



L-Università  
ta' Malta

**MATSEC**  
Examinations Board



# **MATSEC Regulations**

Statute and Conduct

**2023**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Statute for the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations .....	2
Citation and Interpretation .....	2
Applicability .....	2
General .....	2
The Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board .....	2
Regulations and Syllabuses.....	3
Certification .....	4
Repeal .....	4
The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations .....	5
Citation .....	5
Applicability .....	5
Subject Panels.....	5
Composition of Subject Panels .....	5
Role of Subject Panels .....	6
Eligibility to sit on Paper Setters' and Markers' Panels.....	7
Procedures of Subject Panels .....	8
Internal and External Verification .....	9
Remuneration payable to Subject Panels .....	9
Revision of Results.....	9
Disciplinary Committee .....	10
Return of Candidates' Work .....	12
Repeal .....	12

## **Statute for the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations**

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred upon him by articles 74(5) and 75(6) of the Education Act, the Chancellor of the University of Malta has promulgated the following statute made by the Council of the University of Malta in virtue of the powers conferred upon it by articles 72(h), 75(2) and 77(c) of the said Act:

### **Citation and Interpretation**

1. (1) This statute is cited from the Statute for the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (published as L.N. 349 of 2014) with amendments from Statute for the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (Amendment), 2021 (published as L.N. 413 of 2021).
- (2) "Examinations" means various forms of assessment.

### **Applicability**

2. This statute shall be applicable from 1 September 2021 onwards.

### **General**

3. (1) There shall be a Matriculation Examination held at two levels: Advanced (AM) and Intermediate (IM), a Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) Examination and a Secondary Education Applied Certificate Examination (SEAC).
- (2) In each year there shall be continuous assessment and two sessions of the Examinations as specified in the syllabi and learning and assessment programmes.
- (3) The Examinations and continuous assessment shall be under the control of a Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board (MATSEC Board) appointed in terms of article 4 (2).

### **The Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board**

4. (1) The functions of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board shall be:
  - (i) to make recommendations to Senate regarding regulations required for the proper conduct of the Examinations and continuous assessment;
  - (ii) to conduct the Examinations and continuous assessment in accordance with the regulations approved by Senate;
  - (iii) to make recommendations to Senate regarding syllabuses and learning and assessment programmes which would be prepared after consultation with curriculum experts from the schools, the Directorates of Education, the University of Malta (UM), the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS), as appropriate;

## MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

(iv) to make recommendations to Senate regarding the appointment of syllabus and learning and assessment programme panels, paper setters' panels, markers' panels and external and standards verifiers, as appropriate;

(v) to make recommendations to Senate on all matters related to assessment and examinations and on relevant matters referred to it; and

(vi) to make recommendations to Council regarding resources so that the MATSEC Board shall execute all its functions.

(2) The Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board shall consist of twelve members and a chairman as follows:

(i) a Chair (the Rector or his nominated deputy);

(ii) three members of the academic staff appointed by the Senate of the University;

(iii) one member appointed by the Council of Institutes of MCAST;

(iv) one member appointed by the Institute for Tourism Studies;

(v) two members from the Directorates of Education appointed by the Minister responsible for education;

(vi) one member nominated by, and from, the membership of the Church Schools Association;

(vii) one member nominated by, and from, the membership of the Independent Schools Association;

(viii) one representative from the trade union representing the largest number of teachers duly warranted by the Council for the Teaching Profession (as it may be reconstituted from time to time) in terms of the applicable law;

(ix) the Executive Director of the MATSEC; and

(x) the Registrar.

(3) The Secretary of the Board shall be the Registrar or his nominated deputy.

(4) The number of members required to form a quorum shall be six. Board members shall have the power to deliberate and decide on any matter brought before the Board in accordance with its remit hereunder. In the absence of unanimous approval by the Board members on any matter on which it deliberates, decisions may be validly taken if supported by a minimum of fifty percent plus one of all Board members present at any board meeting, subject to quorum.

(5) The Vice-Chairman shall be the Executive Director of MATSEC.

(6) Members shall be appointed for a term of three years, which may be renewed.

