

## ASSESSMENT POLICY

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## **Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all students are provided with fit for purpose assessment opportunities during their programme. This policy is also to provide clear guidance to all programme teams about assessment practice.

The assessment policy seeks to ensure that assessment practices and procedures;

- are subject to appropriate internal moderation/verification
- can be evidenced
- are applied consistently across the programme and by teaching staff.
- are fair and take account of the diversity of learners

## **Methods of Assessment**

The assessment methods relate to specific learning outcomes at module level as set out within the approved qualification. Assessment criteria specific to each assessment will be developed. The time taken for students to prepare has been taken into consideration for all the different types of assessment, there is much differing opinion to the amount of preparation time taken by students. The Student Assessment Workloads Review, A Fielding (2008)<sup>1</sup> has guided the calculations used in the allocation of percentage values of assessment within each module.

**Short Essay** (1000-2500 words, depending on the nature of the task). Focused on a specific text or limited topic, with an emphasis on specific knowledge and understanding. 20 hours research and writing

**Long Essay** (3000-5000 words). Dealing with a range of texts and/ or multiple aspects of a complex topic, with an emphasis not only on knowledge and understanding but also on analysis, critical thought, development of original ideas etc. 40 hours research and writing.

**Unseen Exam.** May be anything between 45 minutes and 2 hours in length; length to be determined by the nature of what is to be assessed, which also determines the nature of the questions set. The amount of time required for revision will be determined by the amount of material which will need to be covered, so that one might envisage 10-20 hours revision being required.

**Seminar Presentation/OSPE.** Depending on the length of the presentation/OSPE and on the nature and complexity of the topic which students will be expected to cover, this may be considered analogous to either a short or a long essay. 20 to 40 hours preparation

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/ltia/issue17/fielding.php> (Appendix.84 Student Assessment Workload)

**Proposal** (5000 words). Dealing in detail with a range of texts and/or multiple aspects of a complex topic, largely self-chosen and self-directed, with an emphasis on knowledge, understanding, critical thought, analysis, development of original ideas etc. It is impossible to prescribe a single notional workload figure for this exercise. a minimum of 80-100 hours.

**Portfolios** are used to collect and collating evidence to demonstrate that learning outcomes have been met. They capture experiences by documenting the acquisition of practical and/or clinical and/or affective skills. They allow students the chance to collate evidence throughout the academic year.

**Objective Structured Clinical analytical exercises** use 'paper patient' simulation exercises allowing students to apply techniques, protocols and critical clinical skills.

**Integrated Structured Clinical Examinations (ISCEs)**, allow students to have real patient-based assessments

## **Assessment Procedure**

The management of assessment sessions ensures transparent and consistent practices for planning, administering, and evaluating assessments.

1. The Head of Department is responsible for planning programme assessment requirements well in advance. This includes responsibility for designing an assessment plan which minimises bunching of assessments and reflects due consideration of assessment structure, timing and methodology across the programme.
2. The Head of Department and module/unit coordinators are responsible for formally providing students with information about examinations (date, time, and examination duration) through their assessment plan.
3. The Head of Department is responsible for ensuring the assessment plan is provided in the programme handbook at the start of the course. Assessments will be explained to students prior to commencement to ensure they fully understand any requirements and rules, but without compromising the integrity of that assessment.
4. The Head of Department is responsible for providing clear information about all programme assessment requirements and making these available to all students formally, in programme handbooks and/or module/unit guides. Information will include;
  - a. how and when assessment takes place
  - b. any associated additional costs
  - c. any special arrangements for assessed coursework, examinations or tests
  - d. any specialist or alternative ways of assessing/examining learners with learning difficulties/and/or disabilities

- e. whether or not previous achievement or experience can count towards the proposed qualification.
  - f. how to present evidence for portfolios to support assessment
  - g. rules regarding timescales, examination conditions, methods of communicating the outcomes of assessment etc.
5. The Head of Department is responsible for coordinating programme handbooks and distributing these to students.
6. The Programme Leader and module/unit coordinators are responsible for preparing schemes of work/module guides and making these available to students at the start of their programme.
7. The Programme Leader and module/unit coordinators will hold assessment meetings to agree types of evidence being used to support assessment decisions. The rules of assessment must be applied when making judgements about the evidence or work presented. To be reliable, evidence must be valid (relating to the targeted outcome), authentic (must be the student's own work), current (reflecting current practice) and sufficient (enough to demonstrate competence in the planned outcomes).
8. The Head of Department will be responsible for appointing internal verifiers/moderators and ensuring implementation of internal verification activity across their Department.
9. Internal verifiers/moderators, in liaison with the Programme Leader and module/unit coordinators, will be responsible for ensuring all assignment briefs or assessments have been subject to a rigorous internal moderation/verification process using the agreed system prior to distribution to students.
10. The Programme Leader, in liaison with the Module Leader will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to retain coursework submissions securely and will ensure that the return of coursework to learners is timely and secure.
11. The Programme Leader and assessors must not give informal extensions to individual students. Any student requiring further consideration due to learning difficulty, learning disability, or circumstances beyond their control, must apply to the Head of Department formally for an extension in advance of the submission date using the MIE Authorised Extensions Policy. Where appropriate any learner unable to meet a submission date must use the Extenuating Circumstances procedures.
12. Where possible, anonymous marking should take place.

