



# Student Handbook 2020/2021

**October 2020**

**\*Subject to change**

**Disclaimer:**

This handbook was compiled to provide you with a summary of resources, regulation, policies, and procedures for programmes of study in St. Nicholas Montessori College, Ireland (SNMCI). Please note that the official sources for all rules, regulations and assessment relating to programmes are published on the SMSI website. This handbook is not intended as a substitute for these, or other official documents, which take precedence in all cases.

Note: Some of the information outlined in this handbook is subject to change during the course of the academic year.



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# SECTION ONE



## 1 Section One

### 1.1 Welcome, Introductions and all things SNMCI...



On behalf of everyone at St. Nicholas Montessori College (SNMCI), I would like to welcome you to the academic year 2020/2021. The year 2020 has been one that we will never forget. We want you to remember it for the right reasons; one of these reasons being a positive, inclusive and life-changing college experience in SNMCI. We look forward to working with you over the coming academic year as you embark on an exciting new phase in your academic and personal development.

You are about to become, or continue to be, a part of a *Centre of Excellence for Montessori Education*. Our programmes are responsive to the needs of the current education sector, both nationally and internationally. Graduates of SNMCI are widely recognised as having the knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing educational landscape in Ireland and abroad. This year will be no different in preparing you for those professional challenges which lie ahead.

All Higher Education students will be confronted over the coming months with many kinds of challenges; some academic, some personal. The motivation and determination that you have already demonstrated in getting this far, will stand to you in good stead and SNMCI will provide you with the skills and confidence to deal with these challenges head-on. Remember also that the SNMCI community will be there to provide support and advice.

We know that maintaining a focus on your academic work is the key to success. However, we are also strong advocates for extra-circular activities, social events and relationship building. Make sure that you participate in these also. They will inevitably help you along the way! Being involved in the social side of college develops important life skills, allows you to make friends and to begin to build your own networks for the future. This year more than ever this is important. Try to make that effort to log in to online events, as well as on-campus activities, and be amazed at how many other learners are feeling the way you are!

SNMCI is committed to providing you with a learning environment that encourages you to meet your potential both personally and professionally. All staff members wish you nothing but success and fulfillment, as you begin what will be an exciting and enriching experience. The year will be full of opportunities, so invest in yourself, dive in and seize anything that heads your way. Be the author of your future!

We hope that your time here will be thought provoking, challenging and productive.

Brid Hannan

Student Engagement Officer



## 1.2 History of St. Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland

St Nicholas Montessori College Ireland traces its origins to the late 1940's when Dr Maria Montessori gave permission to two English women, Margaret Homfray and Phoebe Child, to set up a training centre to teach the Montessori Method in London. This was the first St Nicholas College, with many Irish people completing programmes there.

In 1970 the St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland was founded by Sighle Fitzgerald and a group of like-minded educators. The Irish society ran workshops and evening programmes in association with the London training centre for many years in locations throughout Ireland.

In 1980 the School's College's present home, St Nicholas House in Dún Laoghaire was bought, and St Nicholas Montessori School opened its doors. In 1984 the College began delivery of its first programme, a two year diploma programme awarded by the London Centre.

In 1994, the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) granted SNMCI Designated College Status. This enabled the College to design and develop its own higher education diploma and degree programmes in Montessori education, in line with national and international standards, providing comprehensive training and career opportunities for its learners.

Throughout the 1990s, the College sought and secured state approval for a three-year national diploma, a one year follow-on degree programme, and a higher diploma programme for those already holding an undergraduate degree. The one year follow-on degree programme, the BA (Hons) in Montessori Education (level 8), enabled graduates to register with the Teaching Council of Ireland, under Route 4 with 'Special Needs Teachers' status. As a result there are many hundreds of St. Nicholas graduates working throughout the National School system in Ireland as experts in Special Education.

St Nicholas Montessori College sees graduates employed not only in Ireland, but across the world. Our programmes have continued to evolve to reflect developments and best practice in educational methodologies, and national and international educational frameworks.

Today, the College is Ireland's leading provider of Montessori, Special Education and Early Years professionals and is the first provider of a Bachelor of Education in Montessori launched in 2019. SMSI continues to innovate and transform education in Ireland by seeking to develop new programmes to bring Montessori education to a wider audience.

In collaboration with leading Montessori & Dementia expert, Jennifer Brush, "Montessori and Dementia" workshops were launched in 2019 as a first step to developing a full Level 6 programme; *Montessori Education for Dementia*.

St Nicholas Montessori Society continues to develop, with exciting plans in the pipeline for St Nicholas Montessori Schools, the College and the Teacher's Association.



Dun Laoghaire



Cork



### 1.3 Programmes of the College

SNMCI is a designated Centre of Excellence for Montessori Education. Our programmes are responsive to the needs of the education sector, nationally and internationally. Graduates of SNMCI are widely recognised as having the knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing educational landscape in Ireland and abroad. All programmes are structured to address the constraints of modern work and lifestyle commitments.

SNMCI offers Montessori teacher education through full-time and part-time accredited programmes. The College has also expanded its provision to include a BA in Psychology and a programme dedicated to Montessori Education for Dementia.

The accredited programmes currently offered at the College are:

- **B.A. in Montessori Education**, (level 7) Graduates of this programme may either continue to the B.A. (Hons) year or enter the workforce as an early years' educator. Their level 7 standing qualifies them to receive Higher Capitation as part of the ECCE Free Preschool Years Scheme. Some graduates pursue this work option while completing the B.A. (Hons) part-time. (final year 2020)
- **B.A. (Hons) in Montessori Education** (level 8) full-time and part-time. This is a one year 'add- on' to the B.A. level 7. Graduates of this programme receive Teaching Council recognition (Route 4) which enables them to work as special needs teachers in special schools or in special classes in primary schools.
- **B.Ed. (Level 7 and Level 8) in Montessori Education** full-time and part-time. These programmes utilise, for the first time, the B.Ed. Award Stem. This programme is recognised by the DCYA for the purposes of higher capitation fees in EY.
- **Higher Diploma in Arts in Early Years Montessori Education** (level 8) full-time. This is a graduate programme. It attracts graduates of many disciplines who wish to change paths and embark on careers in early years' education. Graduates with degrees in early years' education are also drawn to the Higher Diploma, to add Montessori philosophy to their existing awards.
- **BA (Hons) in Psychology**  
Level 8 [First cohort 2020]
- **Montessori Education for Dementia**  
Level 6 Certificate [First cohort 2020]

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**General Enquiries:** [info@smsi.ie](mailto:info@smsi.ie)

## Keep in touch...





# M ONTESSORI E ducation



*' Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future. '*

*—Maria Montessori*

Dr Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was a pioneer in the field of education. Her original interest was in medicine; she was the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome Medical School.

She gradually became interested in education through her work as a doctor, observing children in many social and economic circumstances. Because of her medical background she approached education not as an educator, or a philosopher, but as a scientist. Working with some of the poorest and most disadvantaged children in Rome she used the classroom as a laboratory for observation, and for developing ideas and materials to allow children to achieve their full potential. Research indicates that the qualities Montessori encouraged in children, such as critical thinking, collaboration, independence and communication, are the skills needed to succeed in the 21st Century.

So great was the success of her Montessori Method, that she travelled the world, establishing schools and lecturing about her discoveries. She wrote numerous books and articles right up until her death in 1952 at the age of 82. Her legacy is a method of education based on a carefully planned learning environment, combining a practical approach with a deep respect for children as citizens of the world.



*"...there is simply nothing else that approaches the extraordinary cognitive developmental potential of a good Montessori learning environment"* Dr. Steven Hughes, Professor of Paediatrics and Neurology, Minnesota, 2010

## 1.5 Vision and Mission

### The Vision



Our vision is to bring excellence in Montessori education to the broader education landscape so that all young people are placed at the heart of their own educational experience and empowered to be independent, confident and creative lifelong learners.

### The Mission



We strive to achieve our vision through our Centre of Excellence in Montessori Education in which:

- We provide outstanding learning experiences, guided by the philosophy of Dr. Maria Montessori, which meet the developmental needs of every individual.
- We prepare and develop Montessori educators who are able to leverage the full value of the Montessori Method to support and nurture all learners to grow and develop as contributing members to our society.
- We are advocates for the Montessori Method by supporting Montessori professionals to continually enhance and reflect upon their practice, and by seeking to further the integration of the Montessori Method into national education systems.

## 1.6 ECTS/Awarding Bodies/Award Levels/Frameworks

### European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

ECTS is an **academic credit transfer and accumulation system** representing the student workload required to achieve the specified objectives of a study programme.

The ECTS weighting for a module (e.g. 5/10/15 ECTS) is a **measure of the student input or workload** required for that module, based on factors such as the number of contact hours, the number and length of written or verbally presented assessment exercises, class preparation and private study time, classes, examinations, professional training placements, and so on as appropriate.

In SNMCI, all programmes have modules designated as 5 ECTS or as multiples of 5 e.g. 10 ECTS or 15 ECTS etc.

The norm for **full-time** and **part-time** study over one academic year is 60 ECTS

**ECTS credits are awarded to a student upon successful completion of a programme year.**

### QQI

All Programmes of study in SNMCI are validated by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).

The specifications for all QQI awards are available on the QQI website: [www.qqi.ie](http://www.qqi.ie) under Awards Information.



### The National Framework of Qualifications

Qualifications frameworks describe the qualifications of an education and training system and how they interlink. National qualifications frameworks describe what learners should know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification. These frameworks also show how learners can move from one qualification, or qualification level, to another within the system.

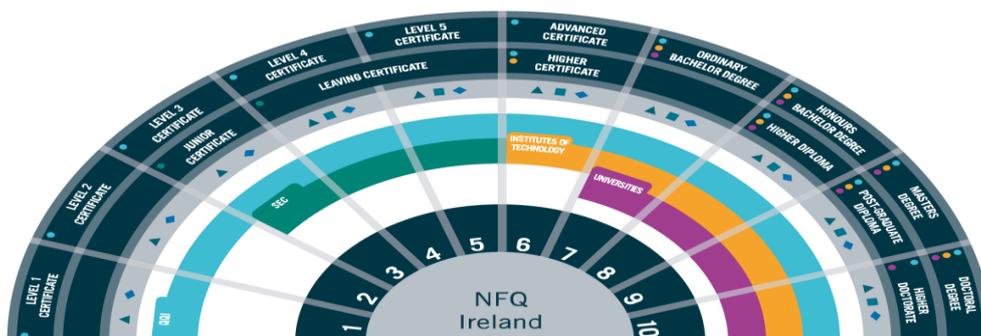
Over 150 countries are now developing, or have developed, a national qualification framework.

The Irish NQF, established in 2003, is a framework through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way.

The many different types and sizes of qualifications included in the NQF are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence.

Because all NQF qualifications are quality assured, learners can be confident that they will be recognised at home and abroad.

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has a responsibility to develop, promote and maintain the Irish NQF. QQI also facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications.





## 1.7 SNMCI Graduate Attributes

### Knowledgeable

SNMCI graduates have extensive specialist knowledge in the field of education. They understand how education has the ability to transform lives and they identify with the concept of life-long learning.

### Socially, culturally and environmentally aware

SNMCI graduates appreciate cultural diversity.. They respect human rights, especially the rights of children, and are always aware of their social and environmental responsibilities

### Professional

SNMCI graduates have integrity and ethical standards. They engage in a professional manner within their schools and within the wider community, for the benefit of all.

