



Assessment at SNMCI

2021 - 2022

(Updated August 2021)



St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI)



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1 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.¹

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

1.1 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 measure, evaluate 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.

1.2 Assessment at SNMCI

<p>Is Valid: Fit for purpose. Is based on valid assessment techniques and measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure.</p>	<p>Is Transparent: There is clarity and understanding by all involved in the assessment process</p>	<p>Is Fair: Assessment is accessible to all students and provides equal opportunity for all students to succeed, using reasonable accommodations where appropriate.</p>
<p>Is Formative: Assessment designed to provide feedback on students' learning. It can help students by providing them with information to self-monitor their academic progress. May or may not be graded</p>	<p>Is Summative: 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>Is Authentic: Has real world applicability</p>
<p>Reflects Quality: Assessment is reliable and equitable and in line with all agreed standards and procedures.</p>		

¹Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2005.



1.3 Key Terms

Summative Assessment Includes Continuous Assessment occurring throughout the year and end of semester examinations	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
	Where one piece of summative assessment is given a high weighting in a module, it is often referred to as High Stakes Assessment
Formative assessment	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.
	If graded, it is usually given very low weighting and is often referred to as Low Stakes Assessment

1.4 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.

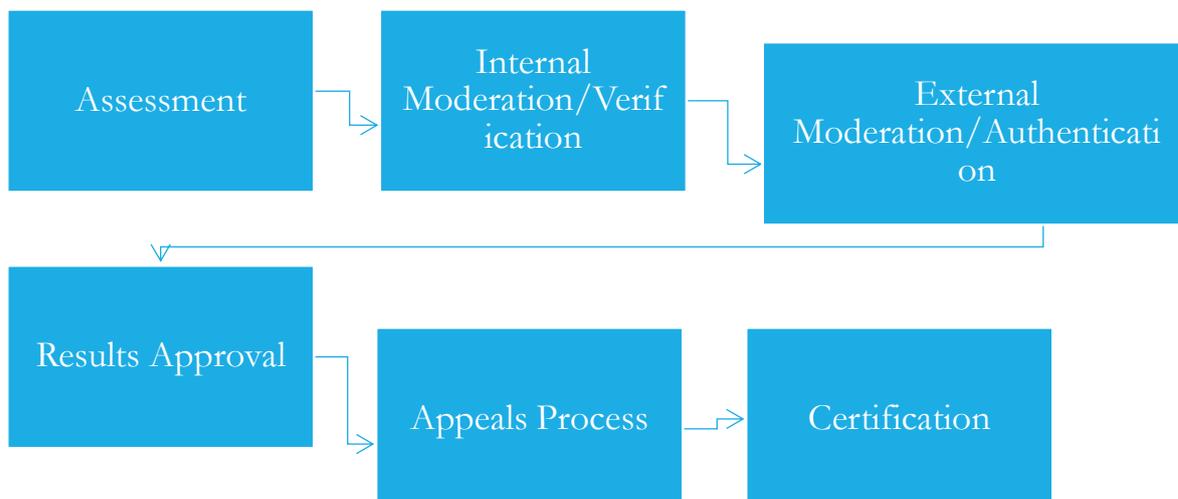
All assessment techniques have advantages and disadvantages.

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.

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



1.5 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:

