



كلية الشرق الأوسط  
Middle East College

# MEC SPECIAL REGULATIONS AND ASSESSMENT APPROACH FOR SPRING 2022 AND SUMMER 2022





## Year of Agile Learners - Academic Year 2021-22

### Special regulations for Spring and Summer 2022

This document summarises the *Special Regulations and Assessment Approach* of Middle East College (MEC) for Spring and Summer 2022, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Special Regulations and Assessment Approach for Spring and Summer 2022 considers the COVID-19 situation prevailing in the country. It is also informed by the earlier Ministerial Order No 02/01/396/2021 dated 16/08/2021 issued by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), Sultanate of Oman; MEC's Teaching and Learning Strategy; review of teaching and learning practices adopted in the Fall 2021 and the previous academic year 2020-21; approaches adopted by universities across the world in response to COVID-19; QAA (UK); advice from our academic and professional body partners including ICE and CILIP, UK; and consultations with staff and students. QAA (UK) advisory<sup>1</sup> states that institutions “*should have a plan or strategy to cater for future disruptions to placements and assessments if a third wave occurs, and accompanying lockdown restrictions once again become necessary, whether national or local.*”

These regulations supersede those mentioned in the document titled ***Special Regulations and Assessment Approach - Fall 2021***. All academic regulations stated in the UG and PG Student Handbook shall generally be applicable for the Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters as well. The special regulations and assessment approach (detailed in this document) must be read in conjunction with the regulations mentioned in the UG and PG Student Handbook. In case of any conflict between the regulations stated in both documents, these special regulations will be applicable for the Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters.

It is important to note that changes shall be made to the implementation of this approach at any point of time during the semester based on continuous review and further directions from the Supreme Committee and/or MoHERI following changes in the COVID-19 situation in the country. The Deans Council of the College is authorised to make appropriate changes to these regulations as per the emerging situation and requirements and shall be the final authority in interpreting these regulations. Students shall be kept informed whenever changes are made.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/emerging-from-lockdown-reflections-from-psrbs.pdf?sfvrsn=b629d781\\_12](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/emerging-from-lockdown-reflections-from-psrbs.pdf?sfvrsn=b629d781_12)



The implementation of the Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters shall be based on the following fundamental principles:

1. The health and well-being of the entire MEC community is of utmost significance (P1).
2. Overall academic standards and achievement of programme and module learning outcomes (LOs) should not be affected (P2).
3. Recognise and prepare for the uncertainty of operations that may demand switching among several alternatives, ranging from complete face-to-face on-campus operations to complete online operations (P3).
4. Consider the attainment of learning outcomes by students learning from home as well as on campus (P4).
5. Provide appropriate opportunities for on-campus education (P5).
6. Draw on the vast experience of the College with respect to online teaching and learning and enrich and enhance student learning experience and outcomes (P6).
7. Students' progression, graduation, and employability should not be adversely affected because of the inability of any category of students to be present on campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation (P7).
8. Assessment design and instruments should take into account the possible disruptions, health concerns and uncertainties of the prevailing pandemic situation (P8).

Informed by the above principles and the guidelines issued by government authorities (hereinafter referred to as authorities) regarding operations of the College, and regarding health and safety measures in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, the following approach and regulations shall be adopted by the College in Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters. It may be noted that the directions of the Supreme Committee/MoHERI/MoH and other authorities shall supersede any of the following regulations:

## **A. General Foundation Programme and Undergraduate Programmes**

### **1 Students on campus**

- 1.1 All registered students shall be allowed to attend sessions as per the timetable (adhering to the College and programme regulations) such that the ministerial directives regarding on campus and online classes are complied with. This approach at the College level is expected to not only ensure the appropriate flexible learning experience and achievement of academic outcomes, but also the health and well-being of students and staff.
- 1.2 Under exceptional circumstances, decided by the Academic Exemption Committee, students left with up to 20 Credit Points to complete Honours Bachelors/Advanced



Diploma/Diploma award may be allowed to study such modules in online mode. This is subject to the further conditions that: (a) such modules are not project modules or modules that normally require on-campus presence (b) Only students who are exiting with an award shall be eligible in this case. Eligible students shall apply to the Student Success Centre with necessary evidence of the extenuating circumstances. The DMC of the Department responsible for such modules shall take a decision regarding the academic aspects of the module, including the assessments, following the principles and guidelines mentioned in this document.

