



# SNMCI College Handbook

## 2021 - 2022

Including an Introduction to Assessment Policies and Guidelines with a link to the SNMCI Assessment Document

(Updated August 2021)



### St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI)

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).

**Note:** The SNMCI student website is the official source for all information and this handbook is not intended as a substitute for this or other official documents which take precedence in all cases.

**Note:** Your SNMCI student e-mail will be used for all communications from the College (other than general public announcements made on the website) so please ensure to read your SNMCI e-mail regularly.

**Note:** Some of the information outlined in this handbook is subject to change during the course of the academic year. Updates will be brought to your attention.

**Note:** Some logistical/ information is subject to change in Semester 2 with the hoped for move to a new campus.



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# SECTION ONE





## 1 Welcome

On behalf of everyone at St. Nicholas Montessori College Ireland (SNMCI) a warm welcome to new and returning students, for the academic year- 2021/2022.

We look forward to working in partnership with you over the coming months as you embark on an exciting new phase in your academic and personal development.

As third level students you will be confronted over the coming months with many new experiences and some challenges; both academic and personal. The SNMCI community of learning will provide you with support, advice, new skills and the confidence to navigate your way through these new experiences and to reframe all challenges as positive learning events.

Maintaining a focus on your academic work is the key to success. However, the last eighteen months in particular have also underlined the importance of friendships, extra-circular activities, social events and relationship building.

These aspects of college life will offer you friends that may be with you for life, the opportunity to develop important life skills and the chance to build your own networks for the future.

Please enjoy all in-house activities as we move gradually to a safe return to campus life (see below- a safe return to campus- statement) and also make an effort to log in to online events, as some of the positive online experiences of the past eighteen months will continue to be a part of College life post COVID.

SNMCI is committed to providing you with a learning environment that encourages you to meet your potential both personally and professionally.

The year will be full of opportunities, so embrace all the experiences and challenges that are heading your way!

## 1.1 A Safe Return to Campus 2021-2022



### Context

On June 15<sup>th</sup> D/FHERIS published [\*A safe return to on-site further and higher education and research \(Safe Return Plan\)\*](#). This document laid out a whole-of sector approach to safe and sustainable operations for the coming academic year.

The re-opening of higher education in September 2021 is underpinned by three primary pillars:

1. Higher education has been nominated as an **'essential service'** by government.
2. There is an overwhelming **desire from students for a return** to on-campus learning and research activity.
3. The vast majority, if not all adults, including college students will have been offered the opportunity to be vaccinated by September.

### Guidelines

Based on the above higher education institutions (HEIs) are now planning **a return to campus in September 2021** based on the detail set out in the adopted and approved *Safe Return Plan*. Measures laid out in the plan will be applied across the sector with each HEI encouraged to work locally, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to ensure safe and sustainable implementation and to adapt the measures to their local context and physical infrastructure.

### SNMCI

#### SNMCI:-

- Is committed to adhering to Government guidance for public health as laid out in *COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021 - The Path Ahead* and any further/future additions to these guidelines;
- Is committed to supporting all students regardless of level, year, or discipline of study and will facilitate access to learning spaces and other physical settings as appropriate;
- Is committed to maximising and optimising the on-campus experience for all students; balancing the public health risks against the academic and mental health benefits;
- Will continue to emphasise the need for personal responsibility and shared collective responsibility to facilitate the safe operation of campus life;
- Will continue to provide specific extra supports for students where required.



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- Has adopted the separate protocol agreed by the HEIs for the arrival of international students to Ireland to ensure their safety and that of the communities in which they will live and study.
- Will ensure that all campus operations are conducted in such a manner as to manage any risk to individual and public health through adherence to such relevant regulations, guidance, and advice as may apply from time to time:
  - ❖ Adhering to all standard hygiene measures, cleaning and sanitisation procedures;
  - ❖ In certain circumstances requiring face masks in indoor on-site shared settings in accordance with prevailing public health regulations and guidance;
  - ❖ Optimising ventilation systems to minimise risk of viral transmission, in line with local context and assessment;
  - ❖ Ensuring that entry and egress to buildings and facilities will be managed as safely as possible via contra flow and other measures;
  - ❖ Managing lecture times and lecture delivery to avoid large gatherings minimise risk;
- Will protect through reasonable accommodation any member of the SNMCI community for whom vaccination is medically contravened, while encouraging engagement with the vaccination rollout, recognising that high levels of vaccination protect all.
- Will support standard public health procedures by updating and monitoring its COVID QA policy and procedures, with appropriate arrangements for management of /control of outbreaks.
- Continually monitor operations in light of the evolving public health status.

**Please read the SNMCI Safe Return to Work and Study sent to all staff and students.**

## 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 travelling to complete 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 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 awarded by the London Centre.

In 1994, the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) granted SNMCI 'Designated College Status'. The College began to design and develop its own higher education diploma and degree programmes in Montessori education, in line with national and international standards.

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 Graduate Higher diploma programme.

The addition of 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.

SNMCI 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 Montessori professionals and as part of its strategic plan has expanded its provision: -

- by developing new programmes to bring Montessori education to the broader community with e.g its *Montessori Education for Dementia* programme in collaboration with leading Montessori & Dementia expert, Jennifer Brush, and
- a *BA(Hons) in Psychology* ; a natural extension of the College's expertise in this discipline area

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 offers Montessori teacher education through full-time and part-time accredited programmes. The College has also expanded its provision to include a *BA (Hons) in Psychology* and a programme dedicated to *Montessori Education for Dementia*. Further programmes are in development.

The accredited programmes currently offered at the College are:

- **B.Ed. in Montessori Education (Level 7)** full-time and part-time. This programme is recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) (formerly DCYA) for the purposes of higher capitation fees in EY.
- **B.Ed. (Hons) in Montessori Education (Level 8)** full-time and part-time. This programme is recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) (formerly DCYA) for the purposes of higher capitation fees in EY.
- **B.A. (Hons) in Montessori Education (level 8)** day and evening. This is an additional year at level 8. Graduates of this programme are eligible to apply for Teaching Council recognition (Route 4) which enables them to work as special needs teachers in special schools or in special classes in primary schools.
- **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 professional paths and embark on careers in early years' education.
- **BA (Hons) in Psychology.** (link to programme handbook here)  
Level 8 [First cohort 2020. This programme is seeking PSI recognition]
- **Montessori Education for Dementia**
- Special Purpose Award Level 6 Certificate [First cohort/s 2020].
- **Micro-credential** in Special Education
- **Micro-credential** in Discovering Montessori Education
- **Micro credential** in Pedagogical Leadership in Early Years

Further programmes are in development and validation stages, as part of the College's Strategic Plan 2025.

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## Keep in touch...



## 1.4 SNMCI Graduate Attributes



**Professional**

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



**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



**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 fellow professional.s They work as part of teams, in the best interests of all.



**Agents of Change**

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

## 1.5 Student Charter: Expectations of Students and College

The **Student Charter** outlines what students can expect of SNMCI and also what SNMCI expects of its students. SNMCI is an academic community where all participants, students and staff, recognise and fulfil their obligations to themselves, each other and the wider College community. The Student Charter below sets out some of these mutual obligations and should be used as a reminder of ways in which we can all build an inclusive, supportive and positive environment.

**Note:** The Student Charter is listed as QA 7.3 as part of SNMCI’s larger Quality Assurance (QA) document. All QA documents are considered ‘living documents’ i.e. they are subject to frequent review, update, adjustment and improvement, based on stakeholder feedback.