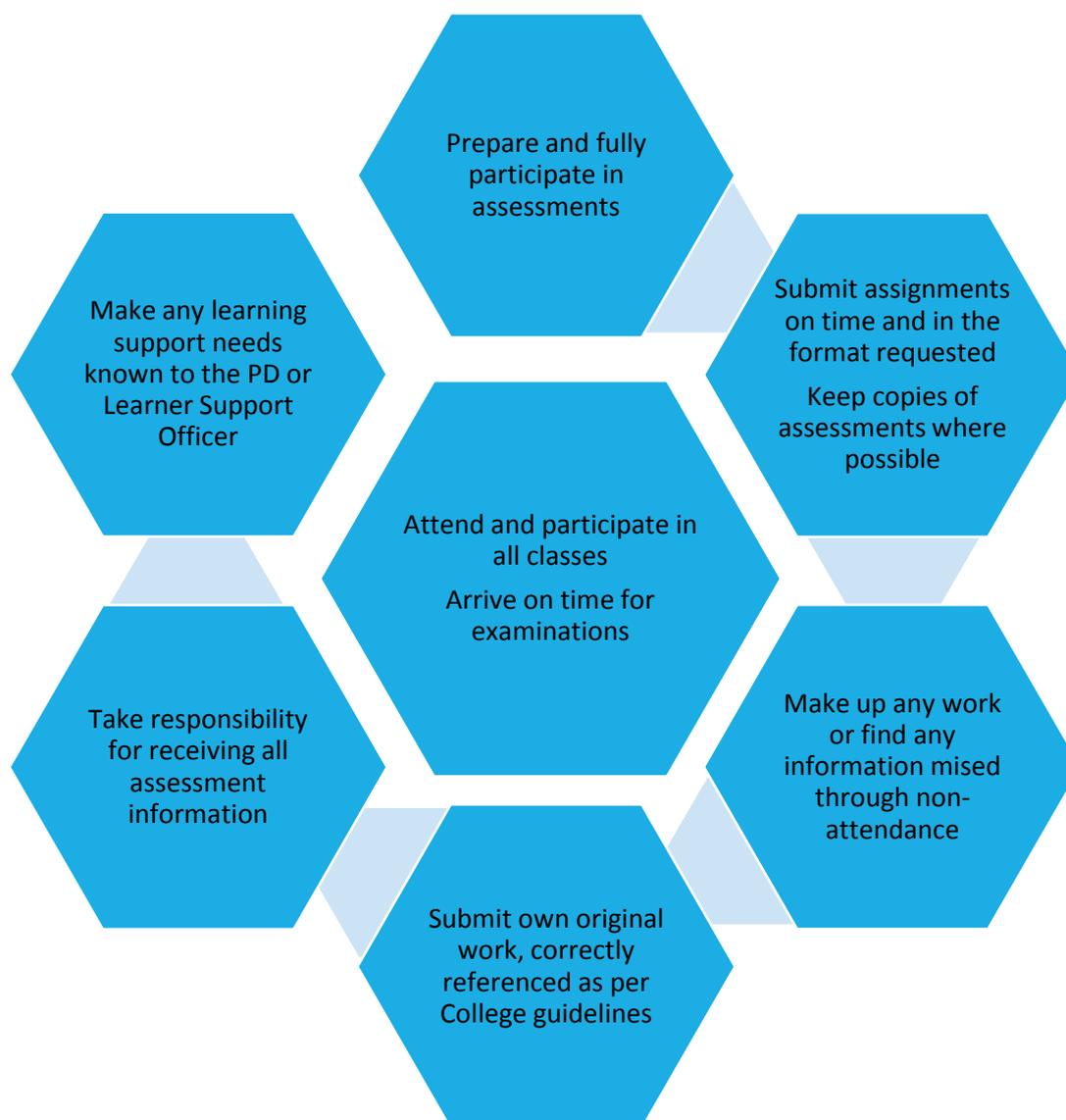
- Establish an Appeals Process
- Allow a minimum of 14 days for learners to lodge an appeal of the assessment process or result
- Process all appeals

Request Certification

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

1.6 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.





1.7 A Lecturer's Responsibility





1.8 Assignment Briefs



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ASSIGNMENT TITLE SHEET

(Programme Title and Stage)

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

Assignment : <i>Clear Title Here</i> Title of the essay/project/presentation etc	
Guidelines: <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?	
MLO'S <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.	
Assessment Criteria: <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



1.9 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:

- The above definitions means that an assessor is measuring and grading a student’s performance **against a fixed set of predetermined criteria**, clearly set out for each piece of assessment. A grader is assessing what each student knows or doesn’t know 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



1.10 Assessment (Student Perspective)

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 attempt. 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.



Assessment Deferrals (See above p.27 section 2.3.11)

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 mitigating 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) 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.

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: 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 breached academic integrity e.g. 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 breach suspected and (b) what stage the student has reached in his/her course of study. **Note:** Breaches of academic integrity in an Award Year is considered 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.



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- 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'.

1.11 Examinations (QA 6.8: Examination Regulations)

Some modules on every programme will have summative examinations.

Exam dates for written examinations at SNMCI are set by the Exams Office and will be published by the Head of Examinations and Registrations, on the student portal, well in advance.

Note: It is each student's responsibility to ensure they note their examination details.

Some examinations held during the academic year 2021-2022 will be in **Open Book Format**. The choice of in-house or Open Book exam is **module specific and a matter for the Programme Committee of each SNMCI programme.**

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.



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- 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 exam

- 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.