### Agents of Change

SNMCI graduates are 'agents of change'. They are proactive and responsive to the needs of society.

### Creative

SNMCI graduates are reflective thinkers, capable of applying creative ideas and innovations They have the capacity to work , reflect, review and build on their knowledge

### Collaborative

SNMCI graduates are good communicators. They respect the opinions of children, parents, colleagues and other professional. They work as part of teams in the best interests of the children.



## 1.8 Key People to Know at SNMCI

NAME	POSITION	CONTACT DETAILS
Dr Nicholas Breakwell	<b>Chief Executive Officer (CEO) SMSI</b>	<a href="mailto:nicholas.breakwell@smsi.ie">nicholas.breakwell@smsi.ie</a>
Ann King	<b>Director of Quality and Academic Affairs (DQAA)</b>	<a href="mailto:ann.king@smsi.ie">ann.king@smsi.ie</a>
Stephen Corkery	<b>Head of Examinations and Registrations</b>	<a href="mailto:stephen.corkery@smsi.ie">stephen.corkery@smsi.ie</a>
Sadhbh Bhreathnach	<b>Programme Director</b> BA (Hons) in Montessori Education (Level 8)	<a href="mailto:sadhbh.bhreathnach@smsi.ie">sadhbh.bhreathnach@smsi.ie</a>
Mina Walsh	<b>Programme Director</b> Higher Diploma in Arts in Early Years Montessori Education (Level 8)	<a href="mailto:mina.walsh@smsi.ie">mina.walsh@smsi.ie</a>
Siobhan O'Reilly	<b>Programme Director</b> BA in Montessori Education (level 7/final year B.Ed Montessori (Level 7/8)	<a href="mailto:siobhan.oreilly@smsi.ie">siobhan.oreilly@smsi.ie</a>
Clare Roche	<b>Deputy Programme Director</b> BA in Montessori Education (level 7)(Stage 3) B.Ed (Hons) Montessori (Level 7/8)	<a href="mailto:clare.roche@smsi.ie">clare.roche@smsi.ie</a>
Jennifer Brush	<b>Programme Director</b> Montessori Education for Dementia (Level 6)	<a href="mailto:jennifer.brush@smsi.ie">jennifer.brush@smsi.ie</a>
Dr Fabiola Neto	<b>Programme Director</b> BA (Hons) Psychology (Level 8) pending	<a href="mailto:fabiola.neto@smsi.ie">fabiola.neto@smsi.ie</a>
Steve Welsh	Instructional Designer	<a href="mailto:steve.welsh@smsi.ie">steve.welsh@smsi.ie</a>
Pauline Murphy	<b>Programme Manager</b> BA in Montessori Education (level 7)(Stage 3) B.Ed Montessori (Level 7/8)	<a href="mailto:pauline.murphy@smsi.ie">pauline.murphy@smsi.ie</a>
Bernie Gilsean	<b>Programme Manager</b> BA (Hons) in Montessori Education (Level 8) Higher Diploma in Arts in Early Years Montessori Education (Level 8)	<a href="mailto:bernie.gilsean@smsi.ie">bernie.gilsean@smsi.ie</a>
Bernie Owens	<b>Coordinator Cork Programmes</b>	<a href="mailto:bernie.owens@smsi.ie">bernie.owens@smsi.ie</a>
Katie Moore	<b>Teachers Association</b>	<a href="mailto:katie.moore@smsi.ie">katie.moore@smsi.ie</a>
Mackenzie Young	<b>Admissions, Marketing and International Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:mackenzie.young@smsi.ie">mackenzie.young@smsi.ie</a>
Irina Pochinkova	<b>Accounts Manager</b>	<a href="mailto:accounts@smsi.ie">accounts@smsi.ie</a>
Audrey Johnston	<b>Learner Support Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:audrey.johnston@smsi.ie">audrey.johnston@smsi.ie</a>
Brid Hannan	<b>Student Engagement and Outreach Officer</b> <b>Programme Manager</b> BA (Hons) in Psychology (Level 8) Montessori Education for Dementia (Level 6)	<a href="mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie">brid.hannan@smsi.ie</a>
Edris Azizi	<b>IT Manager</b>	<a href="mailto:itsupport@smsi.ie">itsupport@smsi.ie</a>
Ciara O'Cathain	<b>College Receptionist</b>	<a href="mailto:ciara.ocathain@smsi.ie">ciara.ocathain@smsi.ie</a>



## 1.9 Academic Calendar 2020-2021

Month	Week Beginning	Item	
Sept. 2020	07/09/2020	Autumn Exam Board <b>RPL Committee</b>	
	14/09/2020	Examination recheck and appeals	
	21/09/2020	Staff CPD for Blended and Online learning <b>RPL Committee</b>	
	28/09/2020	Induction	
Oct. 2020	05/10/2020	First teaching week	
	19/10/2020	<b>Academic Board Meeting Tue 20<sup>th</sup></b> Montessori Education for Dementia commences (21/22/23) <b>RPL Committee</b>	
	26/10/2020	Programme Committee meetings Possible start date BA (Hons) Psychology	
Nov. 2020	09/11/2020	<b>Virtual Open Evening : All Programmes (12<sup>th</sup> )</b>	
	23/11/2020	Online Graduation Nov 23 <sup>rd</sup>	
Dec. 2020	14/12/2020 21/12/2020	<b>Christmas Holidays</b>	
	04/01/2021	Staff return	
Jan. 2021	11/01/2021	Exam Session One <b>RPL Committee</b>	
	25/01/2021	Teaching Commences - Semester 2 <b>Academic Board Meeting Tue 19<sup>th</sup></b>	
	Feb. 2021	01/02/2021	Placement Week Activities/B.ED 1. Exam Review Board Possible Exam Session Two <b>Virtual Open Evening: Bridging Programme (4<sup>th</sup> )</b>
		08/02/2021	Placement Week Activities /B.ED 2. Semester 1 Results
Mar. 2021	15/02/2021	Placement Week Activities /B.ED 3.	
	22/02/2021	Placement Week Activities/ B.ED 4. <b>RPL Committee</b>	
	01/03/2021	Placement Week Activities/Stage Three BAS3/BAH 1.	
	08/03/2021	Placement Week Activities/Stage Three BAS3/BAH 2.	
	15/03/2021	Placement Week Activities/Stage Three BAS3/BAH 3. <b>Academic Board Meeting Tue 16<sup>th</sup></b>	
	22/03/2021	Placement Week Activities/Stage Three BAS3/BAH 4.	
	29/03/2021	<b>Easter Holidays</b>	
	05/04/2021	<b>Easter Holidays</b> <b>Virtual Open Evening: All Programmes (8<sup>th</sup> )</b>	
Apr. 2021	19/04/2021	<b>RPL Committee</b>	
May 2021	17/05/2021 24/05/2021	Exam Session Three	
	June 2021	14/06/2021	<b>Summer Exam Board (17<sup>th</sup> )</b>
Aug. 2021	21/06/2021	<b>Academic Board Meeting Tue 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	
	09/08/2121	Exam Session Four	



# SECTION TWO



## 2 Supports, Resources and Everything to Help You Along The Way

### 2.1 Top Tips for Students

**View studying at Third Level as a full time job – it is!**

**Check your smsi email account on a regular basis. Should the college need to contact you, your smsi account is the ONLY one that will be used.**

**PLEASE** maintain contact with your Programme Director. S/he can provide **HELP AND SUPPORT** if needed, answer specific queries you may have, and keep you up to date on aspects of your course e.g. modules, assignments, submission dates, etc.

**Be Aware of your responsibility with regard to ASSESSMENT**

- Participation
- Preparation
- Submission procedures
- Regulations
- Penalties

**READ THE ASSESSMENT SECTION OF THIS HANDBOOK!!!!**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

- Attendance and academic achievement are closely linked.
- Attendance is monitored.
- Be aware of the possible consequences of non-attendance
- If you are absent for more than 3 consecutive days you are required to provide a medical certificate to the Programme Administrator
- Read the Attendance Policy

#### **Academic Integrity**

It is your responsibility to inform yourself about the College's Policy on Academic Integrity.

**FYI: SMSI has  
A Learner Welfare Officer  
And  
A Student Health and Well-being  
Hotline Service.  
Health Assured**

#### **Quality Assurance:**

**Read the policies and procedures on the SNMCI website and Moodle pages e.g.**

- Assessment Policy
- Academic Integrity

- Keep in touch with your Programme Director
- Check your smsi e-mail
- Talk ! Don't let small problems become big ones
- Attend class!                      Attend placement!



# Erasmus+

Erasmus+, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport covers the period 2014 to 2020. Aimed at boosting skills, employability and supporting the modernisation of education, training and youth systems, the seven year programme has a budget of €14.7 billion, 40% higher than previous levels. More than 4 million people will receive support to study, train, work or volunteer abroad, including 2 million higher education students.

Erasmus + is divided into 3 Key Actions.

**Key Action 1** is about learning mobility of individuals.

Under Key Action 1 SNMCI **second year students** study for a minimum of 3 months in another Higher Education Institute in Europe and SNMCI welcomes European students for study visits. Also under Key Action 1, SNMCI teachers teach in other institutes, and teachers from Europe give classes in St Nicholas.

**Key Action 2** involves strategic partnerships for innovation and exchange of good practice.

Under Key Action 2 SNMCI participated with 6 other colleges in a project with the theme of inclusive education. This project culminated in a two week workshop in Izmir, Turkey, attended by four SNMCI students and two teachers. New projects are being planned for the coming academic years.

**Key Action 3** is about policy reform.

At SNMCI, we have been part of the Erasmus system for at least 10 years. Many of our teachers have travelled abroad and we have welcomed many teachers on lecturing visits. Our students have travelled to Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and Turkey, and to date we have welcomed students on study visits from Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey.

At SNMCI, Erasmus mobility is reserved for **SECOND YEAR STUDENTS**, and the mobility happens in the second semester. Each September we have an Erasmus + information session. The previous year's Erasmus students tell us about their experiences and application forms are available for the coming year. If you are interested, fill in and return. Interviews will be in October. Prior to the interview, we will look at your attendance, your academic record, your punctuality, both in attending college and in submitting assignments. You will know before the end of October if you have been chosen. There are some conditions for students going away: Please see the College website for further information or you may contact the International Officer, **Mackenzie Young**.

E-mail: [Mackenzie.young@smsi.ie](mailto:Mackenzie.young@smsi.ie) Phone: 2300080 ex 27



## 2.3 Behaviour Expectations: In Person and Online

### 2.3.1 Punctuality

The punctual arrival of all students, whether in person or in the virtual environment, is an essential ingredient to the success of the teaching and learning environment. It is a mark of respect for your lecturer/the tutor and for your peers. Late arrival may mean that you will have lost some of the context of the class being delivered. Arriving late may also break the concentration of the other students as well as of the lecturer/tutor.

### 2.3.2 Mobile Phones

These should be switched off prior to the lecture, whether you are in a face-to-face session or online. If for any reason you have to attend to your phone, excuse yourself and leave the lecture. Online, please use the chat box to let your lecturer know that you have stepped away for a few minutes.

### 2.3.3 Attendance

Note: Due to the ever changing COVID 19 situation, for the academic year 2020-2021, specific guidance on attendance will be issued by Programme Directors.

### 2.3.4 Communication

In all circumstances, the Programme Director will be **your link** with the College.

### 2.3.5 Communicating with Staff

If you wish to communicate with a lecturer, please use e-mail, or in exceptional cases leave your communication with admin staff who will forward it to the person in question.