SNMCI welcomes all student feedback. If you would like to suggest any additions or amendments to the Student Carter or indeed to any QA, please contact the Student Engagement Officer (SEO) [brid.hannan@smsi.ie](mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie) or the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs, or use the form provided on Moodle.



| <b>STUDENTS AT SNMCI HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT....</b>  | <b>SNMCI HAS A RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT STUDENTS WILL...</b>  |
|--|---|
| Welcoming and supportive Induction day/s   | Attend Induction  |
| Information and contact details for staff responsible for each programme of study  | Make themselves aware of information provided, by checking e-mails, noticeboards, handbooks and the website, on a regular basis.                  |
| Details of assessment and the assessment criteria used for each stage of study   | Undertake to observe the rules and regulations outlined in the SNMCI College and Programme handbooks  |
| Details, in a timely fashion, of any changes made to programme schedules.  | Demonstrate initiative, communicate their needs and be committed to fostering an environment of openness and enjoyment                            |
| Equal opportunities to participate in activities at the College.   | Take ownership of their student representation within the College   |
|  | Make the most of their time in the College 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.                            |
| Information regarding submission of assignments and any late penalties that may apply                                    | Read e-mails from programme staff and submit all written assignments and other coursework within the specified time limits                        |
| Information on attendance  | Make their best attempt at each element of assessment in each module of their programme.  |
| Clear explanations of unacceptable academic behaviour e.g. plagiarism and guidelines on academic integrity               | Respect the rights of others in all learning spaces.  |
| That College programmes will be regularly reviewed   | Actively engage in their own learning to develop their own professional identity in partnership with SNMCI  |
| Opportunities to offer feedback  | Offer feedback when requested   |
| <b>INTERPERSONAL ENVIRONMENT</b>   | <b>INTERPERSONAL ENVIRONMENT</b>  |
| To be treated with courtesy and respect in all their 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, Schools and/or Teachers Association) into disrepute</b> |
| To have learning needs met as far as is reasonably practicable.  | Take care that their interpersonal communications in both physical and virtual environments are respectful of others at all times                 |
| To have clear and regular communication through email, face to face meetings, zoom and/or by telephone with Academic and | Be ambassadors of SNMCI and advocates of Montessori philosophy.   |



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|   |  |
|---|--|
| Administrative staff.   |  |
| To have access to any personal data held by SNMCI, as provided for under Data Protection and Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation | Initiate and respond to regular communication through email, face to face meetings, zoom and/or by telephone from Academic and Administrative staff, in a respectful manner.                         |
| That personal information will remain confidential; to be released to a third party only with consent, or by legal requirement.       | Use the appropriate College channels for managing grievances and complaints and refrain from discussing these issues on public platforms, thereby maintaining their own and the College's good name. |
| <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 and ever evolving virtual learning environment, keeping pace with programmes and best practice in the sector.            | Make use of the digital learning environment when seeking information on all academic issues.  |
| Access to the physical library and all electronic databases necessary for full engagement with their programme of study.              | Use the physical library and all electronic databases offered 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 and use it for identification purposes if requested by any staff member and for use of all College 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 support and encourage participation in the 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 such supports as may be required/ available.  | 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.   |



## 1.6 Behaviour Expectations: In Person and Online

### 1.6.1 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.

### 1.6.2 Mobile Phones /Social Media (See Netiquette below)

Lecturers have spent a great deal of time and effort in preparing each lecture/study session. Please be respectful of this and give them, your fellow classmates, and the task at hand your full attention by using your phone/tablet/lap-top appropriately. Ideally phones should be switched off prior to the lecture, whether you are in a face-to-face session or online, if they are not needed as part of the lesson e.g. typing notes or following downloaded material. 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.

It is not appropriate to use your phone/tablet/lap-top to:-

- Check your emails
- Check your Social Media page
- Tweet
- Text etc.

#### **Social Media:**

Please be careful and respectful in your use of Social Media as an SNMCI student.

**Note: There is no privacy online and your posts once uploaded are publically and widely available. Write accordingly!!**

Be mindful that as a student of SNMCI you have a role in maintaining and enhancing the reputation of the College. Your award is attached to the good name of the College. Any and all references to classmates, staff and College life should be courteous and respectful at all times.

**Note:** This also extends to any practice placement you engage in as part of your studies. The staff and children with whom you interact on placement MUST NOT BE identifiable in your posts. An indiscreet post (verbal, written, photographic etc.) constitutes a serious breach of good practice and is a disciplinary matter.



### 1.6.3 Communication and Data Protection

#### Communicating by E-mail (See Netiquette below)

E-mail is the most useful and efficient way of communicating between staff and students. You will be assigned an e-mail address on registration. Please check this account regularly as this is the primary way in which all programme communications will be made. When communicating by email please insert a 'signature' line showing your programme and stage, e.g. *Mary Smith, B.Ed Montessori Stage 2*

**Note:** Your Programme Director is **your link** with the College.

### 1.6.4 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 (please see pp21-24 of the College's [Health and Safety Statement](#)).

### 1.6.5 Student recording

**No student may record either audio or video** in any SNMCI teaching, Learning and Assessment situation (lecture, laboratory, workshop, presentation, tutorial, seminar etc.) without **a)** a formal request being submitted and **b)** written permission and consent from all involved. This consent must come through the **Learner Support Office** and will only be considered where there are **documented** personal mitigating circumstances for a student.

### 1.6.6 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 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 are 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 are working online, you are 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 is not an instant messenger like you would use with friends. Treat it like **the learning tool** it is 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 your 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 are offended by something another student says online, keep in mind that you may have misunderstood their intentions. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

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 a communal learning experience.

## 1.7 General Programme Information

### 1.7.1 Attendance

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

### 1.7.2 Fees

The Accounts Office is responsible for the administration of Fees & Grants for all students in St Nicholas Montessori College Ireland and its primary function is the setting and collection



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of all student fees due to the College. International learners are subject to international fees.

All student queries with regard to fees, grants, payment plans etc. should be made directly to, or redirected to, the Accounts Office [accounts@smsi.ie](mailto:accounts@smsi.ie). Please note that the College reserves the right to review fees annually.

### Supports:

- SNMCI accepts learners who are eligible to apply for fee support under the **SUSI Grant Scheme**.
- Where learners are not paying fees in full, SNMCI will provide a **payment schedule** to accommodate learners where possible.
- **We urge all students to engage with us re any issues related to fees and to contact the accounts department to discuss any unexpected personal financial issues related to fee payment.**

**Note:** Students are required to be in good financial standing with SNMCI at all times. If you experience unforeseen financial difficulties please let us know! Non-payment of fees, or arrears, may incur sanctions and in cases where learners **have not engaged with the College** re the issue of outstanding fees, SNMCI reserves the right to seek the assistance of third parties to recover the outstanding amounts.

Where a learner's payment of fees falls into arrears and **no attempt at communication or agreement has been made** by the learner, SNMCI retains the right to withdraw certain facilities.

- If the payment of arrears is not cleared by the end of class contact within each semester the Accounts Department will notify Programme Directors and the Examinations Office.
- The following sanctions may apply:
  - o The learner will not be permitted to sit any end of semester written examinations.
  - o In the case of those seeking to progress, the learner will not be advised of her/ his examination results and therefore, will not be allowed to register for subsequent stages until such time as all arrears have been cleared.
  - o In the case of the Award Stage, the learner will not be advised of her/ his examinations results and will not be allowed to graduate.

Please see [QA 3.9: Fees](#) for the full policy and procedure related to fees.

### **Refunds:** [QA 3.10: Refunds Policy](#)

SNMCI is mindful that extenuating circumstances can and do occasionally impact on a learner's educational plans and it is our policy to support learners experiencing exceptional circumstances, where possible. SNMCI strives to process any refund granted, as quickly as possible.



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**The awarding of a refund based on extenuating circumstances is at the discretion of the CEO.** Where a refund is approved under exceptional extenuating circumstances, the payment for an “approved” amount will be returned to the source of payment.

**No refund** will be made to learners who register on a programme, and subsequently **fail to attend classes and/or who withdraw and do not finish the scheduled programme/short course.**

**International learners** who have pre-paid and **whose visa is refused** are entitled to a refund of full fees paid, minus a €200 administration and registration charge.

SNMCI is legally bound to make contact with the relevant Irish Immigration Authorities (INS/GNIB) to inform them of the withdrawal or failure to attend of any international learner on a student visa.

In the unlikely event of cancellation of a particular programme, short course or bridging programme, pre-paid fees will be refunded (please see [QA 9.2: Protection of Enrolled Learners](#))

### 1.7.3 Withdrawal from a programme of study

Where a student decides to leave a programme s/he is required to complete a “Withdrawal Form” and return it to the Head of Registrations and Examinations, Stephen Corkery [stephen.corkery@smsi.ie](mailto:stephen.corkery@smsi.ie). Programme management will then be notified that you have officially withdrawn from your programme.

**Note: If you have decided to leave, it is important that you officially withdraw from your programme through the registrations office, so that your withdrawal is correctly recorded on the College’s registration system.**

**Failure to follow the correct withdrawal process may have implications for any future attempts to register on any programme, in any other college.**

### 1.7.4 Progression through a programme of study

Progression decisions (i.e. whether a student may progress to the next stage of a programme or in the case of award year, graduate) are informed by assessment designed for that purpose. In line with QQI Assessment and Standards SNMCI looks to ‘how’ and ‘if’ each learner has met the ‘minimum intended learning outcomes’ of each module on a particular stage.