1.3 In case the authorities mandate minor restrictions on student attendance on campus at any stage of the semester, the following groups of students shall be given priority to be on campus:

1.3.1 Students undertaking Diploma and UG graduation projects which require the use of laboratories on campus.

1.3.2 Students undertaking GFP

1.3.3 Students who register for modules that require laboratory-based work on campus. The laboratory sessions of such modules shall be offered on campus.

1.4 In case the authorities mandate major restrictions on student attendance on campus at any stage of the semester, the College shall switch over to the online mode of study.

1.5 Subject to formal approval of MoHERI, the Deans Council may allow a specific student/student belonging to the following groups to be on campus (even under situations described in 1.3 and 1.4) based on specific prior requests:

1.5.1 First semester students and other students who need specific academic support

1.5.2 Students with disabilities

1.5.3 Students who do not have access to the technological resources that are required for learning

## 2. Teaching and Learning

2.1 The College shall continue to follow a blended learning approach in Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters. This shall constitute a flexible combination of on-campus, online, synchronous and asynchronous modes of teaching, in an appropriate *HyFlex* mode.

2.2 The Flipped Learning approach of the College and '*three degrees of interactivity*' approach for HyFlex learning shall continue to be the key characteristics of the teaching and learning experience in the Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters as well.

2.3 Reasonable efforts shall be made by the College to continue to provide online sessions simultaneously with on-campus sessions for students who are allowed by the College to attend such modules/sessions online on account of scheduling or extenuating circumstances. Whereas the blended in-class sessions shall be offered synchronously,



the online pre-class, post-class and recorded in-class sessions shall be offered asynchronously.

- 2.4 There shall be modules that can be undertaken fully on campus and others that are scheduled such that individual students attend on-campus sessions (face-to-face) for some weeks and off-campus (online) sessions in the remaining weeks. Depending on circumstances prevailing at the beginning of the semester, we may initially have alternate weeks of on-campus and off-campus teaching sessions. This arrangement shall be continuously reviewed over the semester and appropriate changes made, subject to the then existing conditions and requirements, as well as protocols that may possibly change from time to time.
- 2.5 While registering for modules, students may get combinations such that some of the modules that she/he has registered are offered online and others on campus during the same day or week.
- 2.6 Depending on the circumstances, reasonable effort shall be made to schedule all laboratory sessions on campus. The College shall additionally take efforts to provide computer-based laboratory sessions in blended-remote access mode.

### 3. Attendance

- 3.1 Overall attendance percentages shall be calculated based on the attendance in online and on-campus sessions including practical sessions and tutorials.
- 3.2 Students who register in modules that have End Semester Examination, as per module descriptor, are required to have a minimum overall attendance of 75% in such modules, subject to the further condition that students should have a minimum of 55% attendance for the scheduled on-campus sessions to be eligible to attempt the End Semester Examination. However, in case a student has less than 75% overall attendance, but has (a) more than 55% overall attendance and (b) at least 55% attendance for the scheduled on-campus sessions, the student has to obtain a minimum of 50% aggregate coursework marks to be eligible to attempt the End Semester Examination.
- 3.3 Students who register for modules that are assessed through coursework alone (100 % coursework modules) are required to have a minimum overall 55% attendance with a further condition that students should have a minimum of 55% attendance for the scheduled on-campus sessions.
- 3.4 Students Working Outside Muscat (SWOM) are required to have a minimum overall attendance of 50% in every module, subject to the further condition that students should have a minimum of 50% attendance for the scheduled on-campus sessions.



- 3.5 Students not having the required attendance in a module shall be declared 'Fail' in that module on account of attendance shortage, even if such students have scored the minimum pass marks required for that module.

## 4. Assessments

- 4.1 All UG and GFP modules, shall have three assessments. However, those 100% coursework modules which do not have any time-constrained assessments, as per the module descriptor, shall have number of assessments and their weight as per the module descriptor. All assessments shall be marked out of 100 marks and subsequently scaled to the appropriate assessment weight mentioned in the MIG of the module.
- 4.2 End of semester written examinations and time-constrained tests (Closed Book test/Open Book test/laboratory assessments) shall be undertaken for modules that specify such assessments in the module descriptor; the conduct of these assessments is described in the later sections. Modules that have lab examination components shall have them included in Assessment 01 and/or 02 and/or 03.
- 4.3 All laboratory-based assessments shall consist of two separate tasks: (a) Task A that shall assess actual laboratory activity undertaken by the student on campus or in blended-remote mode; and (b) Task B based on the handling, analysis, interpretation of laboratory data, and reaching appropriate conclusions. The two tasks may not be combined, given the flexibility required in the current scenario.
- 4.4 In case the authorities mandate complete online learning (as described in 1.3), Task B of laboratory related assessment (refer clause 4.3 above) alone shall be undertaken by students. All such students who have not taken the required laboratory sessions on campus or on blended-remote mode, however, are required to demonstrate the required skill or competence in using the specific laboratory equipment on campus in a subsequent semester, as per the time-limit and schedule provided by the College. A certificate of completion in this regard (certified by the Programme Manager and Head of academic department) shall be an additional graduation requirement for all such students. The marks obtained by such students in Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 for such modules (that mandatorily require on-campus laboratory sessions) shall be recorded and considered by the Exam Board. However, an IP grade shall be assigned for the module until students obtain a certificate of completion, as mentioned.