### Regulations and Syllabuses

5. Regulations made by Senate for the examinations leading to the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificates and the syllabi or learning and assessment programmes for each subject shall normally be published each year. Advanced and Intermediate Level syllabi shall normally be

## MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

published two years in advance of the final assessment. SEC and SEAC syllabi and learning and assessment programmes shall normally be published three years in advance of the final assessment.

### **Certification**

6. Expressly notwithstanding Articles 2.2 (a) and (c) of Statute 6 – the Principal and Other Officers of the University (Schedule 2 of the Education Act – Cap. 327), certification attesting to the performance of candidates in examinations leading to the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificates shall bear the signature of the Executive Director of MATSEC.

### **Repeal**

7. The Statute 04 – The Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations published as Legal Notice 11 of 1991 is hereby repealed.

## **The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations 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**

1. These regulations are cited from The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations, 2013 (published as L.N. 132 of 2013) with amendments from The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (Amendment) Regulations, 2015 (published as L.N. 160 of 2015), amendments from The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 (published as L.N. 386 of 2021) and amendments from The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 (published as L.N. 325 of 2022)

### **Applicability**

2. (1) These regulations shall apply to the Matriculation Examination at the Advanced and Intermediate Levels and to the Secondary Education Certificate Examination offered by the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Board (MATSEC Board), as provided in Statute 4 of the University of Malta. These regulations shall apply for examinations held from 1 January 2021 onwards.  
  
(2) In addition to these regulations, the Matriculation Examinations Regulations, 2013 and the Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations, 2005 shall apply.

### **Subject Panels**

3. (1) Each subject or group of subjects offered within the Matriculation Examination at Advanced and Intermediate Levels and the Secondary Education Certificate Examination shall have:
  - (a) a Syllabus Panel, appointed for a period of two years;
  - (b) a Paper Setters' Panel, appointed for a period of one year; and
  - (c) a Markers' Panel, appointed for a period of one year.  
(2) The appointment of persons on these panels may be renewed.

### **Composition of Subject Panels**

4. The composition of each of the panels shall be as follows:
  - (1) Syllabus Panels: The members on the Syllabus Panel are chosen for the expertise they can offer

## MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

and after consultation with the bodies concerned. In exceptional circumstances, an advisor may be appointed. One of the members shall take the chair.

(a) In the case of the Secondary Education Certificate Examination:

- (i) a Syllabus Panel shall be composed of representatives from the academic staff of the University, the competent Directorate of the Ministry responsible for Education, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS), the Church Schools' Association and the Independent Schools Association, as appropriate;
- (ii) the number of academic staff of the University shall, as far as possible, not exceed half the total number of members of the panels; and
- (iii) the number of Syllabus Panels chaired by members of the academic staff of the University shall not exceed half the number of panels.

(b) In the case of the Matriculation Examination a Syllabus Panel for subjects at Advanced and Intermediate Levels shall be composed of representatives from the academic staff of the University and one from each of the post-secondary institutions recognized by the MATSEC Board. The chairperson of the syllabus panel will be chosen by the MATSEC Board after consultation with the head of the University of Malta Department where the subject is taught, where applicable.

(c) All Syllabus Panels shall be appointed by Senate on the recommendation of the MATSEC Board.

(2) Paper Setters' Panels: A Paper Setters' Panel shall be composed of at least two members, one of whom shall take the chair. The panel shall be appointed by the Senate of the University on the recommendation of the MATSEC Board.

(3) Markers' Panels: A Markers' Panel shall be composed of at least two members. The panel will be chaired by the Paper Setters' chair. The panel shall be appointed by the Senate of the University on the recommendation of the MATSEC Board.

### Role of Subject Panels

5. (1) Syllabus Panel: A Syllabus Panel shall be responsible for the drawing up of a syllabus in the subject/s for which it is appointed. Such a syllabus shall be submitted for approval to the MATSEC Board and Senate. In the case of the Secondary Education Certificate it shall be published at least three years before the date of the examination to which it refers. In the case of the Matriculation Examination, it shall be published at least two years before the date of the examination to which it refers.