Subject to any special conditions of the programme, there are 3 exceptions to the general requirement of **passing all the required modules** in order to progress to **the next stage**.

These are:

- pass by compensation
- exemption from part of the programme (with or without the allocation of a grade and credit)
- eligibility to progress **carrying** the failed modules to be passed during the subsequent stage

| Exception           | QQI Assessment and Standards  |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Compensation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The learner has been assessed for all stage modules and no module in the stage has been failed outright (below 35%).</li> <li>- The results of all modules in the stage are from first attempts.</li> <li>- In the case of full-time learners, the results are from the same sitting (session).</li> <li>- The overall credit-weighted excesses of percentage marks (over 40) is greater than or equal to twice the stage-aggregate of credit-weighted deficits of marks (under 40).</li> <li>- The potentially 'compensatable' results account for no more than one-third of the credit for the stage: i.e. 20 credits in a 60-credit stage.</li> <li>- Compensation does not change the result of the modules passed in that way. When reporting module passes by compensation (on the Diploma Supplement), the actual result is returned, e.g. 37% along with an indication that the module pass has been granted by compensation.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Exemption</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A learner may be exempted from participating in a module if he/she has already attained the minimum intended module learning outcomes. The demonstrable prior learning should be a sufficiently good match to the minimum intended module learning outcomes to justify exemption from the module in the context of the overall programme. (See RPL)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Carrying</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On a case-by-case basis and under exceptional circumstances, a learner may be permitted to carry a failed module while progressing to the next stage, provided the module <b>is not a prerequisite for any module in this stage.</b></li> <li>- Learners are required to pass a carried module in the stage into which it is carried. The normal maximum missing credit should be 16% of the credit for the stage, e.g. 10 ECTS per 60 ECTS stage.</li> </ul>  |

### 1.7.5 Garda Vetting

All incoming students are required to comply with the College's Garda Vetting procedure to determine whether they are suitable for practice placements (where applicable). Students must:-

- Complete the Garda Vetting Form honestly and in full. Please note that a failure to disclose a criminal conviction is a serious breach of SNMCI regulations and will be interpreted as an attempt to deceive the College. A criminal conviction may not automatically make a student unsuitable for placement, but a failure to disclose any such issue gives the College the right to cancel registration.
- Students on programmes of education where placement is a core element will not be allowed to begin placement until the vetting process is complete.
- Although previous Garda vetting documentation may be available, SNMCI is obliged to conduct its own GV process independently.
- Overseas vetting. It is the personal responsibility of International students or students who have lived abroad for more than 6 continuous months to obtain police clearance from that country or countries

### 1.7.6 Data Protection

SNMCI complies with its obligations under the Data Protection (DP) Act 2018 and the EU wide General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as it is recognized under Irish law. DP aims to protect individuals' rights to privacy as it applies to the processing of personal data in all formats. Please see [QA 8.2: Privacy Policy](#) for full details

- SNMCI does not give out information concerning individual students to any person, including other students seeking such information. We cannot give out students' contact details (e-mail addresses, phone numbers, home addresses) to other students
- SNMCI does not supply home or personal contact details for staff members.

[See QA 8.2 Privacy Policy](#)

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

European Credit Transfer System (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** study over one academic year is 60 ECTS

The norm for **part-time** study over one academic year is 45 ECTS

**Note:** Evening students on FT programmes completing the same workload as day students will also complete 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.

QQI is an independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. It was established in 2012 by the [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012](#). The information leaflet [QQI - Who we are and what we do](#) provides an overview of QQI services and the organisations they work with.

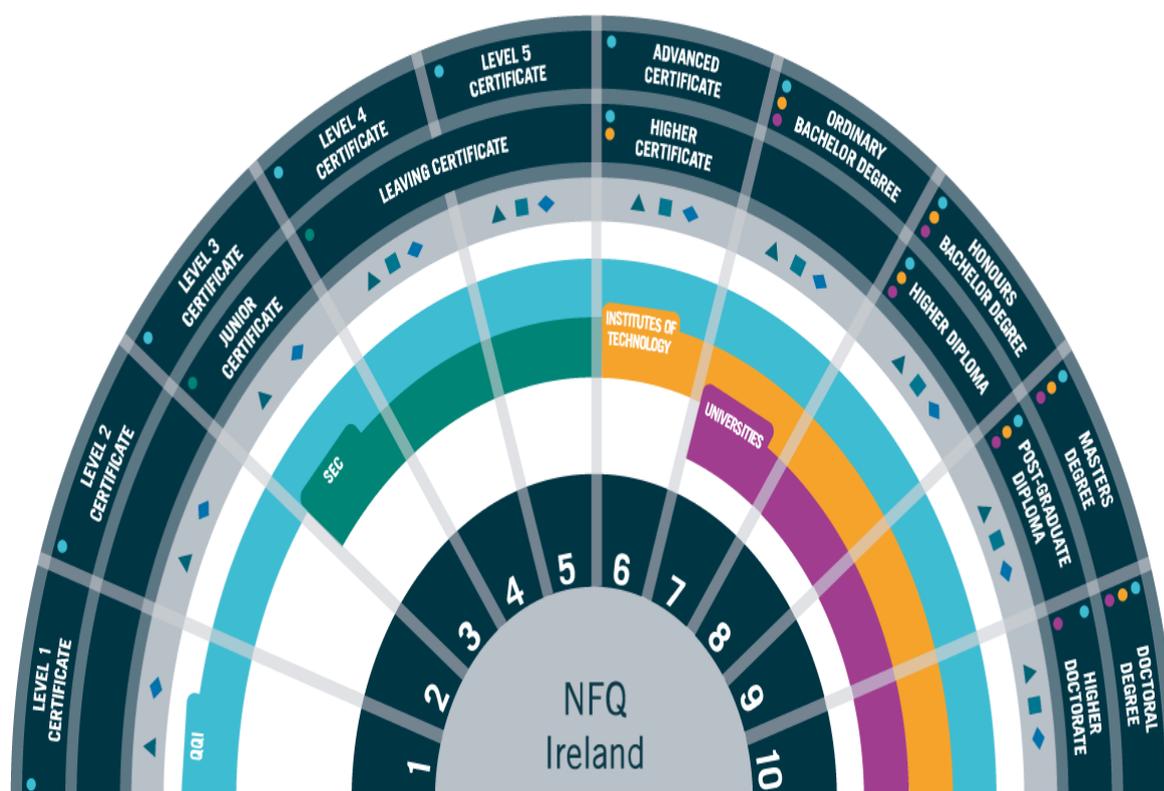




### The National Framework of Qualifications

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 NFQ, 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 NFQ are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence. Because all NFQ 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 NFQ. QQI also facilitate the recognition of foreign qualifications.



## 1.9 Recognition of Prior Learning

**Recognition of Prior Learning** - Recognition of Prior Learning is a term used to denote an assessment process conducted for initial entry or advanced entry onto a programme of study where credit/ exemptions may be granted to the applicant.

Prior Learning can be recognised in two ways:

**1. Prior Certified Learning (PCL)** is where an applicant has already achieved a recognised qualification for a formal programme or module of study. It is learning that has already been accredited by an awarding body e.g. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), a University or an Institute of Technology, nationally and/or internationally.

PCL may entitle the applicant to:

- a) **Admission** (with conditions) to a programme or course of study.
- b) **Admission** (with conditions) to an advanced stage of a programme.
- c) **Exemptions** from **modules** on a programme.

**2. Prior Experiential Learning (PEL)** denotes knowledge or skills acquired through life, work experience, and study not supported by formal accreditation.

Where **Prior Certified Learning** is the basis for RPL, the applicant is **required** to produce evidence of the certified learning which may include the following:

- Transcript of results;
- Syllabi of previous modules/ subjects;



- Past exam papers where appropriate;

SNMCI **MUST** be satisfied that the evidence presented demonstrates the learning that has been achieved prior to admission onto its programme.