We very much hope that your experience in St. Nicholas Montessori is a positive one. If, however, in the unlikely event that difficulties arise between a student and staff member we strongly recommend that the student speaks to the person directly and discusses the issues in an open and honest manner. It is in everybody's interest that sincere effort is made to iron out differences at this level. If this is not possible and differences remain, the Programme Director should be asked to mediate the problem. Every attempt will be made to resolve the difficulty. If the problem is with the Programme Director him/herself, or if the problem is not resolved satisfactorily, more senior management will act as mediator.

### 2.3.6 What is Netiquette?

Netiquette is short for "Internet etiquette." Just like etiquette is a code of polite behaviour in society, netiquette is a code of good behaviour on the Internet. This includes several aspects of the Internet, such as email, social media, online chat, web forums, website comments and other types of online communication. While there is no official list of netiquette rules or guidelines, the general idea is to respect others online.

At SNMCI learners are asked to consider the following....

The rules for online learning and classroom learning are virtually the same: You have to study, take notes, attend classes and participate in discussions. In the classroom, your words, gestures, posture and facial expressions communicate your thoughts and



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observations to your classmates and lecturers. But how do you express yourself online, where the written word is all they see?

- **Make sure identification is clear in all communications.** Begin with a salutation (“Dear or Hi ....”) and end with your signature and a sign off where appropriate (Best wishes /Name ).
- **Be kind, respectful and professional.** Online communication comes with a level of anonymity that doesn’t exist when you’re talking to someone face-to-face. Sometimes this leads people to behave rudely when they disagree with one another. Make a point to be kind and respectful in your comments—even if you disagree with someone. Good netiquette means conducting yourself in **an online class** with the same respect, politeness and professionalism that you would exhibit in **a real-life classroom**. Debate is welcome as long as you are discussing the ideas, not attacking the person.
- **Think before you type.** A passing comment spoken in class can be forgotten a few minutes later, but what you share in an online classroom may be part of a permanent digital record. Be just as respectful toward others as you would be if you were sitting in the same room together. Review what you wrote and try to interpret it objectively. When we speak face to face and are misunderstood, we have an on-the-spot opportunity to rephrase our words. In writing, we must strive twice as hard to be understood.
- **Be aware of the impact of your posts.** If you wouldn’t say it face to face, don’t say it online. When you’re working online, you’re safe behind a screen, but that’s no excuse to be ill-mannered or say things you would never say in face-to-face situations.
- **Be sensitive to different cultural, political and religious backgrounds.** Don’t assume everyone understands where you’re coming from. Sarcasm and wit is often the spice of in-person conversation, but in online discussion, it can backfire. Your online class is made up of people of all ages and cultures who have varied backgrounds, lifestyles and geographic locations. With this in mind, review what you wrote before contributing to the conversation and ask yourself, “Will *everyone* get the joke?”
- **Don’t abuse the chat box.** Chat boxes are incorporated into many online classes as a place for students to share ideas and ask questions related to the lesson. It can be a helpful resource *or* a major distraction—it all depends on how well students know their classroom netiquette. The class chat box isn’t an instant messenger like you’d use with friends. Treat it like **the learning tool** it’s meant to be, and try not to distract your classmates with off-topic discussions.
- **Respect others’ privacy.** Don’t give out another student’s personal email address without permission.
- **Guard you own privacy.** Remember, if it’s on the internet, it’s everywhere. It good practice to be guarded when it comes to personal information. Don’t share personal information about yourself in a public online forum, especially something that could put your safety or security at risk.
- **Forgive and forget.** If you’re offended by something another student says online, keep in mind that you may have misunderstood their intentions. Give them the benefit of the doubt.



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The online environment is great place to share ideas and support each other. Be proud of the posts you make as they can contribute to your fellow students learning experience.

We very much hope that your experience in St. Nicholas Montessori is a positive one. If, however, in the unlikely event that difficulties arise between a student and staff member we strongly recommend that the student speaks to the person directly and discusses the issues in an open and honest manner. It is in everybody's interest that sincere effort is made to iron out differences at this level. If this is not possible and differences remain, the Programme Director should be asked to mediate the problem. Every attempt will be made to resolve the difficulty. If the problem is with the Programme Director or if the problem is not resolved satisfactorily, more senior management will act as mediator.

### 2.3.7 Bullying and Harassment

The College is committed to supporting the right of all members of the College community to work and study in an environment which is free from all forms of bullying, including sexual and racial harassment and other forms of discriminatory treatment.

### 2.3.8 Expectations: Students and Staff

<b>Students have a right to expect.</b>	<b>Staff has a right to expect that students will...</b>
<b>General Information</b>	<b>General Information</b>
Welcoming and supportive Induction day/s	Attend Induction
Information and contact details for staff responsible for your programme of study	Make themselves aware of information provided by checking e-mails, noticeboards, handbooks, website regularly.
Details of assessment and the assessment criteria used for your stage of study	Undertake to observe the rules and regulations outlined in the SNMCI student handbook
Details, in a timely fashion, on any changes made to your programme	Have initiative, communicate their needs and be committed to fostering an environment of openness, equality and enjoyment
Details of assessment and the assessment criteria used for your stage of study	Take ownership of their student representation within the College
Equal opportunities for all students to participate in activities at the college.	Make the most of their time and get involved in all aspects of life at SNMCI
<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning</b>
Quality support, teaching and supervision	Work to the best of their abilities
Fair assessments that are clearly explained	Make themselves aware of all programme requirements and observe them
Timely and constructive feedback on learning progress and assessment	Take responsibility for their own learning progress and seek any support they need.
Multiple teaching and learning strategies suited for all learning styles.	Be punctual and attend all classes, practical sessions, in-class assessments and exams or other timetabled activities.



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Timely and constructive feedback on learning progress and assessment	Read e-mails from programme administrators and submit all written assignments and other coursework within the specified time limits
Information regarding submission of assignments and any late penalties that may apply	Make their best attempt at each element of assessment in each module of their programme.
Information on attendance	Respect the rights of others in all learning spaces.
Clear explanations of unacceptable academic behavior e.g. plagiarism	Actively engage in their own learning to develop their own professional identity in partnership with SNMCI
That college programmes will be regularly reviewed	Offer feedback when requested
<b>Interpersonal Environment</b>	<b>Interpersonal Environment</b>
To be treated with courtesy and respect in all your dealings with SMSI	Treat all staff, fellow students and visitors with courtesy and respect.
To study in an environment free from harassment and abuse of power.	<b>Behave in a manner (in person and on social media) which will not bring SMSI (college, school and teachers association) into disrepute</b>
To have learning needs met as far as is reasonably practicable.	Adhere to all SNMCI regulations outlined in the student handbook.
To have clear and regular communication through email, face to face, and by telephone with Academic and Administrative staff.	Take care that their interpersonal communications in both physical and virtual environments are respectful of others at all times
To have access to any personal data held by SNMCI, as provided for under Data Protection and Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation	Act in a safe and responsible manner towards others.
That personal information will remain confidential, and can be released to a third party only with consent, or by legal requirement.	Be ambassadors of SNMCI and advocates of Montessori pedagogy
	Initiate and respond to regular communication through email, face to face and by telephone from Academic and Administrative staff in a respectful manner.
	Use the appropriate college channels for managing grievances and complaints rather than using public and online media platforms.
<b>Digital Environment</b>	<b>Digital Environment</b>
Access to an IT Support Officer when experiencing technical difficulties	Seek IT Support for issues related to technological needs in an appropriate and timely manner.
An effective virtual learning environment through Moodle and other tools.	Make use of the digital learning environment when seeking information on all academic issues.



Access to the library electronic database, EPSCO, to support learning.	Use the library electronic database, EPSCO, to access up-to-date resources to support their assignments and academic activities.
<b>Supports and Services</b>	<b>Supports and Services</b>
Personalised student cards for library and printing facilities.	Keep their personalised student card with them for identification purposes and for use of College printing and Library facilities.
Opportunities to travel abroad through Erasmus+ programmes with other international partners.	Make use of the Erasmus+ programme, if possible, and take the opportunity to study abroad.
A Student Engagement Officer to encourage participation in the academic and social activities of the college.	Engage with fellow students through activities, events, societies, and class representative meetings.
Encouragement to establish societies or clubs with shared interests	Interact with the Student Engagement Officer to facilitate student representation in all aspects of College Life.
Access to a Learner Support Officer for confidential support.	Disclose any difficulties which may impact on their learning.
A referral service to a professional counsellor based on individual needs.	Seek help from the designated Learner Support Officer, in a timely fashion, to avoid any unnecessary anxieties with academic work throughout the year.
	Provide feedback through surveys and focus groups, when asked, to ensure that their voice is heard.

## 2.4 Supports

### 2.4.1 Programme Directors and Deputy Programme Directors

**Programme Directors (PD)** and **Deputy Programme Directors (DPD)** have primary responsibility for the day to day running of academic programmes.

You will meet your PD/DPD on induction day.

The PD's and DPD's are the primary contact people.

Your contact person **will 'meet' you on induction day** and provide you with all of the information you need to begin your studies, or in the case of returning students, with information relating to the next stage of your studies.

**Note:** Once you have met your PD and DPD they are your **First Point of Contact** for general questions about your programme. General questions related to your programme, addressed to another member of staff, will be relayed to your PD/DPD.

**Note:** You may of course ask individual lecturers any question related to the content of a module or a topic discussed in class.



### 2.4.2 Learner Support Officer

The The College has a Learner Support Officer to assist students with problems of a non-academic nature. She will provide support to students who may be experiencing social or emotional issues or who may require extra support during lectures or at exam times.

The College also has a **Health and Well-being Assistance Programme**. It is provided by Peninsula HR Consultants (based in East Point Business Park), in collaboration with their partner Health Assured (based in Manchester). To find out more information on what services Health Assured can provide, please visit [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com) or contact **1800 936 071**. To gain access to the Health and Well-being Portal, you will require the below login credentials: **Username:** saint **Password:** Nicholas

### 2.4.3 International Officer

The International Officer offers support to all, new and continuing, overseas students. She handles queries from students and visitors from outside of Ireland, assists visa enquiries, facilitates the Erasmus programme and also promotes the College's interests abroad.

### 2.4.4 IT Support

IT **Support** runs the staff and student computing network. At the beginning of the year learners are supplied with Terms of Service providing information about SNMCI's network and access for study and research.

Printing and PCs are also available. In order to print you need a valid ID card and printing credit (which can be purchased in the library).

A wifi network is available for students (snmci-wifi). The passphrase is helicopter14 and you are required to accept the terms of service. This network is monitored to ensure fair distribution of service for all users.

Any queries on the network, PCs, printing, Moodle or webmail can be addressed by email to [itsupport@smsi.ie](mailto:itsupport@smsi.ie) and will be answered promptly.

The College uses the student learning platform **Moodle**. New students will be issued with a username and password. It is the responsibility of each student to log on to the Moodle platform at regular intervals for information regarding module content, assessment submission and feedback. Staff Responsibility: Programme Managers

IT Support: **Edris Azizi** E-mail [Edris@smsi.ie](mailto:Edris@smsi.ie) or E-mail:[itsupport@smsi.ie](mailto:itsupport@smsi.ie)

### 2.4.5 Student Cards

New students will be asked to e-mail a photo (passport type) to the Registrations office.

On-going students will be issued with an up-to-date card for the coming year.

Students are obliged to carry their cards with them at all times when in the College. .

Students must present their student cards at in –person examinations.

