the Examination, including any written work, shall remain the property of the MATSEC Board, but may be returned to the candidates at the MATSEC Board's discretion.

Candidates with Special Needs

16. (1) Candidates with special needs may be given the option to be exempted from being examined in a particular component of the examination, such as an oral or a practical examination. When candidates accept the option and their mark is prorated to compensate for the missing component, their certificate shall be endorsed as follows:

'Special arrangements were made to enable the candidate to be assessed in this subject. Details may be obtained from the Executive Director.'

(2) Such certificates shall only be issued as a last resort when ways cannot be found of supporting candidates with special needs to satisfy examination requirements.

(3) Applications requesting special arrangements shall be made on the appropriate form, within the date stipulated by the MATSEC Board, and must be endorsed by the Head of the candidate's school and supported by appropriate medical or other professional evidence issued within the two years previous to the examination.

Quality of Language

17. Candidates are expected to bear in mind the necessity for clarity of expression and orderly presentation in their examination answers.

Language of Examination

18. The language/s in which the questions are set shall be indicated in the syllabus of each subject. Candidates are required to answer in the language the questions are set, unless otherwise specified in the examination paper.

Repeal

19. The Secondary Education Certificate Examination Regulations, 2014 published as Legal Notice 389 of 2014, shall be deemed to cease to be in force as from 31st December 2024.