1.12 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:



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

Indicators you may see on your transcript:-

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

1.13 Post Continuous Assessment and Exams

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 7.12: Assessment Appeals](#) outlines grounds for an appeal of an assessment

See QA 6.8 Examinations Policy, Procedures and Regulations on Moodle
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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:



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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

Frequently asked questions:

What if I fail an exam? Some students who sit exams and/or submit continuous assessments fail them. It is possible for a student to take a Repeat Exam in the relevant modules. These Repeat Exams usually take place in mid-August. Repeat Continuous Assessment is usually also give a submission date of mid-August to allow for correction and moderation before the Autumn Exam Board.

Where a student must repeat assignments and/or exams they are referred to their Programme Director immediately following the Summer Exam Board. It is the student's responsibility to liaise with the PD and to find out exactly what his/her reassessment requirements are.

How many times can I repeat a module? As per QQI Assessment and Standards learners who fail a module should normally be offered at least three repeat attempts. **Note:** There may be situations where external factors — e.g. statutory or regulatory requirements — impinge on the conditions for offering repeat attempts to learners.

What if I pass some modules but fail others? Once you have passed a module, you will not be required to re-sit it.



1.14 Lecturer's perspective

QQI Assessment and Standards

QQI *Assessment and Standards*, (Revised 2013) provide clear guidance on the assessment of learners. SNMCI reflects this guidance in its QA Policies and Procedures. (The section below has been produced with reference to the above QQI document.)

- 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, **students are required to attempt all components**. The overall module mark is determined by the weighted average of each component.

Writing Assignment Briefs:

- Incoming lecturers may be presented with existing assignment briefs. They should read these carefully and, in consultation with PD be aware of how they fit in to the overall module/s assessment.
- Following end of year Programme Committee meetings and based on lecturer and student feedback, it may happen that the assessment strategy for a module will be changed.
- Lecturers should liaise with PD to discuss and agree any changes that may be made within the boundaries of the validated document. New assessment must be aligned carefully with the module learning outcomes.
- Assessment tasks and grading criteria should be clear and unambiguous.
- The language used in teaching should be the language normally used in assessment
- Grading is an assessment process. A grading scheme (i.e. marking scheme) which uses explicit criteria should be produced for each assessment task.
- Grading should be criterion-referenced (based on learning outcome criteria).
- Grades should be awarded on the individual's performance. They should never be norm-referenced (e.g. have quotas for each grade).
- Individuals undertaking team-based assessment tasks **should also be assessed individually. Your marking scheme should take this into account**. (Not all students may contribute equally to group work. Moreover, not all group members may derive the same standard of learning from the group work. Assessment of group work should therefore account for these possibilities. This does not preclude assessment of the outcome of a team's achievement, nor does it preclude formative assessment of a team and formative feedback to the team.)



- All assessment tasks, criteria, arrangements, indicative answers and grading schemes **MUST** be reviewed internally prior to use. They are reviewed by PD's in the first instance and then signed off by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board.
- High-stake assessment tasks (e.g. examination papers), indicative answers and grading schemes **MUST** be reviewed independently of their authors, including by the external examiners. An assessment task taken out of context cannot be reviewed effectively. Therefore, external examiners should be familiar with the entire programme assessment strategy.
- All assignment briefs must be on an official SNMCI Assignment Title Sheet.
- Your contact person, PD, will provide a template (See below)



St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland

ASSIGNMENT TITLE SHEET

(Programme Title and Stage)

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

Assignment : <i>Clear Title Here</i>	
Guidelines: <i>Clear explanatory guidelines setting out what the student has to do and how they might go about it.</i>	
MLO'S <i>The module learning outcomes assessed by this assignment</i>	
Assessment Criteria: <i>An explanation of how the marks for this assignment will be allotted e.g. (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



Programme:

Stage:

Module: 2-01:

Assignment title: Essay SAMPLE

Assessment Considerations/ Criteria	Marks		Comments & Recommendations
	Max	Examiner	
Acquisition of Knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Level of understanding ➤ Familiarity with subject /material 	(25)		
Argument/Interpretation/Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Quality of argument/reasoning ➤ Depth of analysis ➤ Expansion of ideas/argument ➤ Evidence of original thinking 	(35)		
Accuracy/Relevance/ Focus/ Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Relevance of research to task set ➤ Consistency of focus on the topic of investigation ➤ Organisation of ideas ➤ Fluency/logic of structure 	(15)		
Quality of Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ease of comprehension ➤ Appropriateness of language ➤ Fluency of style ➤ Use of punctuation, grammar, etc. 	(10)		
Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Adherence to presentation guideline ➤ Word count/ length 	(5)		
Bibliography & Referencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use of supporting evidence ➤ Acknowledgement of sources: references, quotes, statistics ➤ Range and relevance of Bibliography 	(10)		