(2) Paper Setters' Panel:

- (a) A Paper Setters' Panel shall be responsible for the preparation of the examination papers, a mark scheme in the subject, and other supporting documentation requested by the MATSEC Board, for each session of the examination. The examination papers must meet the requirements and assessment objectives and must cover the subject content specified in the

## MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

syllabus. The examination papers must be submitted to the MATSEC for printing by not later than the date established by the MATSEC Board.

(b) In the case of subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4(1) of the Secondary Education Certificate Examination Regulations 2014, the Paper Setters' Panel shall set the controlled assessments and the synoptic tests as specified in the syllabi. These assessments must be submitted to MATSEC for printing by not later than the date established by the MATSEC Board.

(3) Markers' Panel: Members of any Markers' Panel shall be responsible for the marking of the examination scripts allotted to them by the person chairing the panel, according to the mark scheme agreed to by the Paper Setters' Panel. The person chairing the panel shall not mark any scripts but shall read a representative sample and shall act as moderator to ensure that all the markers are adhering to the same standards. The Markers' Panels shall take into account the moderated school based assessment, oral examinations and other forms of assessment as provided for by the syllabus. Members of the Markers' Panel may be designated moderators, and may form part of the interviewing panel of the school based assessment.

### Eligibility to sit on Paper Setters' and Markers' Panels

6. (1) Members of Paper Setters' Panels shall not be eligible to take part in the workings of panel for a particular session of examinations if:

(a) they are related to a candidate by consanguinity or by affinity to the third degree inclusive; or

(b) they have been, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, guardians of candidate; or

(c) they have been, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, teachers of any of the candidates in the subject and level of examination or a closely related subject; or

(d) they have given, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, private tuition in the subject and level of examination or a closely related subject; or

(e) they are related to the first degree to any person who teaches candidates taking the subject at that level.

(2) Members of Markers' Panels shall not be eligible to take part in the workings of a panel for a particular session of examinations if:

(a) they are related to a candidate by consanguinity or by affinity to the third degree inclusive; or

(b) they have been, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, guardians of a candidate; or

(c) they have given, at any time during the twelve months before the examination concerned, private tuition in the subject and level of examination or a closely related subject.

(3) Members of Paper Setters' and Paper Markers' Panels shall not be eligible to participate in either



## MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

Panel if they are in a dual relationship with a candidate sitting for an examination in which they are involved. Dual relationship means that a member of one of these Panels is at the same time in a relationship with a candidate or with a person closely associated with or related to a candidate sitting for an examination.

(4) (a) Members of Paper Setters' and Markers' Panels shall be required to declare that they are not disqualified from taking part in the workings of the panel under any of the foregoing provisions of this regulation.

(b) The MATSEC Board shall consider the declarations received and reserves the right to preclude the nominee from acting as a paper setter and/or marker.

(5) The MATSEC Board, after consultation with the person chairing the panel, shall advise the Rector to appoint another paper setter or marker in place of a member who is disqualified as aforesaid.

(6) Where the member to be replaced is the person chairing the panel, the MATSEC Board shall advise the Rector to appoint a paper setter or marker already on the panel to assume that role and such substitute members as may be necessary.

### Procedures of Subject Panels

#### 7. (1) Syllabus Panels:

(a) The Chairperson of the Syllabus Panel is to call meetings of the panel and to inform the Principal Subject Area Officer concerned, who will normally attend panel meetings.

(b) One of the members of the panel is to be appointed to keep the Minutes. These should record decisions only and should be forwarded to the Principal Subject Area Officer within fifteen days of the meeting. Copies of the Minutes will be kept at MATSEC.

(c) The Minutes should record attendance. The Chairperson should inform the MATSEC Board about members who are habitually absent so that replacements could be sought as soon as possible. With the permission of the MATSEC Board, it may be possible to co-opt an advisor for specific meetings or for a series of meetings. Co-opted members will not have voting rights and they do not qualify for an honorarium.

#### (2) Paper Setters' and Markers' Panels:

(a) The Paper Setters' and Markers' Panels shall determine the procedures to be adopted by them within the guidelines and parameters established by the MATSEC Board.

(b) Members of the Paper Setters' and Markers' Panels shall treat as confidential everything connected with the proceedings of their work. They shall take all necessary precautions to prevent leakage of information on the question papers, mark schemes and examination scripts to third parties.

