



L-Università  
ta' Malta

**MATSEC**  
Examinations Board



## **MATSEC Regulations**

Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) Regulations

**2022**

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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, 2014 (published as L.N. 389 of 2014) with amendments from Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Amendment) Regulations, 2015 (published as L.N. 166 of 2015) and amendments from Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 (published as L.N. 450 of 2021).

(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 the January 2022 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, Classical Culture and Civilisation, Commerce, Computing, Design & Technology, Economics, English Language, English Literature, Engineering Technology\*, Environmental Studies, Ethics, European Studies, Fashion and Textiles\*, French, Geography, German, Greek, History, Hairdressing and Beauty\*, Health and Social Care\*, Home Economics, Hospitality\*, Information Technology\*, Italian, Latin, Maltese, Mathematics, Media Literacy\*, Music, Physical Education, Physics, Religious Knowledge, Retail\*, Russian, Social Studies and Spanish.

(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 (3) and (4) of regulation 5, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

### Choice of Subjects

5. (1) No subject may be taken in both the Secondary Education Certificate Examination and the Matriculation Certificate Examination at Advanced or Intermediate Level in the same session.  
  
(2) Candidates may not sit for the examination in Business Studies with any of Commerce, and Economics in the same session.  
  
(3) Candidates are eligible to register for the Supplementary Session in any of the subjects in regulation 4 (2) only if, in the Main Session, they had obtained Grade 6 or lower, or if they were absent, except for Biology, Chemistry and Physics which are regulated by paragraph (4) of this regulation.  
  
(4) 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 Grade 5 or better 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) the Examination in all other subjects shall consist of two papers, each of two hours' duration: Paper I and Paper II as specified in the respective syllabi.  
  
(2) The papers shall be structured as follows:
  - (a) Paper I shall be the core paper to be taken by all candidates registered for the examination in the subject, and may include an oral/aural/coursework/practical component; and
  - (b) Paper IIA comprises more demanding questions than those in Paper IIB.  
(3) Candidates shall be required to indicate on their application form which of Paper IIA or Paper IIB they wish to sit for.  
  
(4) In the Supplementary Session, only Paper I and Paper IIB shall be offered.  
  
(5) In all subjects marked with an asterisk in regulation 4(1) there shall be continuous assessment by the class teachers with internal verification by peers and external verification by the MATSEC Board.  
  
(6) 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.

(7) 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.

(8) 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

7. (1) Grades shall be awarded on a seven-point scale, according to the criteria laid down in paragraph (2) of this regulation. Grade 1 shall be awarded for the highest level of achievement, whereas Grade 8 indicates the minimum satisfactory performance.

(2) Grades 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 low level of attainment.

**Grade 8:** Indicates a basic level of attainment.

(3) Candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper IIA may qualify for Grade 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. The results of candidates who do not obtain at least Grade 5 shall remain unclassified and shall be denoted as U.

(4) Candidates sitting for Paper I and Paper IIB may qualify for Grade 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.

(5) 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.

## 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, 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 an additional 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 a further additional fee.

(4) Registration for the Supplementary Session shall be made during the week following the publication of the Main Session results. Candidates shall be allowed to register for the Supplementary Session only if they had also registered for the Main Session of the examination and subject to the provisions of paragraphs (3) and (4) 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.

(6) Registration for the synoptic tests shall be made during the week following the release of the results of the Units. Candidates shall be allowed to register for the synoptic test only as specified in regulation 6 (8).

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

(8) Alterations to the application form may only be made by the candidates' subject to the same conditions and additional fees applicable for late registration.

## Enquiries upon Results

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

## Revision of Grade

10. (1) In terms of regulation 9 of The Conduct of the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate Examinations Regulations, 2013, candidates who are not satisfied with the grade awarded to them

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in any of the subjects for which they sat, may request a review of their examination scripts, 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 grade obtained in each subject, together with the criteria for the award of the grade as laid down in paragraph (2) of regulation 7, shall be issued once only to candidates who obtain a grade from 1 to 7.

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

### Conduct during the Examination

12. 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.

### Coursework

13. (1) School-based assessment of coursework shall only be accepted from schools approved by the MATSEC Board.

(2) When a syllabus for a particular subject requires the submission of coursework, such coursework must be available at the candidates' school for moderation by the Markers' Panel.

(3) The coursework assessment results awarded by the candidates' schools must reach the MATSEC Support Unit by the date specified by the MATSEC Board.

(4) Coursework assessment results shall be retained for the Supplementary Session.

(5) Coursework assessment results may also be retained for subsequent sessions of the Examination unless the respective syllabus states that the set coursework is no longer valid, but the candidates may, at their option, present new coursework. The assessment results of the new coursework replace the results of the previous coursework.

(6) Private candidates are required to submit their coursework by the specified date and as established by the MATSEC Board, with a dated endorsement showing where it was carried out.

(7) Candidates who have never studied a subject which involves a practical at school but have covered the coursework privately shall be expected to present their coursework to the MATSEC Board by the date indicated by the MATSEC Board. Such candidates shall be asked to attend for an oral examination about their practical work.

### **Oral/Aural Components of the Examinations**

14. (1) Marks obtained in the oral and aural 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/aural components shall be made available to candidates who are marked absent for the Main Session of the oral/aural examination, provided that they are either covered by a medical certificate presented within three days of the oral/aural examination or they are absent for a reason deemed valid by the MATSEC Board. Candidates who are absent for the oral/aural examination in the Main Session without a valid reason shall not be awarded any marks and shall not be entitled to a supplementary oral/aural examination.

### **Examination Materials**

15. (1) No texts or dictionaries are permitted in the examination room unless specifically indicated in the syllabus.

(2) With the exception of the part of Paper I in Mathematics for which a calculator cannot be used, and unless otherwise indicated in the syllabus and in the examination paper, the use of non-programmable electronic calculators is permitted in Mathematics, science subjects and related subjects.

(3) Scientific and mathematical formulae shall be provided by the MATSEC Board where appropriate.

(4) All work submitted in connection with the Examination, including written work and coursework, 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.'*



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(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 good 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, 2005 published as Legal Notice 188 of 2005, shall be deemed to cease to be in force as from 20th June 2014.