13. Internal verifiers/moderators, in liaison with the Programme Leader and Module Leader, module/unit coordinators and assessors, will be responsible for ensuring assessment decisions have been subject to a rigorous internal moderation and verification process in accordance with the:
  41. Assessment Moderation Policy
  52. Assessment Verification Moderation Handbook Malta

and agreed sampling levels, prior to assessment decisions/marks being issued to students.
14. Internal verifiers/moderators will hold regular standardisation meetings to agree assessment decisions/mark, or types of evidence being used to support the assessment decision.
15. Module leaders, and assessors will be responsible for ensuring assessment feedback is provided to students in sufficient time to enable them to improve their subsequent performance. In all cases this will be within MIE agreed timescale and as detailed on the assignment brief. This will normally be within three weeks.
16. Module leaders and assessors will be responsible for ensuring students receive regular updates on their progress through formative and summative assessment feedback.
17. The Head of Department is responsible for monitoring the provision of feedback for programmes. The minimum requirements for feedback are:
  - a. A provisional mark or grade
  - b. Feedback identifying the major shortcomings and recommendations to enable the work to be improved
  - c. Areas of strength
  - d. Feedback will be explicitly linked to the grading criteria
18. Associated Documents:
  41. Assessment Moderation Policy
  38. Assessment Schedules and the Return of Assessed Workv2
  61. Extenuating Circumstances Policy.v3 (CF 25.11.24)

### **Procedure in the event of illness**

If a student fails to sit or submit all or part of an assessment due to medically certified illness or other valid cause, s/he may be permitted to sit/resubmit the failed assessment(s) as if for the first time by a date to be determined in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances policy. This is only permitted if application has been made in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances policy.

## **Late submission of work**

Malta ICOM Educational believes that handing work in on time is a valuable discipline which helps students to develop the ability to plan and organise their time effectively and prepares them for work. In this context the late submission of work is not condoned, unless extenuating circumstances have been agreed.

Heads of Department and assessors will be responsible for making students aware, in the programme documentation, of any penalties that they will incur as a result of the late submission of coursework.

Disciplinary action may be taken against students on HE courses who persistently hand work in late.

## **Access arrangements for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities**

Students are entitled to special access arrangements in all examinations, internal and external, so that they are not at a disadvantage due to learning difficulties or disabilities. Examples of access arrangements include extra time, use of a reader, scribe or laptop.

Students are encouraged to inform MIE at an early stage if they believe they need particular adjustments.

The Heads of Department also have a role in identifying students during their programme who require access arrangements. These students are referred to Learning Support in the early stage of the programme so that they can benefit from diagnostic testing and any subsequent learning support. Applications for access arrangements can be made at any time.

Learning Support staff will assess students' access arrangement needs, where not been carried out previously, and will inform the Head of Department of the arrangements the learner is entitled to.

## **Extenuating circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances are serious, exceptional, and unforeseen events that significantly impact a student's ability to attend assessments, submit coursework, or perform academically. Students must follow the processes outlined in the Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Version 3, 20/11/24) and the accompanying Extenuating Circumstances Procedure Guidelines (Version 1, 25/11/24). The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will submit recommendations to the Examination Board for consideration.

**Fit to Sit Declaration:** By submitting work or attending an assessment, students declare themselves fit to sit. If unforeseen circumstances arise during or immediately before the assessment, students must notify the invigilator/assessor and submit a "Fit to Sit" declaration.

**Submission of Claims:** Students must submit an Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form with supporting evidence to the Head of Department within five (5) working days of the affected assessment or event.

**Attendance Monitoring:** Students must maintain at least 90% attendance. Valid claims for extenuating circumstances impacting attendance will be reviewed by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and reflected in attendance records if approved.

**Outcome Recommendations:** The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will recommend outcomes such as retakes, late submission acceptance, or progression adjustments to the Examination Board.

**Associated Documents:**

Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Version 3, 20/11/24).

Extenuating Circumstances Procedure Guidelines (Version 1, 25/11/24).