(c) Members of a Markers' Panel marking the same part of the examination shall be required to attend a Standardising Meeting to ensure harmonisation and consistency in marking. The chairperson shall call such a meeting soon after the examination and before marking begins.

(d) Members of Markers' Panels must finish their work by the date specified by the member

chairing the Panel within the time frame established by MATSEC. In the event of illness or other emergencies, MATSEC must be informed so that alternative arrangements can be made.

(e) The members of a Markers' Panel shall prepare a brief report on the performance of the candidates whose scripts they have marked, immediately after they have completed their marking. These reports shall be submitted to the member chairing the Panel who will take them into account when compiling a report on the examinations held during a year for submission to the MATSEC Board for publication. The report shall seek to present a balanced picture and shall include such comments as will be of value and interest to teachers in the subject.

### **Internal and External Verification**

8. The assessment of subjects marked with an asterisk in the Secondary Education Certificate Examination Regulations 2014 shall be subject to verification.

(a) For each of these subjects an External Verifier shall be appointed by Senate, on the recommendation of the MATSEC Board.

(b) The role of the External Verifier is to ensure that the planning, delivery and assessment of the programme meets the standard expected by the MATSEC Board. The External Verifier shall also make suggestions about the improvement of quality as necessary.

(c) Internal Verifiers, appointed by the schools responsible for students taking the subject, shall verify that the assignments set by the teachers meet the required standards and that their assessment decisions are fair and consistent. The External Verifier shall monitor and report on the internal verification.

(d) The External Verifier shall chair the Paper Setters' and Markers' Panel for these subjects. These Panels shall be responsible for setting the controlled assessments and the setting and marking of the synoptic tests for each Unit as specified in the syllabus.

(e) The External Verifier shall moderate the results of the controlled assessments and the synoptic tests.

### **Remuneration payable to Subject Panels**

9. Members of subject panels shall be entitled to remuneration, as established by the Council of the University.

### **Revision of Results**

10. (1) (a) Candidates who are not satisfied that the grade awarded to them in any subject represents their performance during an examination may request a revision of their examination papers.

(b) In the case of subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4(1) of the Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations 2014, candidates who are not satisfied with the mark awarded to them for a Unit may request a revision of their assignments and controlled assessment

(2) Such requests must be made to MATSEC, in line with the instructions provided by the Unit and within the period indicated in a notice to be issued soon after the publication of the results. The

## MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

request shall be registered after the payment of the established fee/s. In cases where the revision of examination papers results in an upgrade, the fee paid shall be refunded to the candidate.

(3) The revision of examination papers shall be made by the original Markers' Panel together with a Reviser.

(4) The following procedure shall be followed in the revision of papers:

(a) A Reviser shall be appointed by the Senate;

(b) The Reviser shall be provided with the mark scheme for the examination and will go over the relevant script/s and if s/he agrees that the mark awarded is justified s/he will confirm the mark to the chairperson of the Markers' Panel;

(c) If the Reviser feels that the mark should be changed, s/he shall inform the chairperson of the Markers' Panel. If the recommendation of the Reviser results in an upgrade, the chairperson may call a meeting with the Reviser and, where applicable, the marker/s of that part of the paper which is in question to reach consensus on the mark to be given. If no consensus is reached, a vote will be taken by the aforementioned persons; and

(d) In every case where a revision of a paper is requested, the Reviser shall draw up a brief report, a copy of which shall be sent to the candidate.

(5) When there is reason to suspect that any candidate may not have been assigned marks that belong to him/her or may have been assigned marks that pertain to someone else then it is at the discretion of the chairperson of the MATSEC Board to make arrangement for the candidate to see his/her paper for the sole purpose of identification.

### **Disciplinary Committee**

11. (1) Cases of cheating, attempting to cheat or to take unfair advantage during an examination in any other way, the introduction of unauthorised material in the examination room and reported cases of misconduct shall be investigated by a Disciplinary Committee appointed by Senate.