**Note:** If a card is lost a replacement card may be obtained from the Head of Examinations and Registrations at a cost of 10 euro.



## 2.4.6 The Library

Details of opening times and online availability will be available from Programme Directors for this academic year 2020-2021. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, we cannot open the library at set times for students due to the nature of limiting numbers congregating, in line with Government guidelines. This will be reviewed throughout the course of the year. Please link in with your Programme Director for receiving the most up-to-date information on its' use.

## 2.5 Introduction to Quality Assurance

### The SNMCI Quality Assurance Manual has Three Volumes.

**Volume One** introduces the history of the College, our legal status and our strategic plans for the future. It has clear charts delineating the separation between academic and commercial interests and outlines the SNMCI approach to Quality Assurance emphasising a commitment to comprehensive, open and inclusive processes. These processes are effective, fully aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the College and compliant with both statutory based national objectives and European standards.

#### Sections:

- Governance and Management of Quality
- Management of Institutional Risk
- Embedding a Quality Culture

**Volume Two** concerns sections **2** to **7** of QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines which were developed by QQI, along with certain topic specific guidelines, to assist providers in the designing, establishing, evaluating, maintaining, renewing and reviewing of their quality assurance policies and procedures.

It documents our commitment to quality in terms of policy production and monitoring, programme provision, staff recruitment and development, teaching, learning and assessment and level of support for learners.

#### Sections:

- Documented Approach to Quality Assurance
- Programmes of Education and Training
- Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
- Teaching and Learning
- Assessment of Learners
- Support for Learners

**Volume Three** concerns sections **8** to **11** of QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines. These sections are concerned with information, communication, data management and self-evaluation.

#### Sections:

- Information and Data Management
- Public Information and Communication
- Other Parties involved in Education and Training
- Self-Evaluation, Monitoring and Review



**It is a learner’s responsibility to familiarise himself/herself with the QA policies and procedures of the College. The most frequently used policies and procedures are available on the QA Tab on Moodle . There is also a Quality Assurance email address, overseen by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs, through which your queries can be answered:**

**[quality.assurance@smsi.ie](mailto:quality.assurance@smsi.ie)**

**For more detail please consult the Quality Assurance Tab on the Moodle Page**

## **2.6 Health and Safety**

The College has a Health and Safety Statement. It is written in compliance with Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005, but also applies to students and visitors to the College. It has recently been updated to include additions in light of COVID 19.

The document will be available on the Moodle QA Tab and also in hardcopy at the College reception.

The following represents a short overview of some of the issues represented in the Statement.



### 2.6.1 Declaration

#### St Nicholas St Nicholas Montessori College Ireland

##### Safety Statement Declaration

##### Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

To each employee, student and visitor:

The Governing Body of St Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (hereafter SNMCI) acknowledges its responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (hereafter called the Act) and any Regulations made there under.

SNMCI is committed to developing and maintaining a culture that ensures, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy work and study environment for all College employees, students, authorised visitors, who may have reason to engage with the College, and the safety, health and welfare of its staff and students while elsewhere, while engaged on College activities.

In accordance with Section 20 of the Act, the College's Safety Statement identifies the hazards and assesses the risks of all College activities; it details the protective and preventive measures necessary, people responsible, relevant resources, and employee and student cooperation required, to secure the safety, health and welfare of persons employed in the College, students who attend the College and any authorised visitors.

The College consults with staff and students on safety, health and welfare at work matters, including this document, in accordance with Section 26 of the Act. Specifically staff will be informed of any serious risk(s) to safety and how they are being addressed. This College will review this Safety Statement annually, in the light of experience and developments within the College.

##### **Signed:**

Dr Nicholas Breakwell

CEO

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020

### 2.6.2 Health and Safety Responsibility

**Student** responsibilities fall under Section 14 of the Act which states:-

A person shall not intentionally, recklessly or without reasonable cause...

- (a) interfere with, misuse or damage anything provided under the relevant statutory provisions or otherwise for securing the safety, health and welfare of persons at work, or*
- (b) place at risk the safety, health or welfare of persons in connection with work activities.*

While in SNMCI students are therefore required:-



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- a) to take reasonable care to protect his or her safety & the safety of any other person who may be affected by the student's acts or omissions;
- b) to cooperate with safety systems and signage in place on campus;
- c) to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as directed;
- d) to comply with evacuation procedures and other safety procedures which may be in place;
- e) not to intentionally, recklessly or without reasonable cause interfere with or misuse safety equipment;
- f) to immediately report to a member of staff any accident resulting in loss or injury;
- g) to co-operate with staff in the investigation of the accident and the completion of the Injury/Incident Report Form.

### 2.6.3 Designated Personnel for Health and Safety

On a day to day basis SNMCI has a **Health and Safety Officer** whose role is to:-

- a) implement this safety statement and bring it to the attention of all employees and students and ensure that it is displayed in a prominent position at College reception;
- b) ensure compliance with safety procedures;
- c) ensure that all health and safety legal requirements relating to the operation of the College are fully complied with including but not limited to:-
  - safe use of all equipment;
  - necessary staff training;
  - provision of first aid equipment;
  - accident investigation;
- d) ensure safety procedures are in place for any person contracted to perform any duty, maintenance or activity in the College;
- e) take immediate action to correct any recognised safety and /or health hazards;
- f) report to management and source the correct solution to any unsafe or unhealthy conditions which cannot be corrected immediately;
- g) complete accident/Incident reports within 24 hours of an injury, accident or work related illness;
- h) convene the Health and Safety Committee.

Part of the remit of the Health and Safety Officer is to convene a **Health and Safety Committee** comprised of academic staff, administrative staff and students to:-

- a) provide a forum for discussion on workplace safety, health and welfare issues insofar as they may affect the staff, students, and authorised visitors to the College;
- b) provide information and promote awareness of issues of health and safety among College personnel;
- c) provide appropriate first aid materials;
- d) consider reports of accidents and incidents;
- e) monitor fire drills and other emergency procedures;
- f) make recommendations to management;



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- g) support the Health and Safety Officer on the preparation and on-going review of the College's Safety Statement;
- h) inform staff and students of new legislation and incorporate any such relevant legal provisions into the College's policies and procedures.

**Note:** Any student wishing to be a member of the Health and Safety Committee should contact the Student Engagement Officer who will pass on the request.

Trained staff are on site during working hours. In the case of needing these personal for any reason, please contact the main reception desk. Your query will be noted, or swiftly acted upon, as per the nature of the request.

<b>Fire Warden(s):</b>	
1. Sadhbh Bhreathnach	<a href="mailto:sadhbh.bhreathnach@snmci.ie">sadhbh.bhreathnach@snmci.ie</a>
2. Mackenzie Young	<a href="mailto:mackenzie.young@smsi.ie">mackenzie.young@smsi.ie</a>
<b>Designated Liaison Person(s):</b>	
1. Tara O' Leary	<a href="mailto:tara.oleary@smsi.ie">tara.oleary@smsi.ie</a>
2. In training	To Be Confirmed
<b>First Aider(s):</b>	
1. Mina Walsh	<a href="mailto:mina.walsh@smsi.ie">mina.walsh@smsi.ie</a>
2. Clare Roche	<a href="mailto:clare.roche@smsi.ie">clare.roche@smsi.ie</a>
3. In training	To Be Confirmed

### 2.6.4 Smoking

St Nicholas Montessori College is committed to providing a safe and comfortable work and study environment for staff and students.

In accordance with the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002 & Public Health (Tobacco) (Amendment) Act 2004 smoking is prohibited indoors and this applies to all SNMCI buildings.

Furthermore, in order to ensure the safety, health and welfare of staff and students using classrooms and offices, where windows may be open, smoking is prohibited within a 6 metre radius of doors, windows, air intakes, and covered entryways

**Electronic Cigarettes:** In line with a recent Health Service Executive (HSE) initiative and in recognition that *'the general consensus at European level is that there is a lack of research in relation to the long term health effects of e-cigarettes'* these devices are also included in the smoking ban. SNMCI now treats replacement devices such as e-cigarettes in an identical manner to traditional cigarettes and they cannot be used indoors or within the 6 metre radius of the locations mentioned above.

This section also relates to **Section 6.0 of the Health and Safety Statement: Fire and Emergency Management** and the elimination of sources of ignition.

Persons who contravene the ban are liable to College disciplinary procedures and also to criminal prosecution with associated fine.



# SECTION THREE



### 3 Blended Learning at SNMCI

St Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI) is aware that due to advances in technology, the teaching landscape is rapidly changing and that teaching methods need to evolve, to embrace and incorporate technology. Blended learning is a natural development, combining e-learning and the continued need for a human component, in a complementary way.

As part of a wider institutional plan and in recognition of a growing demand from learners, SNMCI made the strategic decision to develop and embed a blended learning strategy across the College. This was an important decision, recognising the inherent value in blending the best of face-to face learning experiences with those enhanced by emerging technologies.

As a first step and while conducting a small blended pilot study, SNMCI developed initial blended and online learning policies to provide a framework within which it hoped to provide online and blended learning. These policies were formalised as part of the College's re-engagement with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and developed in accordance with QQI's topic specific guidelines in relation to Blended Learning (2018)<sup>1</sup>.

The move to blended learning has been expedited due to COVID 19 and the pandemic has highlighted a need to successfully implement College wide blended learning solutions as both a response to this current emergency and as a contingency for future market driven or government driven directives.

#### 3.1 What is Blended Learning?

Blended learning is effectively integrating information and communication technologies into programme design and delivery. It can involve a mix of delivery modes, teaching approaches and learning styles. Effective 'blending' has the capacity to deliver enhanced learner experiences and outcomes, more engaging teaching, learning and assessment and efficient programme management processes.

Blended learning is not just about using technology because it is 'there'; it is about finding ways of supporting all learners and providing them with positive learning experiences. It should also support all staff, academic and administrative, in their respective roles. Blended learning means adopting new learning environments that work better for learners and staff. It means giving students more control over the pace, path, time, and place of learning. The goal is to personalise learning, using modern technology, to increase access and to expand learning opportunities in the context of preparation for life as a 21<sup>st</sup> citizen.

The nature and details of the 'blend' will naturally vary according to such factors as:-

- the nature of the programme, learning outcomes, discipline, stage;

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<sup>1</sup> QQI, Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018)



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- the nature of the teaching and learning activities;
- the capacity of the organisation;
- the engagement of learners, learner needs;
- the academic's approach to teaching, confidence and experience in using technology and willingness to develop their teaching and learning skills in this area.

Blended learning can:-

- provide new learning opportunities;
- improve programme delivery/communication, organisation of assessment, feedback and other processes and procedures;
- reach all learners;
- encourage collaborative learning.

Blended learning can span a range of deliveries from basic supply of resources and administrative functions, to full online delivery.

SNMCI began its blended journey with the introduction of its VLE Moodle which enhanced communication and a range of administrative functions.

The College does not envisage a move to 'full' online mode and values the complementary benefits of e-learning and the human face –to-face component.

Blended learning at SNMCI will enrich the quality of the learner experience through a combination of online interactive learning activities and face-to-face classroom interactions.

The College has provided a useful "Blended Learning Induction Programme" (BLIP) to introduce all learners to online and blended learning.

At induction a specific "Using Learning Technologies" induction programme will be delivered to all learners.

### 3.2 Definitions

#### **BLENDED LEARNING:**

**Blended Learning** is the combination of traditional, face-to-face learning methods with technology-based online learning methods.