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- All assignments should also have an Assessment Feedback Form outlining the Assessment considerations and criteria in detail.
- These feedback forms form the basis of the gradebook in Moodle, where all marks are recorded.
- The sheet should contain more detail under each of the marking sections

EXAMS:

Whereas some assignment briefs may continue to be valid from year to year, exams by their nature must be addressed on a yearly basis. If your module involves a terminal exam you are required to be proactive in designing, discussing, formatting exam papers.

Note to Lecturers:-

- **Please liaise ASAP with your contact person (PD) if your module requires exam papers to be written. It is important that there is sufficient 'turnaround' time for exam papers to be reviewed and approved.**

Administration Procedure:

In advance of exams at the end of Semester One and End of Year the Examinations Office will require, for those modules where an exam forms part of the assessment,

- Two separate examination papers (a first sitting paper and a repeat paper)
- Indicative answers and marking criteria for each question
- The Head of Examinations (HoE) will send on a template and an example of a properly formatted exam paper
- Lecturers will formulate exam questions and indicative answers, bearing in mind the Stage/Level of the module and the mlos being addressed by the exam.
- Exam questions and indicative answers will be sent on to the relevant PD who will nominate an internal reviewer.
- Internal reviewer and lecturer will discuss any changes that need to be made
- When the Internal Reviewer is satisfied then s/he will complete an Internal Reviewer's Report (FQA6.2) and return it along with the papers to the Head of Examinations.
- The HoE will send the papers on to the external examiner for the programme, to be reviewed.
- Lecturers should be available to comply with any changes suggested by the external examiner.

Exam Writing Process:

Why Exams?

- To provide a controlled environment for independent work and to verify student learning
- To motivate students
- To add variety to student learning and to enable them to engage with course material from different perspectives.



- Exams can provide feedback on teaching. They can enable both students and lecturers to identify and address areas that the students do not understand, thus enabling student progression and programme improvement

Good Exam questions:

- ARE CLEAR. If necessary divide the question into parts
- Are not confusing for any learner but in particular, are clear for learners with additional support needs.
- Give all students an equal opportunity to demonstrate learning e.g. different students are better at different types of questions so consider e.g. 'seen' questions, short questions, essay questions.
- Are valid i.e. questions address what you want to test
- Have indicative answers that match the question asked
- Are realistic i.e. questions that match the students' stage of learning (level 6/7/8)
- Can be completed in the time allowed.
- Free of bias e.g. have considered student differences and the use of colloquial language.
- Have transparent marking criteria

Indicative Answers:

- All exam questions should come with an indicative answer, i.e. an indication of the most important points you would expect to find in the answer.
- Indicative answers should be comprehensive but not exhaustive (allow room for some interpretation)
- Indicative answers should indicate to a second marker/moderator what you were looking for in your question.
- Indicative answers should help you to formulate your marking scheme.

Note to Lecturers:-

- **Indicative answers contain the most important points you would expect to find in the answer, but they are not exhaustive. You may find that sometimes your students have interpreted your question in a way that is different to what you had intended and that students produce good answers that are slightly outside of what was asked. Consider giving these students partial marks. When correcting, make notes on exam scripts making it clear why you gave a particular mark (see feedback).**



Practical examinations:

Practical examinations are generally used, where a set period of time is allocated to students to demonstrate his/her practical knowledge, skills or competency. To ensure that students are adequately prepared for a practical examination they should be provided with

- the location and duration of the exam (the duration will depend on the subject area)
- procedures related to practical exams
- details of the learning outcomes that will be assessed
- materials required to complete the task

Note to Lecturers:-

- **Montessori lecturers are obliged to be available for, and to make themselves aware of the procedures related to practical examinations. They should liaise with PD prior to practical exams. They are also obliged to participate in post exam moderation meetings.**

Presentations:

Students may be obliged, as part of the assessment plan for a programme of study, to present work, either individually, in pairs or in groups. From the perspective of the assessor, issues of validity and reliability arise.