## Examination Boards and Resit Boards

### Examination Boards

The purpose of an Examination Board is to consider and agree students' achievement at the end of each semester. Assessors will meet formally in Examination Boards as follows;

- Semester 1 Examination Board to be held between the end of semester 1 and Easter.
- Semester 2 Examination Board to be held at the end of S2 a minimum of 1 week before the planned Award Board.

For those programmes which do not have units/modules completed at the end of semester 1, the Examination Board will be a formal review of assessment progress.

Examination Boards will include the Head of Department and all those assessing on the units/modules under consideration. The following have rights of membership of the Examination Board;

Chair: Head of Department  
Program Leader  
Clinical Education Coordinator  
Module Leaders  
External Examiner

The purpose of an Examination Board is to oversee the assessment of awards, formally agree the progression status of learners and confirm final award classification or grades. The composition of Examination Boards must include at least one external examiner, the Head of Department and all those assessing on the programme.

## **Resit Boards**

The purpose of a Resit Board is to consider and agree learner's achievement in cases where the Examination Board has recommended that learners are given a resit opportunity. Resit Boards are to be held no later than halfway through the semester following that in which the Examination Board was held.

Composition of Resit Boards will be the Head of Department and all those assessing on the programme. The following have rights of membership of the Award Board;

- Chair HoD
- Programme Leader
- Dean or Vice Dean

All Examination and Resit Board meetings will be formally minuted and a record provided to the Principal.

Related Documents:

51. Examination Boards Terms of Reference

54. Academic Appeals Procedure.

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## **Quorum**

The quorum for the above meetings is normally one half of the members, the Chair and an external examiner must be present. Members of Examination Boards should only absent themselves in exceptional circumstances and should seek the approval of the chair who must be briefed about any matters which may affect any decision of the Board.

## **Academic Misconduct**

All assessments must be conducted with integrity, adhering to the principles outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy. Academic misconduct, including plagiarism, cheating, or the unethical use of AI tools, undermines the credibility of assessments and will be addressed in accordance with institutional procedures.

Students and staff are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the expectations and consequences detailed in the Academic Integrity Policy to ensure compliance and promote a fair and transparent academic environment.

Related Policies:

Academic Integrity Policy v.2

Malta ICOM Educational Using AI Guidance Policy

## **Academic appeals process**

If a learner is dissatisfied with an assessment decision, s/he should discuss this with the relevant member of staff concerned in the first instance. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, then the learner can appeal formally using the academic appeal policy.



Related documents:

Academic Appeals Procedure.

Academic appeal Form AA1

## **Retaining Records**

All student work and associated records are retained until after External Verification/Moderation and certification. Work is stored securely in MIE.

Stored records include all IV of assignments and unit criteria, tracking of progress Once certificated, work is returned to students. Arrangements for the collection of work are given to students at the end of the course, this includes the timescales for destroying uncollected work.

Records relating to summative decisions (tracking sheets, assignment briefs, IV records etc) and the Certification claims, are kept in accordance with the licence under which MIE operates. Securely electronically or occasionally as paper.

## **Final Grading system**

The pass mark is 50% for all MIE programmes other than the BSc Osteopathy programme. The BSc Osteopathy programme pass mark is 40%.

The final grade award to a student on a programme at Malta ICOM Educational

### ***Osteopathy Faculty***

|                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| First Class Honours                   | 70 and above |
| Second Class Honours, First Division  | 60-69        |
| Second Class Honours, Second Division | 50-59        |
| Third Class Honours                   | 40-49        |
| Fail                                  | 39 and below |

### ***Physiotherapy and Dental Hygiene Faculties***

|                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| First Class Honours                   | 80 and above |
| Second Class Honours, First Division  | 70-79        |
| Second Class Honours, Second Division | 60-69        |

Third Class Honours

50-59

Fail

49 and below

## **Rules for calculating the final programme mark and degree classification**

First year (undergraduate) marks will contribute to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or degree classification. Additionally, units in any year of study that are pass/fail only will be disregarded in this calculation.

All units taken in the years of study that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification will count towards the weighted average final mark.

Credits awarded via the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) from any institution other than Malta ICOM Educational must be counted as part of the qualification requirements but must be excluded from the calculation of the classification.

Credits accrued at Malta ICOM Educational and awarded via the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) must be counted as part of the qualification requirements and included in the calculation of the Classification.

The final programme mark is calculated as a weighted average of the year marks for those years of study that contribute to classification. The result of the calculation should then be rounded to the nearest integer. This must be done PRIOR to determining whether the final programme mark is within the classification boundary range.