#### **VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:**

The virtual classroom refers to a digital classroom learning environment that takes place over the Internet rather than in a physical classroom. It is implemented through software that allows the lecturer and students to interact.

#### **SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING:**

When learners participate in an online learning programme at the same time but in different locations, it is known as synchronous learning. Synchronous learning allows learners to interact with the lecturer and other learners. This is done through software that creates a virtual classroom.

#### **ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING:**

When learners participate in online learning at different times, it is known as asynchronous learning. This might also be called eLearning or web-based training (WBT). Asynchronous



learning allows learners to go through material at their own pace and on their own schedule.

**STREAMING:**

Streaming refers to video and audio that is downloaded to a computer as it is happening

### 3.3 Frequently Asked Questions

#### What are the advantages of Blended Learning?

Blended learning promotes 21st Century learning skills including creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and communication, initiative and self-direction, leadership and responsibility, and adaptability. It also greatly enhances accessibility and flexibility enabling students' study from home and at a pace that is best for them.

#### What technology will I need?

You will need a laptop (or desktop computer) with a good internet connection (4G is fine) and a quiet place to study online. All of our blended learning content can be accessed directly via the web and you will be provided with usernames and passwords on enrolment. Your laptop should have speakers and a microphone (a headset is even better) and you should have Microsoft office, and the ability to view videos, pdf files and some other standard file types. In brief, any modern computer will be able to handle all of these requirements.

#### What will my blended week look like?

Typically, each week will include each of the aspects of the blend described above.

- Students will be on campus for some of the time (this will vary by programme).
- For this academic year it will also vary due to the ever changing COVID 19 situation. Students will log-on to live lectures and workshops delivered by academic staff and they will engage in independent study.
- This will include accessing a wide range of resources, activities and tasks via our virtual learning environment, Moodle.
- Specific week by week calendars will be provided at the beginning of each semester.
- These calendars will also be printed week by week and posted at reception.

#### What programmes are delivered using Blended Learning?

All of our programmes are supported by Moodle and in that sense, they are all blended. Our part-time programmes tend to involve more online study, while full time programmes may have more classroom contact. New programmes in development will be designed from the beginning, as blended learning programmes.



# SECTION FOUR



## 4 Student Engagement

### 4.1 Student Support Network

Building a **Student Support Network** is very important, especially in 2020/2021 when we are faced with the possibility of revised timetables and limits to in- person contact.

How?

- Take a study break with classmates over Zoom;
- Meet in person with your cohort in smaller numbers, if guideline suggest this to be safe at any given time;
- Pick up your phone/laptop and drop a fellow student a message/email;
- Link in, be present and reach out for support when you feel like you need it.

The onsite element may be minimised, yet there will be Social Events (Virtual and In-person) organised over the course of the year. Be sure to be part of it, as your engagement with fellow learners can impact on your overall educational experiences at SNMCI.

### 4.2 Student Engagement: Planning for 2020/2021

The Student Engagement Officer, along with the Programme Directors, will play a huge role in helping students to stay engaged over the course of the entire year. This may be tricky but here at St. Nicholas Montessori College, we will endeavour to make your learning space as engaging as possible. We also understand that while some of you may be returning to study with us, there are many new students who have not had the opportunity to connect with their classmates. This is where the organised, online or in person social events will play a pivotal role to building a support system.

So far, we plan to run some of the following events:

#### ***Tea & Chats***

This can of course be facilitated online and in person. Ideally, we will be able to do a little bit of both!

#### ***Mingle Meet Up's***

We hope to have the opportunity to facilitate these events between programme stages and also across different programmes. This will allow students to meet as many fellow students of St Nic as possible.

#### **Online Obstacles**

Zoom Quizzes, Charades, Bingo, Two Truths and a Lie; you name it and we can run it! This is all about interaction and having some fun. Surely you have room for an online obstacle race throughout the course of the year – go on, you know it'll be a bit of fun.

#### **Festive Fun**

In December we hope to run festive events, online or in person, for everyone to get into the Christmas spirit. We expect students to jump in when it comes to organizing the festivities. Be Warned!!



## **New Year, New Challenge!**

Does the whole “New Year, New Me” phrase resonate for college students? Maybe not, as the new academic year started in October and for many that was challenge enough! However, as January 1<sup>st</sup> rolls around, why not set yourself a new, fun and light-hearted challenge? (all while beating the January blues and doing something for yourself).

January 2021 may see some new exercise routines, yoga classes, couch to 5km, HIIT classes or jumping jacks introduced – Whatever you are into! Let us know

### **What Next?**

Contact the Student Engagement Officer, Bríd @ [brid.hannan@smsi.ie](mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie) with any ideas you may have for social events and building a student engagement platform for students. Additionally, you can contact Bríd for further information on setting up an event for your class or for seeing what’s planned for the coming weeks ahead.

## **4.3 Class Reps**

### **Being a Class Representative!**

New Year, New Beginnings... So, let’s get things started on the right foot. This year we need every class to have a Class Representative, or Class Rep, for short. That’s right – a person who will represent their class in anything, and everything, that may happen over the course of the year.

Would you like to be a voice for your class? Would you consider pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone? Or maybe this is right up your street? Whatever the reason, why don’t you simply consider the idea?

This year SNMCI is hoping to institute a Student Council to give students a ‘voice’ and a channel to approach college staff on issues pertaining to the best college experience available. The work of Class Reps will be vital to its successful operation.

Every class can elect one Class Rep to represent their views. However, if the class wanted to ‘stagger’ their Class Rep, we propose to students that they could have a Class Rep per semester. This means the Class Rep would still hold their position but for less time, rotating the responsibility amongst their classmates. We recommend this as a viable option and certainly it may favour those shy of having the responsibility for an entire academic year; three or four months is much less daunting!

So what does a Class Rep actually do? From being the ‘go-to’ person for resolving minor issues facing the class, to putting suggestions towards college for the running of semester ahead, to organising class parties, day-time events and nights out, there are many facets to being a Class Rep, and by getting involved you can enjoy as many of them as you like. The key role of the Class Rep is to be the spokesperson for their class to the College and to their Student’s Council. A good Class Rep can make a real difference to college life for the whole class



### **Would you like to make a difference?**

Ok, so why should you run for Class Rep? Well, there are lots of reasons why students run every year. Here are a few...

- Class Reps get to know their whole class and Reps from other programmes – This is so good for idea sharing, class to class interactions and being in the know of all things SNMCI
- Class Reps can organise parties, virtual or in-person events, and trips away for their class – Along with the help of other classmates of course (No one expects you to have all that time!)
- Class Reps are the voice of their year to the College and will be able to ‘feed in’ to proposed changes to programmes and to College policies and Procedures.
- Class Reps can always call on the College staff to help in developing negotiation and leadership skills, public speaking, organising class parties and much more - Not only do you develop these in College, but you will be able to bring these skills with you into your working life, long after graduating from SNMCI!
- Did we mention it looks really good on your CV? You may not be thinking that far ahead yet but this is certainly a striking and valuable asset to any CV!

### **Where Do I Sign Up?**

So, you want to sign up? GREAT!

Depending on the number of people wanting to be Class Rep, it may have to go to a class vote, or the responsibility may be divided across semesters. However, you must first put your name forward. This process will be carried out within the first few weeks of term because the sooner a Class Rep is elected, the more power you have as a class, and the sooner your voice can be heard!

#### **THE STEPS:**

1. Email [brid.hannan@smsi.ie](mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie) (Student Engagement Officer) if you want to be a Class Rep for your class for 2020/2021. Please make sure to pop in the following details:
  - Name
  - Programme of Study
  - Stage
  - Full-time or Evening?
  - A few lines about why you want to be a class rep?
2. There are three possible scenarios:
  - a. The first scenario may find that there are only a few people who want the task. In this case, the students can split their time of being Class Rep per semester.
  - b. The second scenario finds only one person up for the job and in that case, **YOU'RE IN!**



## Student Handbook 2020- 2021

- c. The third scenario will see the Class Rep selection go to a class vote where students vote for who they want to be Class Rep for the semester /year.
3. In the case where no student puts their name forward, a vote will take place on who should be Class Rep for the year. Emails outlining this process will be distributed by the Student Engagement Officer and a vote will take place in class or via an online poll. You've been warned!
4. This year these processes may have to be done online, via email and Moodle if they are not possible to do in-person on campus. The SEO (Bríd) will be in touch in the first few weeks of semester one.

If you have any questions on all things CLASS REP, please do not hesitate to contact your Student Engagement Officer; Bríd Hannan ([brid.hannan@smsi.ie](mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie)) and she will be happy to discuss these with you and make your year in SNMCI all that you, and your class, would like it to be!

### 4.4 Student Council

Following the appointing of the class reps for each cohort, we plan to give these students a platform to air the views of the class, suggest ideas or share ideas on how to make their student life and learning better at SNMCI.

Student Council information will be shared with the Class Rep's once appointed for 2020/2021.



# SECTION FIVE

## 5 Assessment at SNMCI

*The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and that it takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.<sup>2</sup>*

**See QA TAB Assessment on Moodle for further information on Assessment Policies**



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<sup>2</sup>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2005.

## 5.1 Purpose of Assessment

Assessment is a systematic process for gathering and evaluating information on a student's academic progress. It refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition or educational needs of students. It can be used for one or more of the following purposes

- To provide certification: identifying different levels of achievement of the learning outcomes for the purposes of making an award upon completion of a module or programme of study.
- To improve student learning: motivating students and creating a learning environment. Allowing students to assess their progress.
- Quality assurance and enhancement: providing evidence of academic standards and student progress to staff and stakeholders
- To inform teaching or curriculum enhancement.

## 5.2 Underlying Principles

SNMCI's Assessment Strategy aims to ensure that there is fair and consistent assessment of learning across all programmes. In line with QQI Policies and Procedures and international best practice, the following principles underpin SNMCI's assessment strategy...





### 5.3 Key Terms

<p><b>Summative Assessment</b> Includes Continuous Assessment occurring throughout the year and end of semester examinations</p>	<p>Assessment which is primarily for the purpose of providing certification. Assessment that receives a grade that contributes to the overall mark for a module. This assessment may be Continuous Assessment (CA) i.e. an essay or presentation that occurs mid semester/year, or an assessment that occurs at the end of a semester/year e.g a terminal examination, project or dissertation</p>
	<p>Where one piece of summative assessment is given a <b>high weighting</b> in a module, it is often referred to as <b>High Stakes Assessment</b></p>
<p><b>Formative assessment</b></p>	<p>Assessment designed to provide feedback on students' learning. It can help students by providing them with information to self-monitor their academic progress and also provide staff with feedback to inform their teaching approaches. It may or may not be graded. Examples include, in class tests, MCQ's, class participation, in –class activities.</p>
	<p>If graded, it is usually given very low weighting and is often referred to as <b>Low Stakes Assessment</b></p>

### 5.4 Range/Examples of Assessment

SNMCI's assessment strategy has been developed with an eclectic approach to ensure a wide range of academic knowledge, skills and competences are assessed and to accommodate different learning styles. Continuous assessment (e.g. essay, presentation) is applied to assess learning against expected outcomes and is a method of assessing learning as it is occurring. The focus is on constructive learning, where feedback is motivational and directed at improvement.

Other types of assessment (e.g. terminal examination, dissertations or projects) tend to occur at the end of a semester or stage.

Listed below are some of the assessment techniques used across the programmes.