Note to Lecturers:-

- **There MUST be a second assessor/marker present for all student presentations, for moderation purposes.**
- **Assessment criteria for group presentations MUST include an individual marking element.**

Questions:

- Is the main emphasis of the presentation the product or the process?
- Are you assessing students' abilities to research and prepare cogent and stimulating overviews of subject areas, to demonstrate knowledge and critically analyse?
- **Or** are you assessing students' abilities to present information to an audience with appropriate use of visual and technical aids?
- **Or** is it a combination of both with emphasis on one aspect or another?
- Are the assessment criteria in line with what you have asked the students to do?

Issues for lecturers to consider:

- From the perspective of the student, consider the stress of presenting information to an audience, and any disadvantage that may arise for students where English is a second language
- Consider issues for students e.g. 'free-riding' where one or more group members leave most of the work to a few; decreased student effort because of less accountability in groups; conflict between group members.
- The transient nature of presentations (unless recorded) means that distractions such as a student's voice, appearance and manner may consciously or unconsciously affect judgement



- It can be difficult to give full attention to a number of presentations delivered in succession.

Suggestions:

- Assessment and marking criteria should explicitly state the emphasis being placed on content versus performance.
- The layout of the space and rules for presentations should be discussed and agreed beforehand.
- Students should be given opportunities to practice and to receive formative feedback on their presentation skills, before summative assessment takes place
- Students should be given feedback, not just a mark, after presentations are made.
- The table below offers some **guidelines** for assessing presentations

Organisation	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow
Subject knowledge	Does not have grasp of information;	Is uncomfortable with information	Is at ease with information	Demonstrates full knowledge (more than required)
Questions from assessors	Cannot answer questions about subject	Is able to answer only rudimentary questions	Answers all questions, but fails to elaborate	Answers all questions with explanations and elaboration.
Layout, graphics (for poster or electronic/PP presentations)	Uses superfluous graphics or no graphics	Occasionally uses graphics that rarely support text and presentation	Graphics relate to text and presentation	Graphics explain and reinforce screen text and presentation.
Correctness of grammar, spelling etc.	Presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.
Presentation style e.g. eye contact, speaks out, addresses audience	Reads all of report with no eye contact.	Occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads most of report.	Maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes	Maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returning to notes.
Delivery	Mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear.	Voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation	Voice is clear. Pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation	Uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation.



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Some modules on every programme will have summative examinations.

Exam dates for written examinations at SNMCI are set by the Exams Office and will be published by the Head of Examinations and Registrations, on the student portal, well in advance.

Note: It is each student's responsibility to ensure they note their examination details.

Some examinations held during the academic year 2021-2022 will be in **Open Book Format**. The choice of in-house or Open Book exam is **module specific and a matter for the Programme Committee of each SNMCI programme**.

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 memory; they test an ability to find and use information, and to deliver well-structured and well-presented arguments.
- Open-book exam questions do not merely ask students to 'give back' information. They usually require students to analyse, evaluate, reflect and apply knowledge, to self and/or real life situations.
- Open-book exams require students 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 a student from giving a wrong answer if s/he can't remember a fact, but just getting that fact correct won't get good marks.
- In open-book exams, it's how students locate, apply and use the information that is important.

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.
- **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



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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.

- All assignments must have an Assignment Cover Sheet.
- Students must upload the 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.

Note to Lecturer:

- **Lecturers MAY NOT accept assignments from students. All assignments come through the Programme Manager**

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 to Lecturer:

- **Submission dates are generally set at the beginning of the year. If, for any reason, a change of date is required, lecturers MUST discuss this with the PD and Programme Manager before agreeing to any change of date with students.**

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.)



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- When meeting his/her Programme Director, it is the learner'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. (See QA 6.5)

Note:

- (a) Authorisation for granting an extension rests with the Programme Director.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Due to the time restrictions involved in the submission of assessments a student can normally only appeal the outcome of his/her application if he/she requested the extension 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. **(See QA 7.11: Appeals, QA 7.12 Assessment Appeals)**
- (d) Work submitted late without documented approval of the Programme Director will be penalised.

Note to Lecturer:

- **Please redirect any student looking for a late submission to the Programme Director. Lecturers MAY NOT agree to late submissions.**

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 is capped at 40%.



1.15 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, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) (formerly 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.



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- 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](#).

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.