The classification boundary ranges for bachelors' honours programmes are based on marks out of 100 and are:

## **Osteopathy Faculty**

- First / 2.1 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70
- 2.1 / 2.2 equal to or more than 58 but less than 60
- 2.2 / Third equal to or more than 48 but less than 50

## **Physiotherapy and Dental Hygiene Faculties**

- First / 2.1 equal to or more than 78 but less than 80
- 2.1 / 2.2 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70
- 2.2 / Third equal to or more than 58 but less than 60

## **Appendix A Assessment arrangements**

### **Deadlines for the Submission of Assessed Work**

The Head of Department should inform students of the deadlines for the submission of formally assessed work.

### **Extensions to the deadline for formal submissions**

Where acceptable reasons (with appropriate evidence provided) are agreed with the Head of Department, the deadline for the submission of a formally assessed piece of work may be extended by up to ten college working days without penalty.

### **Late submission of assessment within five college working days of the deadline**

MIE operates a period of five college working days from the point of the initial submission deadline within which a student may submit work late without an agreed extension or agreed extenuating circumstances and continue to be awarded a mark.

Normally, work submitted within five college days of the deadline will be penalised. Work that is judged to be of the required pass standard will be capped at the minimum pass grade. Work that fails to make the minimum standard initially will be recorded as a fail. If it is passed on resubmission, it will be capped at the pass grade.

### **Late submission of work beyond the MIE five-working day deadline**

Work submitted after the MIE five-working day period will not be considered. A mark of fail will be awarded.

A student seeking permission to submit work beyond the five-working day period due to documented and approved extenuating circumstances should follow MIE's regulations on extenuating circumstances (see Extenuating Circumstances Policy).

A student given permission to submit work within the five-working day period permitted by the MIE's Authorised Extension to Assessment Deadline Policy who does not then submit the work, and who does not follow the MIE's regulations on extenuating circumstances, will be deemed not to have submitted the work. The work will be treated as a non-submission.

## **Penalty for non-submission**

When an element of assessment is not submitted, it will be counted as an attempt and marked as a fail.

Persistent late submission or non-submission of coursework may result in a student's suspension or exclusion and the possible termination of registration.

## **Reassessment – General Principles**

A student who has passed a module at the first attempt will not be offered the opportunity to be re-assessed to improve the grade.

A student who passes a module on reassessment will be awarded the minimum pass grade for the module.

## **Forms of Reassessment**

MIE operates the following forms of reassessment:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Retake</b>   | Where a student is permitted or required to retake a failed examination at the next sitting or re-submit a failed coursework for a module within the same course year |
| <b>Repeat</b>   | Where a student is permitted or required to repeat all elements of assessment for that module in the following course year  |
| <b>This would not normally be possible in this sort of programme.</b> |   |

Where, on practical grounds, it is not feasible to offer the original form of assessment by retake an alternative form of reassessment by re-take may be agreed. This will be designed to ensure that students can demonstrate the learning outcomes broadly associated with the elements of assessment failed at the first attempt.

Where it is not possible to design a reassessment by retake which will allow students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes associated with particular failed elements, a repeat/replace will be agreed.

The Examination Board will recommend reassessment by retake for only those elements of the module that have been failed.

Where students are required to undertake reassessment by repeat, it will be a requirement to undertake all elements of assessment for the module, regardless of whether or not specific elements of assessment were passed at an earlier attempt. The overall module result will be capped at the minimum pass grade.

## **Maximum credit load for reassessment by retake following failure at the first attempt**

Following failure at the first attempt, a student is permitted reassessment by retake in a maximum of 30 failed credits.

Where a student fails more than 30 credits, an Examination Board may require a student to:

- be reassessed by 'repeat' in any additional failed credit
- change the intensity of study

Alternatively, an Examination Board may judge that no further reassessment can be permitted and terminate a student's registration. MIE has an agreed set of principles for the amount of failure that a student may be permitted at each level of study before an Examination Board will normally agree that a student's registration will be terminated. These are summarised in the table below.

## **Assessment Opportunities**

|                                      | <b>First assessment point</b>  | <b>Second assessment point</b>  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Level 5 progression and award</b> | Students will normally be permitted 30 credits of retakes and 30 credits of repeats in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non-submission, at which point a student will normally have their registration terminated | Students will normally be permitted repeats/replaces in up to 60 credits in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non-submission, at which point a student will normally have their registration terminated |
| <b>Level 6 progression and award</b> | Students will normally be permitted 30 credits of retakes and 30 credits of repeats in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non-submission, at which point a  | Students will normally be permitted repeats/replaces in up to 60 credits in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non-submission, at which point a student will   |

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | student will normally have<br>their registration terminated | normally have their<br>registration terminated |
|--|---|--|