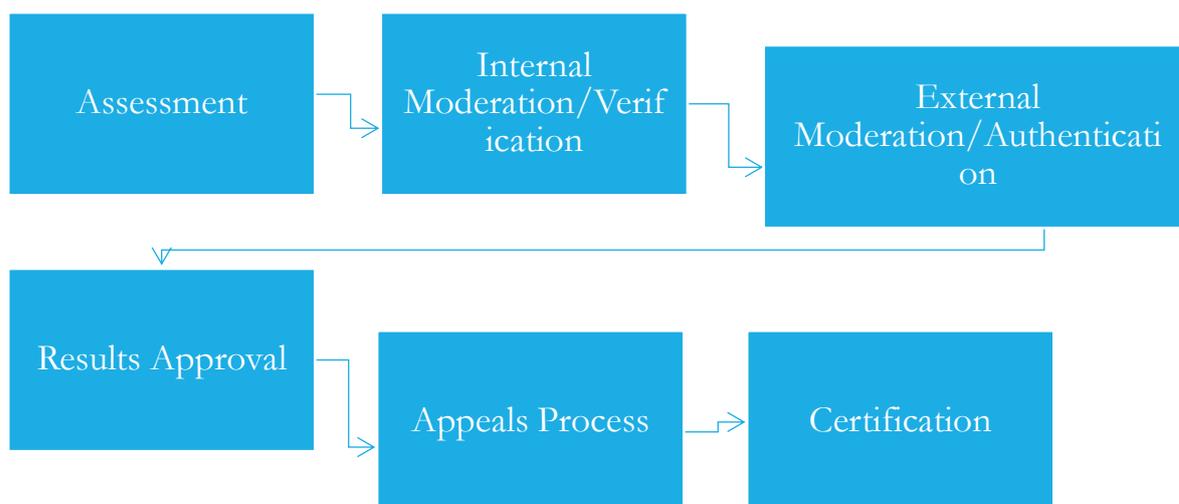
All assessment techniques have advantages and disadvantages.

Programme developers and lecturers in SNMCI are expected to consider their modules carefully and choose from the range of assessments techniques available, to find those capable of allowing students to demonstrate how well they are learning in any given module.

<p><b>Written</b></p>	<p><b>Presented/ Group</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Essay</li> <li>➤ Reflective Diary</li> <li>➤ Dissertation</li> <li>➤ MCQ</li> <li>➤ Written Exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Group Presentation</li> <li>➤ Debate</li> <li>➤ Showcase</li> <li>➤ Poster</li> <li>➤ Student led symposium</li> <li>➤ Peer assessment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Presented/Individual</b></p>	<p><b>Related to Placement</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Poster</li> <li>➤ Project</li> <li>➤ Individual Presentation</li> <li>➤ Practical Presentation</li> <li>➤ Original materials, design and presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Teaching Portfolio</li> <li>➤ Resource File</li> <li>➤ Placement performance</li> <li>➤ Planned activities</li> </ul>



## 5.5 Assessment Process



### Assessment:

- Devise assessment instruments, marking schemes and assessment criteria
- Assess and judge student evidence
- Record outcome

### Internal Verification:

- Verify that all assessment procedures have been applied
- Monitor the outcome of the Assessment Process i.e. the assessment results on a sample basis

### External Authentication:

- Assign an external examiner per award, based on broad award/field of learning expertise
- External examiner to moderate assessment results, by sampling student evidence according to the providers own sampling strategy

### Results Approval:

- Establish a Results Approval Panel i.e Exam Board
- Approve and sign-off assessment results
- [Make results available to learners](#)

### Appeals Process:

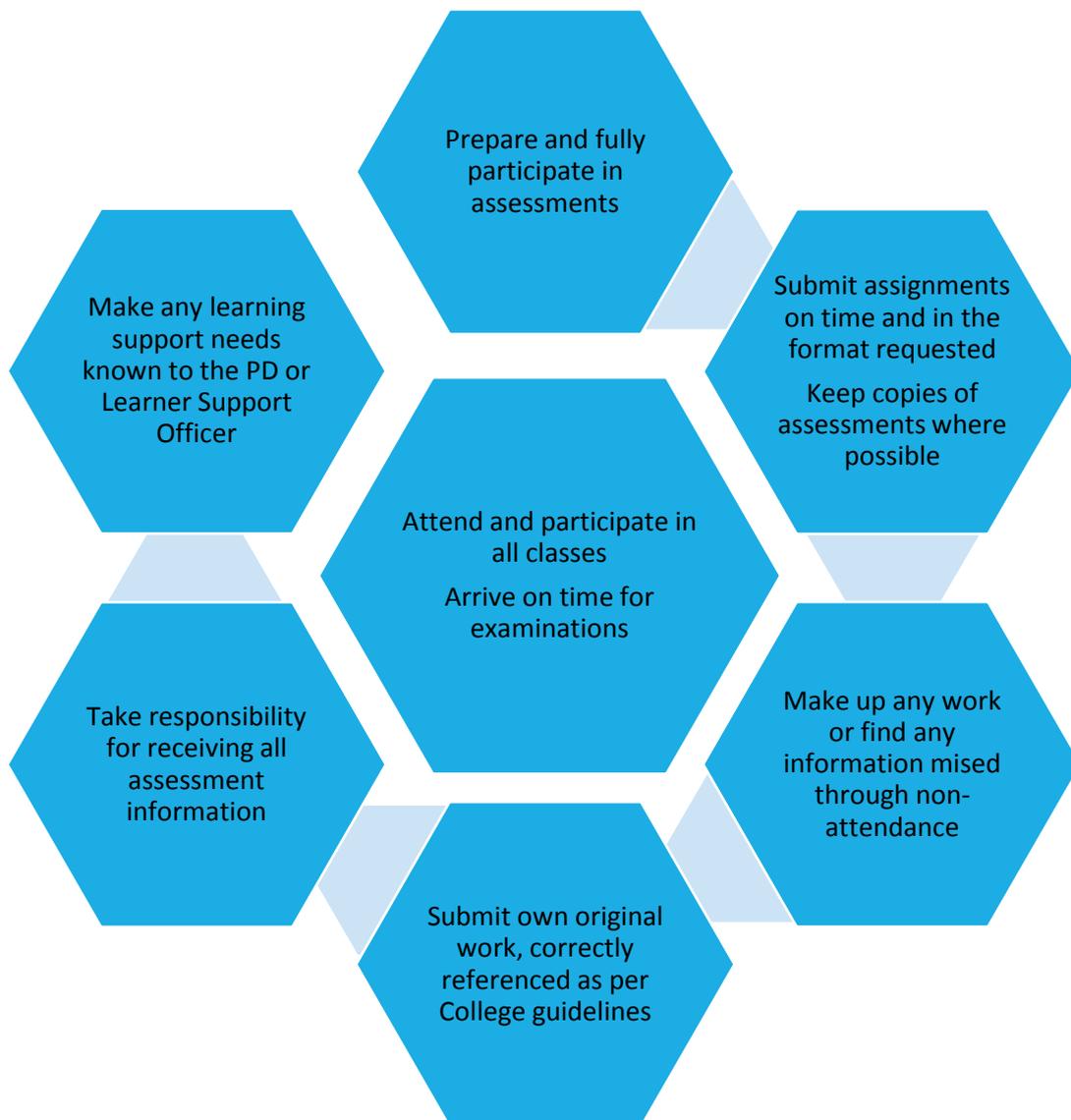
- Establish an Appeals Process
- Allow a minimum of 14 days for learners to lodge an appeal of the assessment process or result
- Process all appeals

### Request Certification

- Submit all learner results for progression to next stage or Award

### 5.6 Student Responsibility with regard to Assessment

- Lecturers will make students aware of upcoming assignments. Each assignment will be discussed in class, giving students the opportunity to clarify and ask any questions they may have regarding the process.
- The assignment briefs will also be posted on each module Moodle section and clearly marked ‘assignments’.
- It is each student’s responsibility to make sure that s/he has all available information re assignments.





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### ASSIGNMENT TITLE SHEET

(Programme Title and Stage)

<b>Programme:</b>	<i>Programme name</i>
<b>Module:</b>	<i>Module Title</i>
<b>Assignment Number:</b>	<i>1/1 or 1/ 2</i>
<b>Date of Title Issue:</b>	<i>Date given to students</i>
<b>Assignment Deadline:</b>	<i>Date of submission</i>
<b>Assignment Submission:</b>	<i>How the assignment is to be submitted</i>
<b>Weighting:</b>	<i>Assignment weighting</i>

<b>Assignment :</b> <i>Clear Title Here</i> Title of the essay/project/presentation etc	
<b>Guidelines:</b> <i>Clear explanatory guidelines setting out what the student has to do and how they might go about it.</i> What to consider when you are putting together your assignment?	
<b>MLO'S</b> <i>The module learning outcomes assessed by this assignment</i> All modules have 4 or 5 Module Learning Outcomes. The assignments are devised to measure these outcomes.	
<b>Assessment Criteria:</b> <i>An explanation of how the marks for this assignment will be allotted e.g.</i> <i>(This is an example. Criteria should match particular assignment)</i>	
<i>Acquisition of Knowledge</i>	25
<i>Argument /Interpretation/Analysis</i>	35
<i>Accuracy/Relevance/Focus/Structure</i>	15
<i>Quality of Writing</i>	10
<i>Presentation</i>	5
<i>Bibliography and Referencing</i>	10



## 5.8 Sectoral Conventions on Assessment

The Sectoral Conventions for Assessment comprise a set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by QQI and all associated providers.

### Sectoral Convention 1 on Award Classifications:

Classification of awards **shall be criterion-referenced** as distinct from norm-referenced.

**Criterion Referenced Assessment:** 'A criterion-referenced assessment is one 'that allows its users to make grade interpretations in relation to a functional performance level, as distinguished from those interpretations that are made in relation to the performance of others' (SEPT, 1985).

**Norm Referenced Assessment:** A norm-referenced test is 'an instrument for which interpretation is based in the comparison of the test-taker's performance to the performance of other people in a specified group' (SEPT, 1985). (Definitions from QQI Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013)

### Note to Students:

- **The above definitions mean that assessors measure and grade a student's performance against a fixed set of predetermined criteria, clearly set out for each piece of assessment. They assess what each student knows or doesn't know, can or cannot do etc, at the time of assessment. The student's performance is NOT compared to other students' performance on the same assessment.**

The following table describes the classifications available for major awards (made by QQI) in the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). It also specifies the required boundary values for grade point average (GPA) and percentage point average (PPA).

Classification of Honours Bachelor's degrees (Level 8) and Higher Diplomas (Level 8)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description
First-class honours	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in most respects is significantly and consistently beyond this
Second-class honours Grade 1	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in many respects is significantly beyond this
Second-class honours Grade 2	2.5	50%	Indicative descriptor: Achievement includes that required for a Pass and in some respects is significantly beyond this
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes



## 5.9 Assessment Submission

(See QA 6.1)

Assignments are designed to assess the achievement of Module Learning Outcomes. Some modules are assessed by one assignment which is considered to meet all module learning outcomes.

Other modules may have assessment components, i.e. more than one piece of assessment from a range of written work/practicals/placement performance etc.

Where modules have more than one type of assessment, **you are required to attempt all components**. Your overall module mark is determined by the weighted average of each component.