### 4.5 UG and GFP modules that have End semester examinations

- 4.5.1 In such modules, Assessment 01 and 02 shall be assignments covering all module LOs between them and subject to clause 4.2. Assessment 03 shall be the end of semester examination covering the module LOs that are mapped against the end semester examination in the approved module descriptor.



- 4.5.2 Assessment 01 and 02 shall have equal weight. However, the overall distribution of module marks between the total of coursework marks and end semester examination marks shall be as per the approved module descriptor.
- 4.5.3 UG students must obtain minimum marks in the end semester examination, as applicable and specified in the student handbook, in addition to overall module pass marks and attendance requirement for successfully passing a module.

#### **4.6 Modules Assessed through 100% Coursework (100% CW Module)**

- 4.6.1 100% coursework modules having one or more time-constrained tests, as per the module descriptor, shall have one of the three assessments as a time-constrained test, and the other two as assignments. These two assignments shall cover all the module LOs between them and shall have 35% marks weight each and the time-constrained assessment shall have 30% weight. The module LOs covered in the assessment on the time-constrained test shall be decided by the Department Management Committee (DMC) of the department offering the module.
- 4.7 In case time-constrained test and/or End Semester Examination cannot be conducted as per the then existing conditions and as per the directives of the authorities to not allow students on campus, the following shall be adopted:
  - 4.7.1 In the case of modules where lab examination was initially planned as a full assessment or as part of an assessment, the lab assessment shall be marked by not considering Task A (actual laboratory activity undertaken by the student on campus), and only considering Task B (task based on the handling, analysis, and interpretation of laboratory data and reaching appropriate conclusions) as described in clause 4.3. The marks initially considered for Task A shall then be allocated additionally to Task B and the students shall be marked for Task B against the new overall marks allocated for Task B. Example: If 10 marks were initially allocated for Task A and 15 marks for Task B in the original laboratory assessment brief and subsequently, if Task A could not be conducted, then Task B shall carry 25 marks (10 + 15).
  - 4.7.2 In case of modules where the time-constrained test is only one part of an assessment, the total marks of that assessment shall be based on the rest of the tasks expected from the assessment alone; the marks that were originally allocated to the time-constrained test shall be reallocated proportionately to the other tasks of the assessment. Example: Suppose, Assessment 02 had two parts: Part 1 is an online assignment with 60 marks and Part 2 is a time-constrained



test of 40 marks. In case of cancellation of the time-constrained test, then Part 1 shall be evaluated out of 100 marks.

- 4.7.3 In case of modules that had a full assessment that was a time-constrained test or End semester examination, the marks obtained in the other two assessments shall be scaled up proportionately to the maximum module marks. Example: If Assessment 01 (assignment) was initially allocated 25 marks, Assessment 02 (assignment) was allocated 25 marks and Assessment 03 (End semester examination) was allocated 50 marks, in the changed scenario Assessment 01 (assignment) shall be scaled to be out of 50 and Assessment 02 (assignment) shall be scaled to be out of 50.
- 4.8 There shall be group assessments in the case of modules that have learning outcomes that are associated with group work. Assessment designs shall ensure that such outcomes are assessed by using internationally accepted practices employed in extraordinary situations in case of a scenario when permission to work in groups is not granted.
- 4.9 Assessments requiring the need for physically going outside to organizations or other social settings for data collection shall be undertaken, unless otherwise mandated by the authorities. In case students are not allowed to undertake this activity, alternative mechanisms shall be established as per the decision of the DMC of the department offering the module.
- 4.10 The administration of Final Projects at UG and Diploma levels shall also follow the above guidelines. Individual supervisors shall communicate the specific requirements to students as per the decision of the DMC of the department offering the module.
- 4.11 DMC of a department is authorised to give specific details on mapping of assessments to outcomes and weight of assessments based on these regulations.
- 4.12 Information on assessments shall be provided to all students through the MIG and Assessment briefs. The dates of submission of assessments shall be based on the Programme Assessment Calendar.