Disciplinary Committee:

Any breach of academic integrity is unacceptable. **The SNMCI policy QA 7.8** outlines the different categories of academic misconduct and the associated means of prevention and detection. It details associated penalties and describes the investigation, disciplinary and appeals procedures. In certain cases the alleged breaches of academic integrity may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

- Repeated offences will automatically be referred to The Disciplinary Committee.
- Students have the right to appeal the decision of the Disciplinary Committee.

Note: Referencing

In the academic year 2020-2021 the College transitioned to APA referencing.

A guide has been produced to support staff and students.

This move will be less stressful for B.Ed first and second years and for first and second year BA (Hons) Psychology students.

For on-going students e.g. BA Hons and Higher Diploma we ask lecturers to be aware that some students may wish to continue with their Harvard reference guide.

The most important thing is for students to be consistent with what they use.



Academic Integrity Lecturer Checklist (GQA 7.8)

THE PROCESS	Y/N	WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY	Y/N
I KNOW WHAT COUNTS AS A BREACH OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AT SNMCI?		I AM AWARE THAT TECHNOLOGY IS EVOLVING?	
I KNOW WHERE TO REPORT A SUSPECTED CASE AND WHAT TO DO?		I AM AWARE OF ESSAY MILLS?	
I KNOW THE CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENTS?		I HAVE LOOKED AT THIS WEBSITE TO INFORM MYSELF? here .	
I HAVE READ QA 7.8 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY			
MY MODULE	Y/N	MY STUDENTS	Y/N
I ADDRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEGRITY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM?		KNOW I VALUE INTEGRITY IN MY MODULE?	
I REFERENCE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFTEN?		KNOW I VALUE THEIR WORK/INPUT?	
MY ASSESSMENTS ARE ALIGNED WITH MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES?		UNDERSTAND THE ASSESSMENTS?	
		TAKE OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LEARNING?	
MY ASSIGNMENTS			Y/N
I PROVIDE CLEAR EXAMPLES OF WHAT PLAGIARISM LOOKS LIKE?			
I PROVIDE FORMATIVE FEEDBACK			
MY ASSESSMENTS/EXAM QUESTIONS DON'T RELY ON SIMPLE FEEDBACK OF INFORMATION. THEY INCLUDE ANALYSIS AND REFLECTIVE ELEMENTS			

If in doubt about any of the above please contact your Programme Director



FQA 7.8 Lecturer Report re suspected Breach of Academic Integrity

DETAILS

Student Number	
Student Name	
Programme/Stage	
Module Title	
Assignment Title /or Exam Session (Summer/Autumn)	

Mark Awarded if correction complete	
Reason for Query e.g. similar assignment to classmate, plagiarised content, collusion etc. (see QA 7.8)	
Evidence: I present the following evidence of alleged academic misconduct /plagiarism (additional pages may be appended if required):	
Turnitin (or other detection software) % if known	
Lecturer comments and/or recommendations	
Date referred to Programme Director	
Signed by lecturer:	
Date:	

Received by PD: Date	
Action and Outcome: (additional pages may be appended if required):	
Signed by PD	
Date:	



Grading, Feedback, Moderation and Grade Descriptors as used by SNMCI

(See QA 6.6: Correction and Provision of Feedback to Learner)

According to QCI guidelines, 'a college's QA procedures on feedback should seek to ensure that individual learners receive timely and constructive feedback on their assessments which informs their participation on the programme.' (QCI Assessment Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013, Section 3.1.2, p 8)

The **rubric below** sets out the indicative grading descriptors for the purpose of awarding marks and feedback to student assignments.

Note to Lecturers:-

- Please read the guideline set out below, prior to correcting any assignments for the first time.
- The guidelines have been formulated with reference to QCI Assessment Guidelines for Providers, Revised 2013, Section 3.1.2
- Please liaise with your contact person (PD) with regard to any issues re marking and feedback

Guidelines

- Feedback to learners is an ongoing process. In accordance with the college's QA, specific, formal feedback to students is required as part of each programme's assessment plan.
- Feedback is required in a timely manner
- Feedback is required after each assessment has been marked, and at specific times during the academic year.
- Feedback for assignments is usually in the form of formal written feedback on marking templates in Moodle (and where hard copy has been supplied and in-house exams have occurred, by written comments on students' work).

All learning is positive and students should be encouraged to be proud of and value all of their learning.