**NOTE: All components of Placement modules MUST be passed.**

### Assignment submission

- Students are obliged to make a 'reasonable attempt' at every assignment
- Students will be issued with a 'date for submission' and a 'submission mode' for all assignments.
- When an assignment is due, students will be notified by the Programme Manager. It is important that you check your smsi e-mail regularly and read these notifications carefully. They will outline clearly how and when the assignment is to be submitted, e.g. the timeframe when Moodle is 'open' to students to **upload a PDF version** of written work and/ or a drop off point, where a sign-in sheet will be available for any hard copy required.
- All assignments must be typed (see style page in Study Guide)
- All assignments must have an Assignment Cover Sheet. Your Programme Director will indicate where to find this on the Moodle area for your stage. This cover sheet must be completed prior to submission.
- Students must upload a cover sheet and their assignment to Moodle (unless otherwise instructed) on the submission date.
- In the case of project work with resources such as a poster, portfolios or materials students must:
  - add an Assignment Cover Sheet
  - submit their assignment to the Programme Manager
  - sign the Assignment Submission Form as confirmation

### Deadlines

Assignment submission deadlines are strictly observed. Unless a student has applied for and been granted an **extension** of an assignment, penalties will apply for late submission.

#### No authorised extension:

- Submitted within **one week** of submission date /deduction of 15% of mark
- Submission within **two weeks** of submission date /assignment mark capped at 40%



- Failure to submit an assignment within 14 days of the deadline will result in an overall grade of NP (Not Presenting) in that subject, regardless of performance in a subsequent exam. If a grade of NP is received, the student will have to submit the assignment for that subject, at the next available opportunity. Please note that this will be seen as a second attempt and will be capped at the minimum pass mark of 40%.

**Note:** When submitting a late assignment, whether authorised or not, students will send a **PDF** of a written assignment to the Programme Manager who will then upload it to Moodle, or in the case of hard copy, deliver it to the Programme Manager and sign the Assignment Submission Sheet.

### **Extensions/Late Sub**

The granting of an extension on the submission date of coursework is a mechanism to support a student who, **through no fault of his/her own**, is experiencing difficulties in completing his/her assessed work on time.

- A student wishing to apply for extensions must make an appointment to see his/her Programme Director normally **up to one week prior** to the submission date.
- Applications received nearer to the submission date will be considered in terms of their merit and the nature of the circumstances.
- In general, extensions will only be granted in extreme mitigating circumstances (illness, accident, bereavement, etc.)
- When meeting his/her Programme Director, it is the student's responsibility to come with the completed paperwork (Mitigating Circumstances Form, and supporting documents e.g. medical cert). The student will discuss his/her reasons for requiring an extension and, **if** it is granted the Programme Director will communicate this to the Programme Manager.
- Computer or printer failures and pre booked holidays **are not** legitimate reasons for requesting an assignment extension.

### **Note:**

- Authorisation for granting an extension rests with the Programme Director.
- Students should be aware that there is no automatic entitlement to an extension and, should an extension not be granted, their work is subject to late submission penalties if they do not submit their work on time.
- Due to the time restrictions involved in the submission of assessments a student can normally only appeal the outcome of his/her application for extension, if he/she requested it at least one week before the submission date and if he/ she appeals, in writing, to the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs (DQAA) within one working day of having his/her application refused.
- Work submitted late, without documented approval of the Programme Director will be penalised.



## Feedback and Results

When assignments are corrected students will receive notification of results and will be able to access feedback on Moodle. All assignment results and feedback will be given within a reasonable amount of time. In the event of non-submission of an assignment, the student will be required to submit a repeat assignment. Please note that all repeat work takes place at the end of a semester and is capped at 40%.

**Declaration:** Students submitting assignments, essays, dissertations or any form of work for assessment are required to sign a declaration that the material in question is wholly their own work (or the joint work of the named participants in the case of a group project) except where indicated by referencing or acknowledgement. In modules where anonymous marking is the practice, students sign the declaration with their student number and date.

**Note: In this academic year, as we all contend with the ongoing COVID situation, students are requested to check their smsi emails carefully and regularly for information on assessment processes.**

**Note:** Students should be aware that the College takes an extremely serious view of any breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.

**See QA 7.8 Academic Integrity Policy on Moodle**

**Note: Turnitin/Plagiarism Detection:** Work submitted for assessment may be subject to electronic or other detection methods. When an assessor suspects that a student has engaged in plagiarism the matter is referred to the Programme Director. The Programme Director will conduct an investigation which will include an interview with the student concerned. At this interview the student will have the opportunity to offer an explanation, oral or written, of his /her actions. S/he may be accompanied by a witness/advocate of his/her choice. The Programme Director will then decide on a course of action in light of (a) the extent of the plagiarism suspected and (b) what stage the student has reached in his/her course of study. **Note:** An incident of plagiarism in an Award Year is considered to be a case of Major Academic Misconduct and may impact on a student's final award classification.

## Presentations

As part of their programme's assessment strategy, students may be required to engage in presentations either individually, in pairs or in groups. Please note the following

- As with all other assignments, a brief will be issued with clear guidelines as to content, duration, time, place, and marking criteria. Read the brief carefully so that you are clear about...



- **Content:** was it assigned? Can you choose from a range of topics? What is the lecturer looking for?
- **Time and place:** Are you clear about the date and time of the presentations?
- **Duration:** Have you noted the expected duration of the presentation, e.g. 10 minutes or 12 minutes? Will you be asked to stop if you reach your time allowance? What are the consequences if you are allowed to complete your presentation but you run way over time?
- **Process and Product:** Do you know to what extent the lecturer is looking for product (presentation content) and process (how well the group worked together and presentation skills)
- How will individual performance be assessed?
- How will group product be assessed?
- What are the consequences if you do not arrive on the day of presentations?

**Note:** The general rules for extensions and late submissions outlined above apply for presentations.

- For individual presentations, students may apply for late submissions in the usual way. Students, who are granted extensions, will have the opportunity to present during the next exam/presentation week (December for Semester One and May for Semester Two). With valid late submissions these will be assessed as 'first attempts'.
- Students, who miss presentations and do not have valid late submissions or extensions, will have the opportunity to present during the next exam/presentation week (December for Semester One and May for Semester Two). Without valid late submissions these will be assessed as 'second attempts' and subject to late penalties.

### Paired and Group Presentations

Paired and group presentations are used in Higher Education for a variety of reasons. These types of assignments can help students to develop communication skills, share perspectives, develop approaches to resolving difficulties, establish relationships, pool knowledge etc. As assessment tools they have many benefits but they can also present challenges for both students and staff. Please note the following...

- When you are part of a pair, or a group **you have a responsibility to your partner or team mates.**
- All students are responsible for contributing equally to the preparation and the presentation.
- Sharing the work does not mean reducing individual effort
- Conflict may occur if a member is perceived as not pulling his/her weight. This must be addressed early, either by the students themselves or by the moderating influence of the lecturer or PD. Group conflict issues brought to the attention of the lecturer following the presentation, will not be considered.



- There will also be an individual component to the marking scheme, as well as a group mark.

**Note:** The general rules for extensions and late submissions outlined above apply for paired and group presentations.

- Where one member of a pair or a group is unable to attend, or fails to attend on the assigned day, the pair /group forfeits their place on that day and must wait for the next presentation date. (See Programme Manager)
- Students, who miss paired/group presentations with valid late submissions, will be assessed as 'first attempts'. Students who are part of a pair or a group who miss presentations without a valid extension will be assessed as 'second attempts' and subject to late penalties. Other members of the group will be assessed as a 'first attempt'.

### 5.10 Examinations

All examinations held during the academic year 2020-2021 will be in Open Book Format due to the ongoing COVID 19 situation.

#### What is an Open Book Examination?

An "open book examination" is an assessment method designed in a way that allows students to refer to lecture notes, articles, textbooks, or other approved material while answering questions, in an agreed timeframe.

- Open-book exams don't test your memory; they test your ability to find and use information, and to deliver well-structured and well-presented arguments.
- Open-book exam questions do not merely ask you to 'give back' information. They usually require you to analyse, evaluate, reflect and apply knowledge, to self and/or real life situations.
- Open-book exams require you to learn for understanding rather than just remembering
- In the case of SNMCI, Open-book exams are essay style.
- Open-book exams are not an easy option. Answering the questions well requires more than just copying information straight from texts. For example, having access to a textbook can stop you from giving a wrong answer if you can't remember a fact, but just getting that fact correct won't get you good marks.
- In open-book exams, it's how you locate, apply and use the information that is important.



## Should I study for an Open-book Exam?

### Yes

- Probably the biggest misconception about open-book exams is that there is no need to study. You should study just as you would for any other exam. Having books and notes to refer to might mean you don't have to memorise as much information, but you still need to be able to apply it effectively.
- You must fully understand and be familiar with the content and materials of your module so you can find and use the appropriate information.
- In open-book exams, you need to quickly find the relevant information in the resources you have. If you don't study, you won't know where to find the information. This style of learning equips you well for exams and 'real life' experiences.
- **You don't need to know everything, but you need to know how to find the relevant information.**

## Before the Exam

### Get a good night's sleep

On the night before the exam, don't stay up until all hours studying. You will be fuzzy, stressed and unable to think clearly.

## Don't panic

- When you're sitting an exam, it's OK to be nervous, but try not to panic. An open-book exam is another form of intellectual analysis. It is not very different from preparing an assignment at home, except that time is more limited.

## Prepare your examination space

- Gather module notes and resources together beforehand and organise them neatly in a quiet study area at home.
- Set up a quiet space where you can concentrate and work without interruptions.

## Getting Started

- Find out the exam requirements
- For open-book exams, know:
  - How much time you have been allocated
  - Whether you need to reference
- Read the guidelines as stated on your paper



### Information Gathering

- Once you have received your exam question **Read it carefully** and make sure you understand what you are being asked to do. Look for 'clue' words in the questions.
- Underline key parts of the question
- Work out the main concepts or information.
- Select your materials and resources carefully and organise them for quick reference.
- A large amount of materials might make you feel secure, but you'll probably work best relying on no more than a few pages of notes and a few well-chosen texts.
- You are on a time limit so try to have the essential facts, etc. at your finger-tips.
- Make brief and legible notes and prepare a list of key information (key definitions etc.) likely to be used.
- Use index cards to list key topics and relevant page numbers of texts. Use one card per book. This can help you find information quickly.
- Apply the information in your sources to the questions

### Writing your essay

- You **can't copy** chunks of text directly from textbooks, notes or the internet. This is **PLAGIARISM**.
- In open-book exams, the resource materials have been made available throughout your module, so you are expected to do more than just reproduce them.
- You must be able to find, interpret and apply the information in your sources to the exam question/s.
- You usually need to reference as well, just as you would for any other assignment but don't use too many quotations. Use the time and information to build a well-constructed answer.
- Don't over-answer: With lots of materials available, it can be tempting to over-write and waffle on. **Answer the question**, and aim for concise, accurate, thoughtful answers that make good use of supporting evidence.



### Eat something and take breaks

- You might feel too nervous to eat, but your brain needs fuel! If you don't eat, halfway through the exam, you'll find yourself feeling tired, hungry and losing concentration.
- Take some bottled water into your 'exam' room /area.
- Take breaks as needed.

### 5.11 Results

Students will be advised of their results within one week following the deliberations of the end of semester/year **Examinations Board**. **Students** will be sent their Transcript of Results by email to their SMSI account.

The transcript indicates:

- The percentage achieved in each component (examination / assignment) of each module for which the student is registered.
- The overall percentage and grade achieved in each module.
- The overall award achieved, where applicable.
- Where appropriate, a recommendation to discuss results with Programme staff.