## 5. Supplementary attempts

- 5.1 Students who are eligible to take a supplementary attempt in Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters, in modules that have end semester examinations, as per the approved module descriptor, shall be given a supplementary examination or one assignment as decided by the Deans Council based on the situation prevailing at that time.
  - 5.1.1 This supplementary examination/assignment shall only cover the module Learning Outcomes that are assessed by the end semester examination component as per the module descriptor.
  - 5.1.2 In case the students failed a module where they were initially assessed using assignments only, the marks obtained in that semester shall be scaled to original weight of the course work as per the module descriptor and the marks obtained in the supplementary attempt shall be scaled to the weight of end semester component as per the module descriptor to calculate the final module marks.
  - 5.1.3 In case the students failed when they were initially assessed using both course work and end semester examination, the regulations as per student handbook shall be followed.
- 5.2 In case students were to only undertake assignments during the Spring or Summer 2022 semesters in modules that have End semester examination as part of the approved Module Descriptor, they shall be eligible for supplementary attempts in a subsequent semester as per regulations only if they meet the minimum attendance requirements and have obtained an overall minimum of 30% marks in the failed module in Spring/Summer 2022.
- 5.3 Unless otherwise mentioned in the regulations that shall be provided in Fall 2022, UG and GFP students who are eligible for a supplementary attempt in that semester, shall follow the assessment regulations mentioned in the Student Handbook.
- 5.4 Supplementary examination of GFP students shall be conducted within a week of declaration of Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 results.

## B. Postgraduate (PG) Programmes

### 1 Students on-campus

- 1.1 All PG students shall be allowed on campus and the teaching sessions will be scheduled as per the blended learning approach.
- 1.2 In case authorities mandate minor restrictions on students on campus at any stage of the semester, the students undertaking PG projects which require the use of laboratories on-campus shall be given priority to be on-campus.



- 1.3 In case authorities mandate major restrictions on student attendance on campus, the College shall switch over to online mode of operation.
- 1.4 Subject to formal approval of MoHERI, the Deans Council may allow individual PG students to be on campus (even under situations described in 1.2 and 1.3) based on their specific prior request.

## 2 Teaching and Learning

- 2.1 The College shall continue to follow the blended approach in teaching in Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters. This shall constitute a flexible combination of on-campus, online, synchronous and asynchronous modes of teaching, in an appropriate *HyFlex* mode. 50% of the overall module delivery shall be on campus and the remaining online (Reference: MoHERI 505/3/221/2021, dated 02/08/2021).
- 2.2 The Flipped Learning approach of the College and '*three degrees of interactivity*' approach for *HyFlex* learning shall continue to be the key characteristics of the teaching and learning experience in the Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 semesters as well.
- 2.3 Reasonable efforts shall be made by the College to provide online sessions simultaneously with on-campus sessions for students who are allowed by the College to attend such modules/sessions online on account of scheduling or extenuating circumstances. Whereas the blended in-class sessions shall be offered synchronously, the online pre-class, post-class and recorded in-class sessions shall be offered asynchronously.
- 2.4 Depending on the circumstances, reasonable effort shall be made to schedule all laboratory sessions on campus. The College shall additionally take efforts to provide computer-based laboratory sessions in blended-remote access mode.

## 3 Attendance

All students are required to have a minimum overall attendance of 50% in every module, subject to the further condition that students should also have a minimum of 50% attendance for the sessions scheduled on campus. Overall attendance percentages shall be calculated based on the attendance in online and on-campus sessions including practical sessions and tutorials. Students not having the required attendance in a module shall be declared 'Fail' in that module on account of attendance shortage, even if such students have scored the minimum pass marks required for that module.