Where **Prior Experiential Learning** is the basis for RPL, the applicant is **required** to produce a portfolio of evidence which may include the following:

- References from previous employers;
- CV, outlining career, voluntary work etc.;
- Job descriptions and experiences, verified by an employer;
- Details of any 'on the job' training, supported by certificates for qualifications, training courses etc.;
- Professional licenses/registrations or membership of professional organisations; (See Procedure below)

Such applications may also require learners to complete the assessment for the module/s in question.

### **RPL Committee:**

The College has an RPL Committee which convenes as required throughout the year to review applications for the purpose of entry and modular exemptions.

It is the applicant's responsibility to apply for the RPCL in advance of the programme commencement. If a decision has not been received before the commencement of the programme, applicants must continue to attend class until a decision has been made (and written confirmation received) on whether the exemption is granted or not.

### **Results**

When approved, the outcome of the RPL process, irrespective of the source, PCL or PEL, will lead to the result EXEMPTION GRANTED in the non-award stage by the Examinations Board.

### **RPL in Award Stage**

Exemptions are not allowed in the Award Stage of any programme. Any module which forms the basis of award classification must be marked/ graded for that purpose.

Please see

[QA 3.6: Recognition of Prior Learning](#) and

[QA 3.7: Terms of Reference of the RPL Committee](#) for further details.

### **International Qualifications**

Applicants seeking RPCL on the basis of foreign qualifications should contact Qualifications Recognition ([www.qualificationsrecognition.ie](http://www.qualificationsrecognition.ie)) to have their qualifications aligned with the appropriate Irish qualification. If any of the evidence submitted as part of this process is not available in English, then it must be translated and stamped by a translation service. The onus is on each applicant to ensure that the information submitted is accurate.



## 1.10 Academic Calendar 2021-2022

| Month  | Week Beginning                                     | Item  |
|--|--|---|
| July 2021  | 05/07/21   | Primary Teachers EPV programme (Special Education /micro credential possible)                                 |
|  |  | Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> Review Board Bridging Programme  |
|  | 12/07/21   | Primary Teachers EPV programme (Building Resilience) TBC  |
|  |  | <b>Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> 3.00 pm Academic Board (5/2020-2021)</b>   |
|  | 26/07/21   | <b>Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 42<sup>nd</sup> AGM: St Nicholas Montessori Society Ireland (7.00 p.m.)</b> |
| Aug 2021   | 02/08/21   | Summer Bridging Week 1 (3 <sup>rd</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> ) online                            |
|  | 09/08/21   | Summer Bridging Week 2: In- house   |
|  |  | <b>Autumn Exams: Session One /10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup></b>                             |
|  | 16/08/21   | Summer Bridging Week 3: In -house   |
|  | 23/08/21   | Summer Bridging Week 4 (24 <sup>th</sup> /26 <sup>th</sup> /28 <sup>th</sup> ) online                         |
|  |  | <b>Staff CPD: Thursday Aug 26<sup>th</sup> Staff CPD (10.00-12.00 and 1.00-3.00) Facilitator Steve Welsh</b>  |
| <b>Friday Aug 27<sup>th</sup> Mock panel for B.Ed. Primary</b> |  |   |
| 30/08/21   | RPL Committee                                      |   |
|  | Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> MED Cohort 1 Graduation    |   |
|  | Tue 31 <sup>st</sup> : BAPSY Programme Meeting TBC |   |
| Sep 2021   |  | <b>September 3<sup>rd</sup> A QQI validation event for B. Ed (Hons) Primary</b>                               |
|  | 06/09/21   | RPL Committee/ on going   |
|  |  | Wednesday/Thursday Sep 8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> : BAH Montessori Programme Meeting/s                  |
|  |  | <b>Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> 2.00 pm Autumn Exam Board</b>  |
|  |  | <b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup> Montessori Masterclass (Language MO'C)</b>  |
|  | 13/09/21   | Examination recheck and appeals   |
|  |  | <b>Induction Week: All programmes</b>   |
|  |  | <b>Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board (1/2020-2021)</b>                          |
|  |  | <b>Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> A QQI Differential Validation Event</b>   |
|  |  | <b>Friday 17<sup>th</sup> Montessori Masterclass (G&amp;A/MO'C)</b>   |
|  | 20/09/21   | RPL Committee (modular only)  |
|  |  | <b>Monday 20<sup>th</sup> Teaching Week 1</b>   |
| Oct 2021   | 04/10/21   | Monday Oct 4 <sup>th</sup> : <i>Montessori Education for Dementia</i> Induction                               |
|  |  | Friday/Saturday/Oct 8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> : <i>Montessori Education for Dementia</i> Workshop/s    |
|  |  | Monday Oct 11 <sup>th</sup> : <i>Montessori Education for Dementia</i> programme                              |
|  | 11/10/21   | <b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> 2.00 pm QQI Quality update meeting</b>   |
|  |  | <b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> 3.00pm Academic Board Meeting (1/2021-2022)</b>                                    |
|  | 18/10/21   | RPL Committee /on going   |
|  |  | Student Council Events (TBC)  |
|  | 25/10/21   | Reading week  |
| Nov 2021   | 08/11/21   | Special Education Placement Week 1 BAH  |
|  |  | B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 1  |
|  |  | <b>Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> Virtual Open Evening : All Programmes</b>   |
|  |  | <b>Monday 8<sup>th</sup> Quality Enhancement Committee (1/2021-2022)</b>                                      |



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|           |                      |   |
|-----------|----------------------|---|
|           | 15/11/21             | Special Ed Placement Week 2 BAH<br>B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 2<br>Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> Graduation (if in –person)   |
|           | 22/11/21             | Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> Graduation (if online)<br>B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 3  |
| Dec 2021  | 06/12/21             | St Nicholas Night: School and College Christmas Market Events (TBC)   |
|           | 13/12/21             | <b>End of Semester summative assessment/exams/presentations (programme specific) Session One</b><br>Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> BAH Montessori Mid -Year Review<br>Christmas Student Event/s (TBC)       |
|           | 20/12/21             | Christmas Holidays  |
| Jan 2022  | 03/01/22             | Staff return<br><b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board (2/2020-2021)</b><br>Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> B. Ed (Hons) Montessori Mid-Year Review                                |
|           | 10/01/22             | RPL Committee (modular only)<br>Prep Week/Correcting Week<br><b>Mid-Year Exams: Session Two</b><br>Jan 5 <sup>th</sup> : B. Ed (Hons) Montessori Mid -Year Review                                       |
|           | 17/01/22             | Teaching Commences – Semester 2<br><b>Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> 3.00pm Academic Board Meeting (2/2021-2022)</b>   |
|           | 24/01/22             | Jan Exam Review Board<br>Semester 1 results<br><b>Monday 24<sup>th</sup> Quality Enhancement Committee (2/2021-2022)</b>  |
| Feb 2022  | 31/01/22             | Virtual Open Evening: Bridging Programme (3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb )   |
|           | 21/02/22             | Reading Week<br>BAH   |
|           | 28/02/22             | Observation week BAH / B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 4<br>RPL Committee (Bridging)   |
| Mar 2022  | 14/03/22             | Mar 18 <sup>th</sup> Bridging programmes /BAH/B.Ed Montessori Placement BAH/ B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 5   |
|           | 21/03/22             | Placement BAH/ B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 6<br><b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> Teaching, Learning and Assessment Board (3/2020-2021)</b>  |
|           | 28/03/22             | Placement BAH/ B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 7   |
| Apr 2022  | 04/04/22             | Placement BAH/ B.Ed Montessori Placement Week 8   |
|           | 11/04/22             | Easter Holidays   |
|           | 18/04/22             | Easter Holidays<br><b>Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> 3.00pm Academic Board Meeting (3/2021-2022)</b>   |
| May 2022  | 02/05/22             | Reading Week  |
|           | 09/05/22             | Presentation Week<br><b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> Quality Enhancement Committee (3/2021-2022)</b>   |
|           | 16/05/22<br>23/05/22 | <b>Summer Exams: Session Three</b><br>Student Event (TBC)<br>Thursday May 5 <sup>th</sup> : BAH Montessori Programme Meeting<br>Friday May 20 <sup>th</sup> : B. Ed (Hons) Montessori Programme Meeting |
|           | 30/05/22             | Virtual Open Evening: Bridging Programme (2 <sup>nd</sup> June)<br>BAH Interviews   |
| June 2022 | 20/06/22             | Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June Summer Exam Board  |
|           | 27/06/22             | <b>Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> 3.00pm Academic Board Meeting (4/2021-2022)</b>  |



# SECTION TWO





## 2 Supports and Resources

### 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 programme, 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
- Read the Attendance Policy

#### **FYI: SMSI has**

- A Learner Support Officer (LSO)
- A Student Health and Well-being Hotline Service; 'Health Assured'

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

**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! Ask for help! Don't let small problems become big ones
- Attend class!
- Attend placement!