#### Indicators you may see on your transcript:-

<b>F</b>	<b>Fail</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>Deferral of Result</b>
<b>NP</b>	<b>Not presented/Absent</b>
<b>W</b>	<b>Withdrew</b>
<b>WH</b>	<b>Withheld</b>
<b>X</b>	<b>Exemption</b>

### 5.12 Reviews, Rechecks, Appeals

#### Reviews

Students are given the opportunity to review and discuss their assessment results with lecturers. These reviews are aimed at providing guidance to the student on how to improve on future performance.

Reviews may be requested up to **10** days following the receipt of assignment mark.

#### Recheck

A recheck is the operation of checking the administrative addition and recording of marks. A request for a recheck may be made up to **5** days following the receipt of assignment mark. There is a fee for the recheck service (refundable if any fault in recording has been made by the College)



## Appeals

The following extract from **QA document E15** outlines grounds for an appeal of an assessment

### See QA

**Section 6: 6.8 Examinations Policy, Procedures and Regulations on Moodle**

### Grounds for an Appeal of an assessment

The student must clearly identify the module(s) and the elements for which the appeal is being made. The application must also specify the grounds on which the appeal is sought and must contain all information that the student requires to have taken into account in the appeal.

An appeal of an assessment result shall be considered only where a student believes that:

1. He/she was adversely affected by an irregularity in how the assessment was conducted e.g. in written examinations, insufficient/inaccurate information on examination papers and continuous assessments or faulty IT equipment.
2. He/she was adversely affected by extenuating circumstances which the Examinations Board was unaware of when making its decision, e.g. personal or medical reasons.
3. He/she was adversely affected by an administrative error, resulting in an incorrect grade being recorded on the student database, e.g. missing assessment component.
4. SNMCI did not follow due process;

The following statements **DO NOT** constitute the basis for an appeal:

- Student disagrees with the grading criteria and grading scheme
- Other students in class achieved a higher grade
- Student expected a higher grade for assessment
- Student is disappointed with their result
- A request to have work rechecked by a different assessor
- Student had to work to earn money and could not attend class
- Lecturer X is a hard marker

### Deferrals

A deferral is where a candidate has been granted permission by the Programme Director, not to take one or more assessment elements on the date scheduled for assessment, due to documented circumstances.

#### **Students may only defer on the following grounds:**

- (a) Illness.
- (b) Bereavement.
- (c) Circumstances, beyond the student's control, which cause an extended period of absence during the teaching term.

To apply for a deferral, the student must discuss his/her reasons for requiring a deferral with the Programme Director. They must complete the *Mitigating Circumstances Form* (MCF) (See Programme Manager) and where applicable attach relevant supporting documentation. The onus is on the student to make his/her case for obtaining a deferral.



If the student wishes to defer a further sitting, he/she must submit another MCF to the Programme Director.

Once you decide to return to the programme, you should notify the PD of your intention. You must also contact the Head of Examinations and Registration in order to re-register on the programme.

### 5.13 Academic Integrity

The College's policy on Academic Integrity (QA 7.8) is one of the most important. Here is a short guide to the policy which can be found in full on Moodle.

Learners at SNMCI are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. You will complete a wide variety of assignments during the course of your programme and this short guide has been developed to help you understand the importance of academic integrity in the preparation of your assignments. It is organised as a question and answer session which explains: academic integrity, plagiarism and how to ensure that your work meets the College's standards and references the College's full Academic Integrity Policy document;

**QA 7.8: Academic Integrity** which can be found on the QA tab in Moodle.

#### What is academic integrity?

**SNMCI** uses the following definition of Academic Integrity as per the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI, 2013) i.e.

Academic Integrity is

- *'a commitment, even in the face of adversity to five fundamental values: honour, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility'.*

#### **SNMCI Considers that Academic Integrity is**

- something to be achieved through good practice rather than 'misconduct' to be avoided;
- goes beyond understanding and avoiding plagiarism, although this is a key part of it.
- involves the learner demonstrating knowledge and understanding through a process of evaluation and research, expressing understanding and original ideas independently, honestly and in an appropriate academic style, using good referencing and acknowledging all sources;

At each stage of your programme you will have assignments to complete. These are designed to advance your learning and understanding of your subject by requiring you to demonstrate how well you have engaged with and understood the material you have studied. Assessment tasks will vary from subject to subject and may be e.g. essays, presentations, laboratory reports, dissertations, portfolios, reflections, examinations etc. requiring problem-solving skills, evaluation skills, reflective skills and the presentation of coherent and cogent arguments.

It is expected that in producing an assignment, you need to read and gather information from a range of sources including e.g. books, journals, official reports, newspapers, material from the Internet as well as ideas generated in discussion with lecturers and peers.

When presenting your assignment it is vital to remember that:-



- you **cite** correctly, i.e. you are explicit about any material or ideas presented by other people that you have included in your assignment;
- you **reference** correctly, i.e. you include a complete list of references acknowledging the information that you have used to inform your assignment.

These actions are **the basis of good practice** in the presentation of your assignment and this is **what academic integrity looks like!** It means that you are being honest about showing how the work of others has helped you to form your own understanding and explanation of a topic.

### Why is academic integrity important?

#### Academic Integrity is important:-

- To uphold the academic reputation of the College and to ensure that stakeholders see SNMCI as a reputable college that maintains the standards of its awards
- To ensure that learners receive due credit for the work they submit
- To protect the interests of all learners so that there can be no academic advantage or disadvantage
- To meet SNMCI's reporting and compliance obligations as a Higher Education Provider delivering QQI validated awards.
- To assure employers that our graduates, who have been awarded degrees, have met the standards and professional requirements for the program of study e.g. Teaching Council, CORU, PSI, DCYA. .
- To assure employers that our graduates, who have been awarded degrees, have met the professional expectations of honesty, ethical standards, respect and responsibility.
- Because it is an extension of your own personal integrity.

### What is plagiarism?

SNMCI understands plagiarism to be the inclusion of another person's writings or ideas or works, in any formally presented work which forms part of the assessment requirements for a module or programme, without due acknowledgement, either wholly or in part, of the original source of the material through appropriate citation.

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and means that you have presented information or ideas belonging to someone else, as being your own original thoughts on a subject. This may happen in a number of ways, and these are explained further below, but in general there are two main ways in which you could potentially plagiarise:

- By incorporating ideas, phrases, or whole sections of text in your assignment which have been written by somebody else; or
- By failing to use proper citation methods which show all of the material you consulted in researching your assignment

### What constitutes plagiarism?

#### Plagiarism: (From SNMCI QA 7.8: Academic Integrity)



- Attempting to pass off others' effort, intellectual property, or any other work as their own by copying without consent or failing to use academic referencing conventions (deliberately or otherwise);
- Unclear referencing: taking parts of the work from a source or sources and using them without acknowledgement in a submitted assignment. SNMCI is aware that this type of plagiarism often arises because learners are unsure how and when to reference material;
- Inadequate paraphrasing: when a learner closely follows a source and partially changes words and phrases;
- Copying another's work;
- Representing collaborative work as one's own.
- Cutting and pasting from the web – even if it is referenced;
- Previously submitted work: submitting a piece of work that has previously been submitted in another module, in another programme of study, or for assessment in another college, (self-plagiarism).

**Attempting to pass off others' effort, intellectual property, or any other work as their own by copying without consent or failing to use academic referencing conventions (deliberately or otherwise);**

This could include getting someone else to write part or all of your assignment, using an assignment written by another learner, including those from previous years of your programme, copying parts of the work of another learner or buying an essay from an 'essay mill' or the internet. **Tip:** essays bought from the internet are usually poor value as they rarely address the question you have been asked to write about. They are usually badly written and often inaccurate.

**Presenting work copied extensively with only minor textual changes from the internet, books, journals or any other source;**

It is acceptable and even expected and that you will wish to incorporate the ideas of others into your work but in doing so you must be explicit that the information included is not your own original thought. **Tip:** check referencing guide

**Inadequate paraphrasing: when a learner closely follows a source and partially changes words and phrases;**

If you want to use somebody else's idea indirectly as an illustration of the argument you are making, be careful that you express it as a short summary or paraphrase of their argument and acknowledge that it is not your own original idea. Then cite your source to indicate that you are using someone else's ideas. **Tip:** It is not acceptable to change just a few words or phrases from someone else's text and then present the idea with citation. A **paraphrase** means you express the idea directly in your **own words**, and you must also include a reference to the original source.

**Unclear referencing: taking parts of the work from a source or sources and using them without acknowledgement in a submitted assignment;**



References should include all books, journals, official reports, newspapers or material from the internet, which informed the presentation of your assignment.

**Tip:** check referencing guidelines re how to reference internet sources correctly

### **Representing collaborative work as one's own;**

If you are part of a study group or a group formed for assessment purposes, you may spend time discussing topics with peer. If you discuss an assignment with a fellow learner, you need to be conscious that when you write up your part that you are expressing your own ideas not the opinions expressed by others. Be careful to show your individual understanding and effort towards the task.

### **Can plagiarism be unintentional?**

SNMCI is aware that plagiarism may arise from a range of situations e.g. not having enough time to complete an assignment properly, careless referencing (**negligence rather than deliberate intent**) or a lack of understanding of the correct referencing methods. However, these are not valid excuses and plagiarism is defined **by the action** rather than the intention.

The SNMCI **QA 7.8 Academic Integrity** policy states that

- Learners have a responsibility to make themselves aware of College policy;
- Learners are responsible for following all guidance related to good practice and academic integrity as given by academic staff;
- Learners should demonstrate initiative and be proactive about investigating good academic practice and about learning how to express themselves clearly without resorting to replicating other's words, while citing, and referencing as per guidelines.

All learners are responsible for being familiar with the College's policy and if in doubt, are encouraged to seek guidance from a member of the academic of staff.

### **How is plagiarism detected?**

- Lecturers will be familiar with the references in your subject area and are likely to recognise particular phrases, sentence constructions and even entire paragraphs, as parts of well-known published works, particularly where they are not referenced properly.
- It is routine practice in the College to use Turnitin (electronic detection) to identify instances of plagiarism.
- Lecturers will correct a whole range of assignments and that familiarity with the range of work presented will alert them to similarities in learners' work.

### **What happens if I plagiarise?**

- In line with College philosophy and values, SNMCI, will, in the first instance, move from framing 'academic integrity issues' as 'misconduct and dishonesty' to a more supportive and educative approach, aimed at the encouragement of good academic practice and learner success;
- The College has clearly outlined its own responsibilities with regard to Academic Integrity and also outlined learner responsibilities as part of a joint effort to maintain



academic standards and to avoid unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any member of the SNMCI academic community.

**The following principles underpin the College's approach to dealing with breaches of academic integrity:-**

- First instances of infringement of academic integrity will be viewed as arising from **negligence rather than deliberate intent** and learners will be offered extra support and instruction on acceptable academic practice. **Note:** first instances in Award Year may have further consequences.
- Each instance will be considered in light of (a), the extent of the plagiarism suspected and (b), what stage the learner has reached in his/her programme of study; **Note:** first instances in Award Year may have further consequences.
- Repeated offences: Each incidence is counted over the entire duration of a learner's programme. If a learner offends a second time, the incident is deemed to be more serious;

Note: Cases of major plagiarism, plagiarism in postgraduate or award year, or cases of repeated plagiarism will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee;

**Please read SNMCI QA 7.8: Academic Integrity**

Further information on new laws in Ireland prohibiting cheating and cheating services, is available [here](#).

**END**