## 4 Assessments

- 4.1 PG modules shall have assessments (type and weight) as per the module descriptor.
- 4.2 All laboratory-based assessments shall consist of two separate tasks: (a) Task A that shall assess actual laboratory activity undertaken by the student on campus or in blended remote mode; and (b) Task B based on the handling, analysis, interpretation of laboratory data, and reaching appropriate conclusions. The two tasks may not be combined, given the flexibility required in the current scenario.
- 4.3 If situation arises such that authorities completely restrict students on campus:
  - 4.3.1 A lab examination which was initially planned as a full assessment or as part of an assessment could not be undertaken, the lab assessment shall be marked by not considering task A (actual laboratory activity undertaken by the student on campus), and only considering Task B (task based on the handling, analysis, and interpretation of laboratory data and reaching appropriate conclusions) as described in clause 4.2. The marks initially considered for Task A shall then be allocated additionally to Task B and the students shall be marked for Task B against the new overall marks allocated for Task B. Example: If 10 marks were initially allocated for task A and 15 marks for Task B in the original laboratory assessment brief and subsequently, if Task A could not be conducted, then Task B shall carry 25 marks (10 + 15).
  - 4.3.2 The time-constrained test shall be converted to an appropriate assignment. Submission time in such cases shall be restricted to a maximum of two weeks from the date of issue of the assignment brief.
- 4.4 There shall be group assessments in the case of modules that have learning outcomes associated with group work. Assessment designs shall ensure that such outcomes are assessed by using internationally accepted practices employed in extraordinary situations in case of a scenario when permission to work in groups is not granted.
- 4.5 Individual supervisors shall communicate the specific requirements to Dissertation and Project students as per the directions of the Department Management Committee (DMC) of the academic department offering the programme.
- 4.6 Dissertations, Projects and other assessments that require the need for physically going outside to organizations or other social settings for data collection shall be undertaken, unless otherwise mandated by the authorities. In case students are not allowed to undertake this activity, alternative mechanisms shall be provided as per the decision of the DMC of the department offering the programme/module.
- 4.7 Information on assessments shall be provided to all students through the MIG and assessment briefs. The dates of submission or conduct of assessments shall be based on the Programme Assessment Calendar.



## 5 Resits and Retakes

Resit and retakes shall be governed by assessment regulations provided in the PG Student Handbook.

### C. Additional important notice for all students

1. The physical and mental well-being of students are important for MEC. In case students are anxious or worried about the current COVID-19 situation or about their studies and need any advice, guidance, or counselling, they can contact Student Success Centre. They can be contacted via email ([ssc@mec.edu.om](mailto:ssc@mec.edu.om)) or over the phone (24531550).
2. It is important that students plan their learning activities well, attend all the on-campus and online classes, have a proper personal assessment timetable, undertake self-study effectively, take good care of their health, and follow all the HSE protocols when on campus. The possible physical and mental health risks associated with the overuse of computers should be understood by students and they should accordingly take precautions to avoid its adverse effects.
3. The existing policies on **Academic Integrity** apply for this period as well. Viva and other internationally accepted practices will be employed to detect academic integrity violations and the policy for determining penalties will be strictly adhered to. Disruptions caused by emergent situations like COVID-19 are seen as opportunities by antisocial elements and essay mills who will try everything possible to drag students into committing grave academic integrity violations. Taking any help from an external party to complete assessments is not only unethical, unprofessional and in violation of our academic integrity policy, but also an encouragement of antisocial activity that could have severe consequences. Students are strongly advised to avoid these courses of action. If students need additional support with their assessments, they are encouraged to contact their teachers who will provide the necessary academic support to complete their assessments.
4. MEC shall take all reasonable steps to provide a safe and secure IT and campus infrastructure, as well as online learning platforms for the use of its stakeholders, including students and staff. It is, however, important that users are cautious and alert while using online systems to avoid falling victims to cyber threats and crimes.
5. **Communication with College:** We recommend that students use emails to contact their faculty members, Heads of academic departments, and other staff members or official portals to request for IT services. They could also contact the Student Experience Office ([seo@mec.edu.om](mailto:seo@mec.edu.om)), if required. However, in case of an emergency, they may contact the following numbers between 8 am and 4 pm on working days.



Departments	Hotline numbers	Email
Admissions Office	24531531	<a href="mailto:ad@mec.edu.om">ad@mec.edu.om</a>
Registration Office	24531591	<a href="mailto:ro@mec.edu.om">ro@mec.edu.om</a>
Accounts Office	24531422	<a href="mailto:ao@mec.edu.om">ao@mec.edu.om</a>
IT Office	24531555	<a href="mailto:support@mec.edu.om">support@mec.edu.om</a>

The Supreme Committee in charge of dealing with the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, has decided that *"Starting from September 01, 2021, vaccination is a condition to enter all government units and private sector establishments, including malls, restaurants and other commercial activities"*. In compliance with the above decision, **MEC will not allow any student to register for modules in Spring 2022 and Summer 2022 if they are not vaccinated** (as per the decisions of the authorities from time to time). If any student is having a medical reason that prevents him/her from taking the vaccine, they have to submit an exemption request to Student Success Centre at the earliest along with a medical report justifying his/her request. The request must be submitted at least by February 28, 2022. MEC shall consider alternative arrangements in such cases, after approval of the authorities.



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