## 2.2 Erasmus



# Erasmus+

**Erasmus+ 2021-2027** is the recently updated programme for education, training, youth and sport. This new version places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life. It is aimed at boosting skills, employability and supporting the modernisation of education, training and youth systems. The programme has a budget of €26.2 billion, nearly doubling previous levels and it offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in higher education and vocational education and training.

**Mobility** of learners and staff is the flagship activity of Erasmus+. About 10 million individuals, including students, learners, professors, teachers and trainers in all sectors, are expected to participate in mobility activities abroad during the course of the programme.

Through the unique experience of living, studying, training or travelling abroad, participants gain self-confidence and soft skills, discover different cultures and build networks of interpersonal and professional relationships with people from other countries. This fosters their employability and active participation in society, and contributes to greater social inclusion and a strengthened European identity. With more flexible mobility format and duration, higher education students will have even more opportunities to study or to carry out a traineeship in Europe and beyond.

### **Erasmus + at SNMCI:**

SNMCI has been part of the Erasmus system for more than 15 years. Many of our lecturers have travelled abroad and we have welcomed visiting lecturers. Our students have travelled to Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and Turkey, among other destinations and we have welcomed students on study visits from Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey.

**Erasmus + at SNMCI** allows **second year students** to study for a minimum of one semester in another Higher Education Institute in Europe and SNMCI welcomes European students for study visits. Students study on a programme similar to their own which is recognised as fulfilling their programme requirements at home. It also allows, when possible, for SNMCI faculty to teach in other institutes and for the opportunity to welcome guest lecturers to St Nicholas.

At SNMCI, the mobility happens in the second semester for **second-year students**. Each September at an information session the previous year's Erasmus students talk about their experiences and application forms are available for the coming year. Interviews occur in October and students are informed of the outcome at the end of October. Please see the College website for further information or you may contact the International Officer.

**E-mail: Brid Hannan [brid.hannan@smsi.ie](mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie)**



## 2.3 Supports

### 2.3.1 Key Support roles at SNMCI

| NAME             | ROLE                                    | CONTACT DETAILS  |
|------------------|---|--|
| Stephen Corkery  | Head of Examinations and Registrations  | <a href="mailto:stephen.corkery@smsi.ie">stephen.corkery@smsi.ie</a> |
| Ciara O’Cathain  | College Receptionist                    | <a href="mailto:ciara.ocathain@smsi.ie">ciara.ocathain@smsi.ie</a>   |
| Irina Pochinkova | Accounts Manager                        | <a href="mailto:accounts@smsi.ie">accounts@smsi.ie</a>               |
| Audrey Johnston  | Learner Support Officer                 | <a href="mailto:audrey.johnston@smsi.ie">audrey.johnston@smsi.ie</a> |
| Edris Azizi      | IT Manager                              | <a href="mailto:itsupport@smsi.ie">itsupport@smsi.ie</a>             |
| Steve Welsh      | Instructional Designer                  | <a href="mailto:steve.welsh@smsi.ie">steve.welsh@smsi.ie</a>         |
| Bríd Hannan      | Student Engagement and Outreach Officer | <a href="mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie">brid.hannan@smsi.ie</a>         |

### 2.3.2 Programme Team

Each programme of the College has a **Programme Director (PD) Deputy Programme Director/s (DPD)** (where applicable) and a **Programme Manager (PM)** who have responsibility for the day to day running of the programme.

You will meet the PD/DPD/PM on induction day.

The PD’s and DPD’s are the primary contact people for issues relating to **the academic content and delivery of the programme**. Students will engage with Programme Managers for administrative tasks.

Members of this team will meet you on induction day (in person or online as applicable) and provide you with 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 redirected 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.

**Note: The College is transitioning to a new system called OPEN/SYS. This is a staged event. Some programmes will be entering /moving to the new system and some programmes will remain on Moodle. Details available at Induction from the Programme Directors and Instructional Designer.**

### 2.3.3 Learner Support Officer

The role of the **Learner Support Officer (LSO)**, at St Nicholas Montessori College, is to **support learners who are experiencing difficulties that are affecting or are likely to affect their learning**.

Learners:-

- self-refer;
- are referred by the Programme Director;



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- are referred by a lecturer or supervisors or
- are invited to attend by the Learner Support Officer.

Some reasons why learners might attend the Learner Support Officer are:

- to seek advice about coping in College while dealing with personal issues such as bereavement or illness
- to seek pastoral care support
- to seek help organising their study schedule
- to get advice regarding technology that will support their particular learning needs
- to discuss study strategies that will complement their learning style
- to get advice regarding making an application for Special Considerations
- to get advice regarding the maternity/paternity policy and support plan
- to get support regarding management of emergency health protocols

It is advised that learners seek advice at the earliest opportunity.

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

### 2.3.4 Supports for Students with Additional Needs

Learners with Additional Needs

The following are examples of accommodations that may be provided by SNMCI to students with specific learning needs:

- Extra time to complete examinations (in-house)
- Dictation / scribe in exams (in-house)
- Use of a laptop
- A reader pen in exams (in-house)
- Enlarged print to A3 size
- Smaller or separate examination rooms (when available)
- Rest period during examinations
- Spelling and grammar waiver (examinations only)

**Note:** SNMCI will endeavour to meet the needs of students within its capacity to do so.

#### **Registering for supports for additional needs:**

**Note:** It is important that students with specific physical or learning needs declare them at the beginning of their studies, so that any assistance available can be offered.

Any assessment of additional support needs will be based upon an appropriate report from a relevant expert such as a medical consultant or educational psychologist.



Learners may:

- Make application for Special Considerations by completing FQA 6.13 Special Considerations and sending it along with existing documentation to the Head of Examinations and Registrations Stephen Corkery [stephen.corkery@smsi.ie](mailto:stephen.corkery@smsi.ie)
- Discuss their additional needs with the Learner Support Officer Audrey Johnston [audrey.johnston@smsi.ie](mailto:audrey.johnston@smsi.ie) who will offer advice on making an application for Special Considerations

**Note:** All information is considered confidential and only shared with relevant members of staff e.g. HoE; LSO. Where it is considered necessary to include other staff members the student's permission will be obtained.

### 2.3.5 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.

### 2.3.6 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.

**Moodle:** 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)

### 2.3.7 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.



### 2.3.8 The Library

Details of opening times and online availability will be available from Programme Directors for this academic year 2021-2022. Due to the on-going COVID situation there may be additional requirements e.g. limiting numbers in the library at any one time and time limits on study sessions etc. This will be continually monitored to minimise restrictions while observing all government health and safety guidelines. Programme Directors will update as available.

### 2.3.9 Appeals

Learners may formally challenge decisions of any 'decision –making 'Board or Committee of the College e.g. Admissions Committee, RPL Committee, Complaints Committee, Disciplinary Committee. For full information on the appeals process please see....

[QA 7.11 Learner Appeals](#) and Form **FQA 7.11** Appeals Form

[QA 7.12: Assessment Appeals](#) and Form **FQA 7.12** Assessment Appeals Form

### 2.3.10 Complaints

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, or between fellow students, it is SNMCI policy to have a fair and accessible Learner Complaints policy and procedure, in recognition of a person's right to express a complaint in the event they feel they have been unfairly treated or disadvantaged, as a result of the service provided by SNMCI, or the actions and behaviours of a member of College staff or student body.

We strongly recommend that, in the first instance, the **student speaks to the person directly** whether staff or fellow student, where both parties can discuss the issue in an open and honest manner with willingness to seek a quick and fair resolution.

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.

[QA 7.7 Learner Complaints: TOR Complaints Committee](#) policy and procedure and Form **FQA 7.7** Complaints Form for Learners enables issues of complaint **a)** to be brought to the attention of the College and **b)** to be investigated with the aim of a satisfactory resolution. The Complaints Policy allows for a formal process for complaints that cannot be resolved informally.