(2) The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of the Chairperson of the MATSEC Examinations Board, the Director of MATSEC, the Principal Subject Area Officer responsible for the subject in which the irregularity took place, a member appointed by the MATSEC Board, and the Chairperson of the Markers' Panel of the examination as appropriate.

(3) The Disciplinary Committee shall impose penalties in cases where it is established that a breach of the regulations has been committed.

(4) Penalties shall differ in severity depending on the extent and nature of the breach of these regulations as ascertained by the Disciplinary Committee, previous instances of misconduct by the candidate, and any extenuating circumstances.

MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

(5) The Disciplinary Committee may apply a penalty as it deems appropriate. The Disciplinary Committee may:

- (a) reprimand the candidate and issue a warning to the candidate about more severe penalties if any future breach of regulations is committed;
- (b) issue a warning and lower the result of the examination in the subject;
- (c) issue a warning and assign a failing grade in the subject;
- (d) cancel the results of all the examinations which the candidate sat for in the particular session when the irregularity took place;
- (e) require the candidate to pay for, or otherwise make good for, any damage/s caused, or other costs incurred by the MATSEC Board as a direct consequence of the misconduct;
- (f) temporarily suspend the candidate from sitting for any examinations with the MATSEC Board for a definite period of time;
- (g) reserve the right to nullify previously awarded certificate/s;
- (h) cancel the results of all and/or any of the examinations which the candidate sat for in any preceding session, provided that this sanction shall be applied only when the Disciplinary Committee deems it in the interests of justice to do so; and
- (i) adopt any combination of the penalties defined above.

(6) A record of all meetings held by the Disciplinary Committee and the penalties applied as a result of these meetings shall be kept by the MATSEC Board.

(7) Any candidate whose conduct during an examination is being investigated shall be informed in writing about the nature of the allegation and invited to attend the meeting of the Disciplinary Committee when his/her case is discussed. In cases where candidates are minors, the parents/guardians shall also be informed. The candidate may be accompanied by a representative of his choice. If the candidate is accompanied by a legal adviser, the role of the legal adviser shall be to provide the candidate with support and not legal representation. The candidate shall be responsible for all arrangements involving the legal adviser. In such case, the other parties must be informed beforehand.

(8) The Disciplinary Committee has the power to summon persons for the purpose of giving evidence at any meeting.

(9) Should a candidate fail to attend the meeting of the Disciplinary Committee, the Disciplinary Committee may proceed in his/her absence provided that candidates who fail to appear before the Disciplinary Committee shall be deemed to have renounced the right to be heard.

(10) The candidate shall be allowed to sit for any other examination s/he registered for during that same session of examinations.

## MATSEC Regulations: Statute and Conduct (Education Act (Cap. 327))

(11) The issuing of a candidate's results may be suspended until a decision is taken by the Disciplinary Committee.

(12) The Disciplinary Committee may, in special circumstances, reconsider its decision either on its own motion or following a request to that effect by the candidate concerned, provided that, for the purpose of this regulation, 'special circumstances' means only when new (fresh) evidence is available which could not have been provided earlier to the Disciplinary Committee when the case was being heard and/or was not available then.

(13) Before reconsidering the case, the Disciplinary Committee shall first determine whether such evidence is new evidence which could not have been provided earlier to the Disciplinary Committee when the case was being heard and/ or was not available then.

(14) A request for reconsideration may be made by the candidate in writing to the Chairperson of the MATSEC Board by not later than fifteen days from the date of notification of the Disciplinary Committee's decision.

(15) Where the Disciplinary Committee decides to reconsider its decision, it shall inform the candidate accordingly of the new (fresh) evidence it may have received and it shall allow the candidate the opportunity to rebut such new (fresh) evidence.

### **Return of Candidates' Work**

12. (1) Candidates shall collect their coursework material (projects, reports and other work) presented for assessment from MATSEC in line with instructions given by the Unit. Written scripts and practical work carried out within the formal examination shall be retained by the MATSEC Board.

(2) MATSEC reserves the right to dispose of any uncollected coursework as it deems fit.

### **Repeal**

13. The Regulations of 1996 for The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examination, published as Legal Notice 62 of 1996 and amended by Legal Notice 303 of 2002, are hereby repealed with effect from 1 January, 2013.