- Avoid disparaging language and use positive language. Identify and note strengths;
- Students need positive feedback on the skills and abilities they demonstrate;
- They need constructive feedback on where evidence is weak, or does not match the learning outcomes as outlined in the assignment guidelines;
- **DO NOT** simply cut and paste from the rubric below without elaboration directly linked to the student's work;
- Give comprehensive and specific feedback, with examples from or direct references to the student's work;
- Use assessment criteria and marking schemes to help you to give objective feedback and to suggest specific options for improvement;
- Once you have given a student a mark of 70% you have awarded that person a First Class Honours Grade for that assignment;
- Generally work worthy of a First Class Honours falls, not less than 70 and not more than 79, in terms of marks awarded.



- There are 2 more 'levels' in the First Class Honours band and these, given the subjective nature of SNMCI modules, **are only achievable** by work deemed to be of '**publishable quality**'. Please note the language used in the descriptors.

Moderation

Every component of assessment that contributes towards the classification of an award, undergraduate or postgraduate, is subject to internal moderation. Internal moderation involves the review of a sample of marks and comments on assignment tasks, to ensure that marking criteria have been fairly, accurately and consistently applied during first marking.

Purpose:-

The purpose of internal moderation is to ensure that students are assessed accurately, fairly and with only those aspects of subjectivity which are academically justifiable, and to ensure that marking standards are consistent IN and ACROSS a number of modules in a programme of study.

Context:

- The College's aim is to sustain high standards and demonstrate consistency in the standard of our awards.
- We aim to achieve both rigour and fairness in the assessment of students against those standards.
- We aim to ensure that standards are met through the assessments set and that they remain appropriate.
- This is achieved through continuing monitoring and moderation of assessment process and outcomes.

A clearly articulated and consistently applied policy ([See QA 6.7: Internal Moderation Policy and Procedure](#)) for moderation is necessary, in order to demonstrate that:

- Assessments are related to the specific aims and learning outcomes of programmes and modules;
- Assessed work is consistently marked within programmes and modules;
- Outcomes of assessments are clear, reliable and valid and are agreed by the programme team and the Teaching Learning and Assessment Board before the students undertake the assessment;
- Fairness and consistency is achieved for all;
- Correctors have a mechanism which demonstrates consistency across the grading of their work;
- Module leaders can provide evidence that they have accurately and fairly assessed content and met learning outcomes within a module

Moderation process

Moderation of assessment starts at the initial stage of planning of assessment (programme management) and progresses through to awarding of final marks and results. Stages include:-

1. Marking: Making judgements - marking and results



2. Post assessment Outputs Systems Phase: Moderation of assessment - processes and outcomes

Pre assessment: planning, design and methods

The moderation process begins at the planning stage of the module. The setting of the assessment should include clear concise written statements and should occur before the teaching of the module commences: Information is required on:

- How the assessment relates to the intended module learning outcomes (mlos) of the module;
- Clear assessment criteria which provides a clear indication of what is required and how marks will be allocated
- A clearly identified marking scheme to be applied.

All proposed assignments should in the first instance be reviewed by the Programme Director and will be signed off by the [Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board](#). The following will be checked;

- Alignment of assessment with learning outcomes;
- Clarity of assignment brief;
- Assessment criteria;
- Assignment level
- Time frame for assessment which identifies the following :
 - Clear submission date of students assessment
 - Turn-around date for initial markers
 - Clearly identified list of markers
- Date for internal moderation of assessment
- Group moderation – academic staff identified, date set & room booked
- Individual moderation – system clearly identified, academic staff identified and dates agreed
 - Date for submission to external examiner
 - Date for publishing of results

Marking:

Programme management is responsible for ensuring that all staff are prepared for the correcting task and should provide at a minimum:-

- marking guidelines;
- a rubric;
- representative work samples;
- group marking exercise to agree on standards, particularly for large numbers of markers, markers from different cognate areas, or inexperienced markers;
- experience of double marking a random selection of assessment tasks, or of borderline scripts;
- advice on how to spot
 - discrepancies between grade allocations
 - high numbers of failures
 - high numbers of distinctions
 - clustering of marks
 - discrepancies between grades allocated to individual students in successive assessment tasks



Moderation process:

- Moderation of marking is undertaken by reviewing **a sample of the students' work**.
- It is generally not seen as double (second) marking.
- The moderator **acts as reviewer of the standard and consistency of marking against explicit assessment criteria**.
- A sampling process is clearly identified for each programme, which is based upon the number of students within the cohort. When there is a need for the students work to be marked independently and/or graded by more than one marker, this should be clearly identified and agreed by the programme management team prior to the assessment being set.
- The role of the external examiner for each programme should be clearly identified and agreed upon. See [QA 6.11: Roles and Responsibilities of External Examiner](#)
- Due process will be followed as identified in the College's policies on Assessment and Moderation;
- Anomalies and trends will be identified and explored in light of evolving assessment strategies within the programme.