### 2.3.11 Deferrals

At SNMCI learners may apply for two types of deferral:

#### a) Programme Deferral

The postponement of a programme of study (prior to registration) until the next available commencement

or

The postponement of a stage of a programme (subsequent to registration) until the next available commencement

#### b) Module Deferral

The postponement of a module(s) (attendance and assessment) until the next available commencement

or

The postponement of a module(s) (assessment only) until the next available sitting

**Programme Deferral** (prior to registration and post offer) is granted for a maximum of ONE academic year.

**Stage Deferral** is at the discretion of the Programme Director. Learners applying for stage deferral should be of good academic standing and have completed the previous stage. Stage deferrals are granted for a maximum of ONE academic year. For full information on the deferral process please see....

[QA 3.12 Deferrals](#) and Form **FQA 3.12 A: Defer Stage Form**. See Student Information on Moodle

**Module Deferral** is at the discretion of the Programme Director. Module deferrals are granted for a maximum of ONE academic year and applications for this type of deferral must be made within two weeks of the beginning of the semester. For full information on the deferral of a module process please see....

[QA 3.12 Deferrals](#) and Form **FQA 3.12 B: Defer Module Form**. See Student Information on Moodle

Within the module deferral process and in the case of deferral of **assessment only** the Programme Director can grant a deferral of assessment until the next available sitting on the following grounds:

- **Illness:**
- **Bereavement:**
- **Mitigating Circumstances:**

Application should be made on Form FQA 3.12 C. Assessment Deferral/Mitigating Circumstances Form See Student Information on Moodle

Deferral of assessment is granted until the next available sitting.



### **2.3.12 Protection of Enrolled Learners**

The Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 contains provisions for the protection of learners enrolled in programmes of education and training (Part 6, S. 64-67).

The legislation **applies to all education providers** (other than those specifically exempt under legislation) and to any course of 3 month duration or longer where fees have been charged.

QQI has developed protocols to facilitate providers in the fulfilment of their legal obligations with regard to PEL. These protocols apply in various ways to different categories of provider, depending on their relationship with QQI.

As summarised by QQI, the 2012 Acts seeks to ensure that:

- (1) Learners have an opportunity to complete a programme leading to an award
- (2) Learners are refunded the moneys most recently paid if a programme ends before they complete it
- (3) Learners are provided with adequate and accurate information about the programme that they wish to pursue and about the protection in place for them in event that the programme ceases prior to their completion. (Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for the Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act)

SNMCI, along with other private colleges, is participating in the Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA) PEL scheme.

The HECA PEL scheme is accepted by QQI for the purposes of compliance with Section 65 of the 2012 Act.

Under this scheme, SNMCI programmes are 'bonded' by two other HECA member colleges. This bonding is also complemented by a Trust Fund, where 2% of annual fee income is being set aside to provide financial support to those nominated colleges.

#### **What does this mean?**

This means that in the event of SNMCI not being able to provide your programme for any reason, including cessation of trading or withdrawal of validation, learners will be able to continue with their studies in other higher education institutions with the minimum amount of disruption.

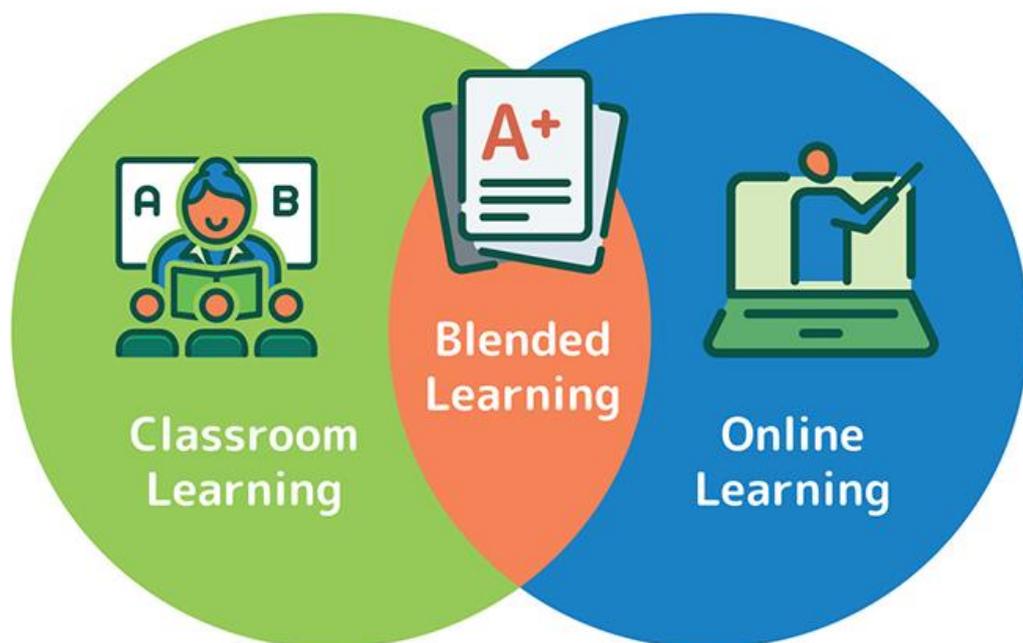
For further information please see....

#### **[QA 9.2 Protection of Enrolled Learners](#)**



# SECTION THREE

## Blended Learning





### 3 SNMCI and Blended Learning Status

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.

The strategic plan to embed a blended learning strategy across the College, as a contingency for future market driven or government driven directives, was expedited during the COVID 19 pandemic and, during the past eighteen months, SNMCI has made great strides towards achieving this strategic goal.

- As part of a sector wide reengagement process SNMCI's QA policies and procedures were approved by the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) in April 2020. This included SNMCI's initial blended and online learning policies.
- In August 2020 SNMCI had a further review of its QA procedures for Blended Learning and was granted Blended Learning Status by the QQI Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) in October 2020.
- Blended Learning will be considered in the development stage of all new programmes as appropriate to the programme discipline
- The College is applying for modifications to existing face-to-face programmes to incorporate blended aspects. These modifications will extend beyond the current permissions to proceed with blended elements during the COVID 19 pandemic.

#### 3.1 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 of Blended Learning 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;
  - the nature of the teaching and learning activities;
  - the capacity of the organisation;
  - the engagement of learners, learner needs;
  - Academic approaches to teaching; confidence and experience in using technology and willingness to develop teaching and learning skills in this area.

### **3.2 Blended Learning at SNMCI**

SNMCI began its blended journey with the introduction of its VLE Moodle which enhanced communication and a range of administrative functions. This was Blended Learning at a basic stage of supply of resources and administrative functions. During COVID 19 the College, as all other colleges, functioned in a predominantly online mode.

Going forward the College does not envisage a move to ‘full’ online mode for major programmes, where the complementary benefits of e-learning and the human face –to-face component are evident.

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

Blended learning programmes at St. Nicholas leverage several of the most widely-used educational technology platforms across higher education: Zoom for video conferencing/live sessions; the Google Workplace suite for email, filesharing and asynchronous collaboration; and Moodle for its Learning Management System (LMS). These are the three main technology components of the blended learning infrastructure.

Accessibility is a key concern and we strive to keep the technological barriers as low as possible. Students are expected to supply their own standard computer (Window or Apple). Live sessions require the use of a camera, microphone, and sufficient internet bandwidth to participate in a live stream. Each of the above-mentioned platforms is free to students, and compatible with both Windows and Mac operating systems. Many students choose to use their mobile devices to participate in live lectures. Where smartphones are insufficient to adequately fulfil research and writing requirements, students also have access to College computers.

### Blended Learning Programme Technology Infrastructure



1. Zoom: Videoconferencing and live sessions.



2. Google Drive: Document production and collaboration



3. Moodle: Learning Management System (LMS)

Students are introduced to these technologies through their respective induction programmes, during which our Instructional Designer is introduced and addresses the incoming students. The College has a useful “Blended Learning Induction Programme” (BLIP) to introduce all learners to blended learning and a specific ‘Using Learning Technologies’ programme delivered during induction. Students are also encouraged to reach out to the Instructional Designer (academic) and the IT Officer (functional) for direct support when needed.

You can see the student-facing technology requirements resource here on the SMSI website: [smsi.ie/blended-learning-tech-requirements](https://smsi.ie/blended-learning-tech-requirements)

**Note:** As an alternative to using the Google Drive suite for producing documents (Docs), spreadsheets (Sheets), and presentations (Slides), many students opt to use the Microsoft Office Suite. This is not a required technology for students, but those wishing to use the Office Suite (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) to produce their work are accommodated. We have provided students with documentation clarifying the interoperability of the Office Suite and Google Workspace.

### 3.3 Useful Definitions

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Bended Learning:</b>       | Blended Learning is the combination of traditional, face-to-face learning methods with technology-based online learning methods.  |
| <b>Virtual Classroom:</b>     | 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.  |
| <b>Synchronous Learning:</b>  | When learners participate in an online learning programme at <b>the same time</b> 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. |
| <b>Asynchronous Learning:</b> | When learners participate in online learning <b>at different times</b> , 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.  |
| <b>Streaming:</b>             | Streaming refers to video and audio that is <b>downloaded</b> to a computer as it is happening  |
| <b>Blog/Vlog</b>              | A digital entry platform for recording thoughts, assignments, digital content, etc. Can be used as a tool for reflection or logging, with text or video, the experiences of the individual. Blogs usually have a specific topic that they always touch upon and are updated within a certain timeframe.   |
| <b>Discussion Forum</b>       | An online place of meeting for discussion of class content. Usually the content is separated out into categories and users discuss which topics interest them or topics that have been assigned.  |
| <b>Flipped classroom</b>      | A type of teaching which aims to increase student engagement by assigning 'homework' e.g. readings/videos etc. which is then used as a base for 'live' discussion/problem solving in class.   |
| <b>Podcast</b>                | Video and/or audio recordings of an individual. A podcast is in the similar category of lecture capturing except that it generally has a more niche topic and audience.   |
| <b>Instructional Design</b>   | Instructional design involves the assessment of needs and the designing of processes, development of materials etc. to meet these needs   |
| <b>Instructional Designer</b> | An instructional designer identifies the needs and performance issues of a targeted audience and determines the best approaches for meeting the audience's needs and improving performance. An ID may e.g. design instructional management systems; evaluate new eLearning materials; create educational podcasts, videos and content; train others on how to deliver learning material; research new innovations in both learning design and education |
| <b>Video Conferencing</b>     | Video conferencing refers to the use of video technology (both hardware and software) to create a virtual meeting between two or more people in different physical locations. Participants can see and hear each other through this technology.   |
| <b>Virtual classroom</b>      | 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 an instructor and students to interact.   |
| <b>Webinar</b>                | A webinar is a virtual classroom in which the facilitator and participants view the same screen at the same time. Webinars typically use video, audio and slides that the facilitator controls and functionality that allows participants to chat by entering text, answering polls, raising their hands and asking questions.  |

### 3.4 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' to study from home and at a pace that suits them.

### In a nutshell, what technology will I need?

You will need:

- A laptop (or desktop computer) with a good internet connection (4G is fine)
- A quiet place to study online
- Your username and password as supplied
- Speakers
- A microphone (a headset is even better)
- Your laptop 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, a 'blended 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) and for this academic year, on campus activity will vary due to the ever changing COVID 19 situation.
- For some of the time students will log-on to live lectures and workshops delivered by academic staff
- For some of the time students will engage in independent study which will include accessing a wide range of resources, activities and tasks via the virtual learning environment, Moodle.
- Calendars will be provided at the beginning of each semester.

### What programmes are delivered using Blended Learning?

- Programmes generally need to be approved for blended learning when validated by QQI.
- During the COVID 19 pandemic QQI has given permission for all of their validated face-to-face programmes to be delivered online (during lockdowns)
- As we gradually move to a return to campus, all Higher Education Institutes are urged to follow *A safe return to on-site further and higher education and research (Safe Return Plan)*. See pp 6-7 above.
- For the academic year 2021-2022, SNMCI will be encouraging a return to face-to-face learning (as considered safe within HSE guidelines) while retaining some blended content.
- New programmes in development will be designed from the beginning, as blended learning programmes.



# SECTION FOUR



QUALITY  
ASSURANCE





## 4 Quality Assurance

### 4.1 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

#### Important QA dates:

- Re-Engagement with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI): In **April 2020** all SNMCI QA policies and procedures were approved by QQI



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- Application for Blended Learning Status: In **August 2020** SNMCI was approved by QQI for delivery of programme through blended learning.

**Note: It is A STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY to familiarise himself/herself with the QA policies and procedures of the College.**

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

**The most frequently used policies and procedures are available on the QA Tab on Moodle and include:-**

- [QA 2.3: Academic Frameworks, Boards and Committees](#)
- [QA 3.6: Recognition of Prior Learning](#)
- [QA 3.9: Fees Policy](#)
- [QA 3.10: Refunds Policy](#)
- [QA 3.11: Learner Induction](#)
- [QA 3.12: Deferral](#)
- [QA 3.14: Learner Feedback, Principles, Policy and Procedures](#)
- [QA 5.2: Blended and Online Learning](#)
- [QA 5.5: Roles and Responsibilities in Participating in Placement](#)
- [QA 5.6: Research Policy](#)
- [QA 5.7: Code of Good Practice for Student Research](#)
- [QA 5.8: TOR for Submission of Student Research](#)
- [QA 5.9: TOR Ethics Committee](#)
- [QA 6.8: Examination Regulations](#)
- [QA 7.1: Student Engagement](#)
- [QA 7.7: Learner Complaints: TOR Complaints Committee](#)
- [QA 7.8: Academic Integrity](#)
- [QA 7.11: Learner Appeals](#)
- [QA 7.12: Assessment Appeals](#)
- [QA 7.14: Student Maternity/Paternity Policy](#)
- [QA 8.1: Principles, Terms and Conditions of Use of the College's Information and Communications Technology](#)
- [QA 8.2: Privacy Policy](#)
- [QA 9.2: Protection of Enrolled Learners](#)



# SECTION FIVE





## 5 Health and Safety

### 5.1 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 following represents a short overview of some of the issues represented in the Health and Safety document. The entire [Health and Safety Statement document](#) is available on the Moodle QA Tab and also in hardcopy at the College reception.

#### 5.1.1 Declaration

##### **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 (last revision)



### 5.1.2 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:-

- 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.

### 5.1.3 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;
- 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 members 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.

#### 5.1.4 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. **Please read the SNMCI Safe Return to Work and Study sent to all staff and students.**



# SECTION

# SIX





## 6 Student Engagement

### 6.1 Student Support Network

Building a **Student Support Network** is very important, especially in 2021/2022 as we continue with the possibility of revised timetables and limits to in- person contact.

Whereas we hope for an increase in onsite engagement, there will be a mixture of virtual and in-person social events organised over the course of this academic year.

Be sure to be part of it, as your engagement with fellow learners can impact on your overall educational experiences at SNMCI.

### 6.2 Student Engagement: Planning for 2021/2022

The Student Engagement Officer, along with the Programme Directors, play a huge role in helping students to stay engaged over the course of the entire year. We understand that while some of you may be returning to campus this year, there are also many new students and those students who have spent their entire first year online, who have not had the opportunity to connect with their classmates in person. This is where organised, online and in -person social events will play a pivotal role in building a support system.

#### How to stay connected

- Take a study break with classmates over Zoom;
- Meet **in person** with your classmates in small numbers, if guidelines 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 if needed.

#### Other plans:

##### Tea & Chats

Facilitated online and in person. Ideally, we will be able to do a little bit of both!

##### Mingle Meet Up's

We hope to facilitate these events both between programme stages and across different programmes. This will allow students to meet as many fellow St Nic students 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 and in person, for everyone to get into the Christmas spirit. We expect students to jump in when it comes to organising the festivities. Be Warned!!



### 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 is planned for the coming weeks ahead.

## 6.3 Class Reps

### Being a Class Representative!

SNMCI encourages every class to have Class Representatives (Class Reps, for short) 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? Maybe this is right up your street? Whatever the reason, why don't you simply consider the idea?**

Last Year SNMCI instituted 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 ongoing successful operation.

Each class can elect one Class Rep to represent their views. If a class wants to have options with Class Reps it could propose a Class Rep per semester. This may be an option to share the responsibility for an entire academic year; a commitment of three or four months is much less daunting!

So what does a Class Rep do?

- A key role of the Class Rep is to be the spokesperson for a class and to represent its interests at Student Council, Programme Committee and occasionally at the Academic Board.
- Class reps will be the 'go-to' person for resolving minor issues facing the class and will be invited to the Programme Committee meetings to present any issues that may be arising from a student perspective across the programme;
- Class reps may also be involved in organising class parties, day-time events and nights out;

### Would you like to make a difference?

Why should you run for Class Rep? 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 good for idea sharing, class to class interactions and being in the know of all things SNMCI



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- 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 and will be able to ‘feed into’ 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!