Process summary:

- PD identifies internal moderators for each module at the beginning of the academic year.
- A sample of continuous assessment or exam scripts is selected by the Programme Manager. The sample is representative of a range of marks and will normally include, all fails, some borderline, mid-range, high and extremely high marks.
- The moderator reads the sample and determines whether he/she feels there is consistency between individual and overall marking.
- Where the internal moderator is satisfied that the marking is consistent, he/she will complete the *Internal Moderator Report (FQA 6.7)* and return it (with the scripts where hard copy is a feature) to the Programme Administrator.
- Where the internal moderator is not satisfied that the marking is consistent, he / she should firstly speak to the lecturer and attempt to clarify and resolve any differences.
- Should the internal moderator and the lecturer be unable to resolve such differences, the internal moderator notes this on the *Internal Moderator Report (FQA 6.7)* and returns it to the Programme Manager, along with an alternative series of proposed marks for the sample.
- The matter then goes to the PD who may (a) decide that the internal moderator's marks are more appropriate than the lecturer's or (b) suggest a modified mark which in his / her view, best reflects the student's achievement.
- The PD sends the marks to the Programme Manager.
- The original and the revised marks are kept on file and open to scrutiny by the External Examiner. **(See QA 6.7)**

Note to Lecturers: -

- **For new lecturers and novice markers, a wider sample of their corrected work may be taken for moderation purposes. Feedback offered to the corrector will form part of the induction process and contribute to professional development programme.**
- **Correctors are expected to be willing to engage with the moderation process in the best interests of the students**



1.16 Grade Descriptors as used by SNMCI

Grade	Mark Range	Grade Descriptors
1 st class Hons (1:1)	90-100	<p>Supreme performance, engaging profoundly, systematically and comprehensively with the brief, brilliantly demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A superlative mastery of the subject, richly supported by evidence - An outstanding ability to organise, analyse and express ideas in an original manner - An optimal capacity for critical analysis - A display of rare penetrative insight, originality and creativity
	80-89	<p>Exceptional performance, engaging deeply and systematically with the brief, with consistently impressive demonstration of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A comprehensive mastery of subject matter, amply supported by citation - Reflecting deep and broad knowledge, critical insight and extensive reading - An exceptionable ability to organise, analyse and present arguments - A highly developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking
	70-79	<p>Very Good to Excellent performance engaging closely and systematically with the brief, with consistent strong evidence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical evaluation and reflection in presentation of arguments and new insights - Advanced and wide-ranging knowledge of concepts, theory and principles supported by correct citation. - Imaginative, original and logical reasoning leading to clear inferences, outcomes and conclusions - Excellent structure, writing and specialised vocabulary Consistent and accurate use of Harvard referencing system
2 nd Class Hons Grade 1 (2:1)	60-69	<p>Good to Very Good performance engaging substantially with the brief, demonstrating a strong grasp of the subject matter well supported by evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very good analysis, reflection and critical evaluation in presentation of arguments - Wide-ranging knowledge of concepts, theory and principles - Some original and logical reasoning leading to clear inferences, outcomes and conclusions
2 nd Class Hons Grade 2 (2:2)	50-59	<p>Good performance, factually sound and competent answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good knowledge of concepts, theory and principles - Reasonable analysis, reflection and critical evaluation in presentation of arguments - Writing of sufficient quality to convey meaning - Limited original thinking - Some omissions
Pass	40-49	<p>Satisfactory performance- intellectually adequate answer with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic knowledge of concepts, theory and principles - Some analysis but inclusion of unsubstantiated statement or irrelevant material - Some reflection and critical evaluation but mainly descriptive - Lacking evidence of original thought
Fail	35-39	<p>Unacceptable performance with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient understanding of the question/subject - Insufficient analysis, reflection and evaluation - Insufficiently clear outcomes and conclusions - Lack of organisation of ideas / quality of writing - Inaccurate or insufficient referencing <p>(possible pass by compensation)</p>
Fail	<35	<p>Wholly unacceptable performance with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deficient understanding - Failure to address the question - Inadequate knowledge - Confused expression