### So, you want to sign up? GREAT!

Depending on the number of people wanting to be Class Rep, a class vote may be called. In the first instance people will be asked to put their name forward. The selection process will be carried out within the first few weeks of Semester One because the sooner a Class Rep is elected, the sooner the student 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 2021/2022. 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. Only one person signs up for the job and in that case, YOU'RE IN!
  - b. Only one **or two** people want the role. In this case the role could be shared.
  - c. No one puts their own name forward. In this case nominations from others will be taken and students vote for who they want to be Class Rep for the semester /year.

The Student Engagement Officer (SEO) Bríd Hannan ([brid.hannan@smsi.ie](mailto:brid.hannan@smsi.ie)) will be in touch via email in the first few weeks of semester to outline the process. If you would like to initiate contact with Bríd please do!

## **6.4 Student Council**

The Terms of Reference of the Student Council are under review and all new information will be shared with the 2021/2022 Class Representatives, once appointed.



# SECTION SEVEN



Mor detailed information is available in a separate document [Assessment at SNMCI](#).

## 7 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>1</sup>*

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

### 7.1 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.

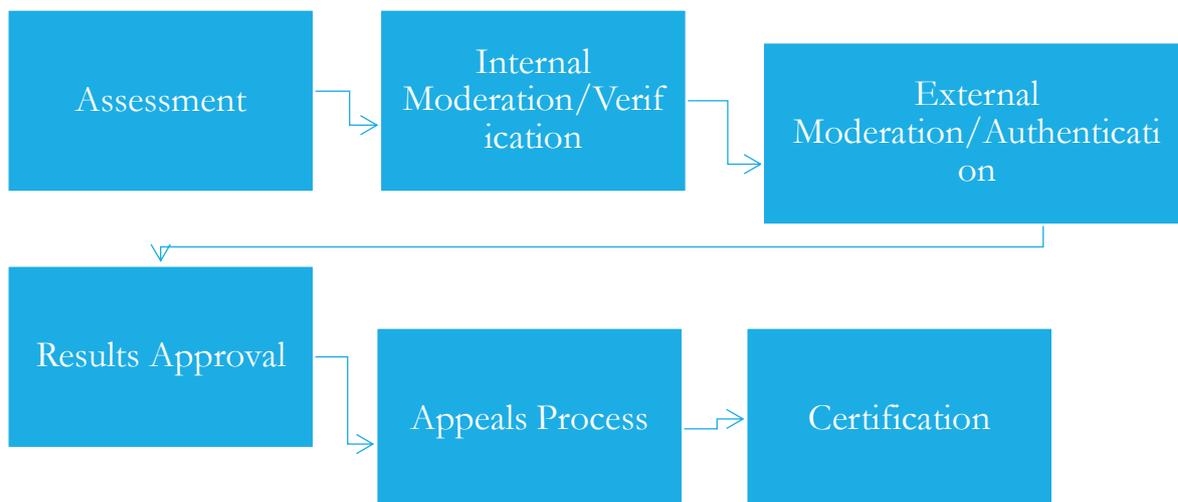
### 7.2 Assessment at SNMCI

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Is Valid:</b> Fit for purpose. Is based on valid assessment techniques and measures the skill or attainment it is designed to measure.</p>   | <p><b>Is Transparent:</b> There is clarity and understanding by all involved in the assessment process</p>   | <p><b>Is Fair:</b> Assessment is accessible to all students and provides equal opportunity for all students to succeed, using reasonable accommodations where appropriate.</p> |
| <p><b>Is Formative:</b> 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><b>Is Summative:</b> 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><b>Is Authentic:</b> Has real world applicability</p>   |
| <p><b>Reflects Quality:</b> Assessment is reliable and equitable and in line with all agreed standards and procedures.</p>   |  |  |

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



### 7.3 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 number of days for learners to lodge an appeal of the assessment process or result
- Process all appeals

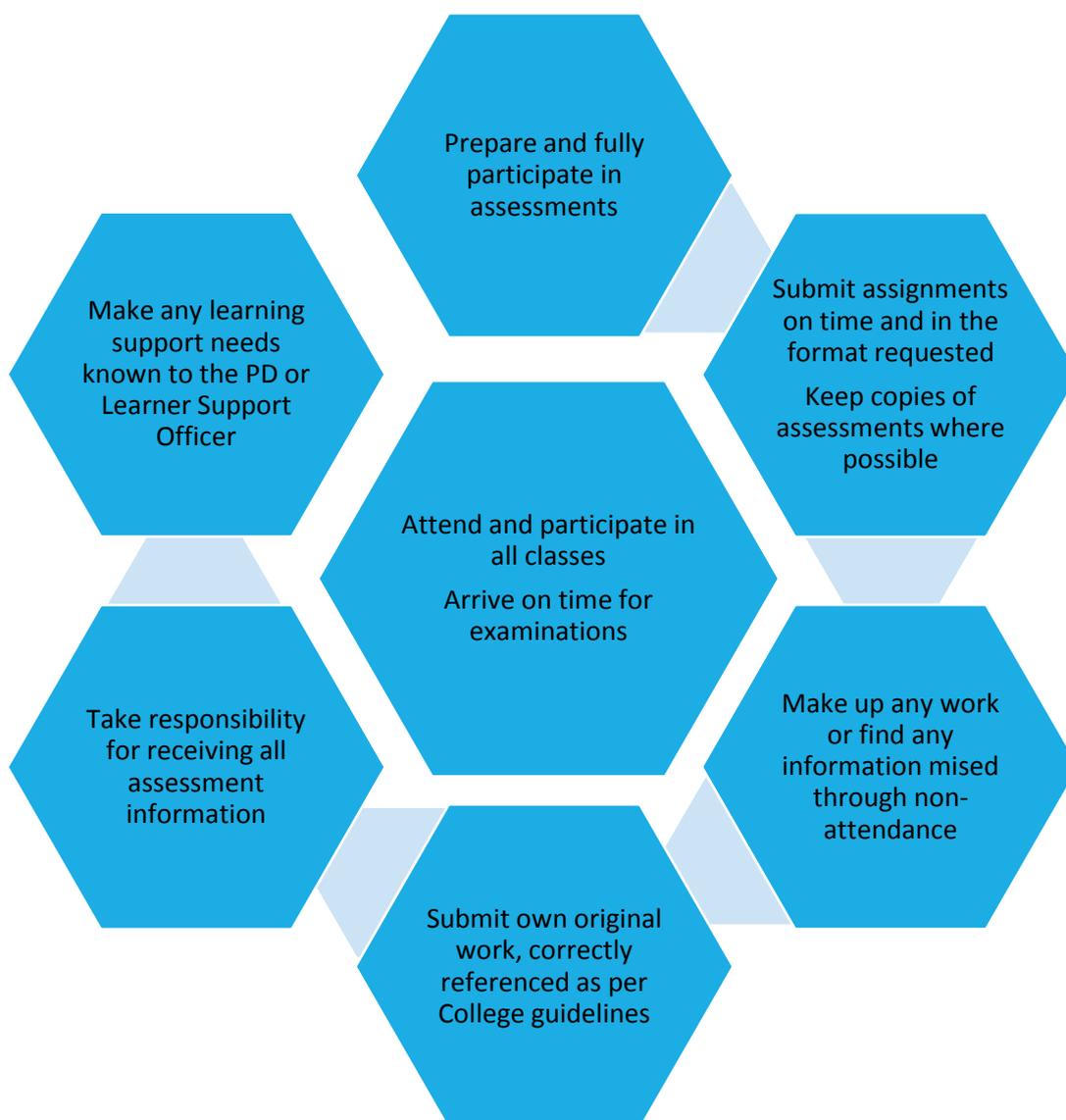
#### Request Certification

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



### 7.4 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.





## 7.5 Lecturer's Responsibility





## 7.6 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   |



## 7.7 Assessment Submission

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 making application to the Programme Director, it is the student's responsibility to gather all relevant 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.
- 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'.

## **7.8 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.



- 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.

## 7.9 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>            |

## 7.10 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](#)



## 7.11 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.



- 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](#).



## 7.12 Grade Descriptors as used by SNMCI

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

