Assessment during COVID-19 restrictions
Information for students

Version 02 December 2020

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Types of assessment

As you are all aware, the normal on-campus university examinations in January 2021 have been replaced with alternative assessments. The alternative assessments will be designed by each department to fit the content and aims of the module, but as a general guide the main types of alternative are:

Assignment: This means a task that you are set and that you submit by the agreed date. In doing assignments we normally assume that you can read books and articles, refer to notes and do other reading. As always, the assignment should be your own work, and you should use the appropriate referencing when using the work of others. If there are any specific restrictions on the use of external sources, they will be made clear in the instructions for the assignment.

Timed exams: This means an exam that you do remotely, but at a set time. Where these are used, you should treat them like examinations, and not use external sources during the exam, except where it is specifically allowed in the instructions. See the section on timed exams for more information.

Take home exams: This is an assessment that you do remotely, but you have a longer time to do it. It could be one full day, or a number of days. We are not expecting that you will work on this constantly for the time allowed. The instructions will give you an indication of how much time you should spend on the work, but you can organise that time as you wish. The exam will normally give word limits and you should stay strictly within those limits. You may normally use readings and notes when doing a take home exam, and the instructions with the exam paper will make clear if there are any exceptions.

Each Department will provide you with the specific information about assessments relevant to your modules. Please check Moodle and your University email account regularly for updates.

Registration: If you are not registered for a module you will not be able to take the online assessment. If you are not sure that you are properly registered, please check that your module registration is up to date via the Student Web: https://studentwebauth.maynoothuniversity.ie/live/

If you need to change your registration record you should contact the Student Records Office immediately (records.office@mu.ie), noting the process for late registration at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/records/student-registration.

Deadlines

Some of you will find that you have two assessments due on the same day. This is something we cannot avoid. Because of the range of subjects and subject combinations, it is inevitable that many of you will have assignments with deadlines on the same day.

You should not have two timed exams at the same time. Remember the timed exams are set at a fixed time and you are given a number of hours to complete them (max half a day). You are expected to work on these for most of the time window, and so you should never have a clash of timed exams. If you find that you have a clash, please contact the exams office.
For all other assessments, you are not expected to work on the assessment all of the time, and it is not a problem if two assignments have the same deadline. This requires that you manage your time and arrange to get one of the assignments done early. One of the key challenges is to manage your time in the remaining weeks of the semester. Just as you would in a written exam, you should divide the time between the tasks you are set, making sure that each gets a fair share of time. You should be careful not to allow one assessment to take a disproportionate amount of time, as this will have an impact on what you can do in the other assessments.

**Academic integrity**

It is very important that the work you submit is your own work, and reflects your understanding of the topic. By submitting work, you are declaring that the work is your own, and was done in accordance with the guidance above and the specific instructions for the assignment/exam.

Online assessments and exams are university exams and subject to the University's exam regulations, plagiarism policy and all other student regulations. The University may use Turnitin or other software to check for plagiarism. A breach of examination rules is a serious issue and can incur penalties, including the awarding of a mark of zero for an entire module.

Once the assessments have been submitted, we may call some students for a verification assessment. This will usually take the form of an interview, in person or by video, but other assessments may be used as appropriate. If you are called for a verification assessment, you will be told what module is being examined, and given information about the format of the assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to verify that the work submitted is your work, and that you can demonstrate a level of understanding consistent with the work you submitted. Your mark in a module can be adjusted or withheld following a verification assessment.

We know that this will be extra work for some students, but we think this is an important quality control measure, to make sure we can stand over the marks and grades we award.

**Academic Standards**

Departments have been asked to mark the assessments in the context of the unusual conditions this semester. This means that we understand that much teaching has been done remotely, and that you may have had difficulty in accessing the library facilities and other supports. While you still need to demonstrate that you understand the material, the marking will be adjusted as far as is reasonable to recognise the context.
Timed exams
If you have been told that your modules will use timed exams, this section will provide some extra information. The information in this section applies to Timed Exams ONLY.

1. The timed exams are scheduled in the normal exam period, from 8th-23rd January 2021 (incl. Saturdays). The timetable is available at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/examination-timetable-information

2. We will have 2 exam sessions per day. The first will be in the morning, any time from 9.00 to 13.30, and the second will be in the afternoon (any time from 14.30 to 18.30).

3. You may have two exams in the same day.

4. You are advised to check the published timetable regularly. You will also receive details about the exam by the Department managing the exam, through Moodle.

5. Each exam will be managed and administered by the Department, so please contact the Department running the exam for any questions.

6. The exams may start at uneven times like 9.10, or 9.20. We are doing this to spread the load on the computer systems, and reduce the risk of technical problems.

7. The exam timetable shows you the time allowed for the paper (the “writing time”) indicating the time usually required to complete the exam. We have extended the duration of the exams to allow for difficulties in internet connection. This is listed for each exam as the “additional submission time”. This is designed to reduce the stress that might arise if you have a delay in downloading or uploading the paper.

8. If you are registered with the Disability Office, and are normally allowed additional time in exams, you will also be given extra time in these timed exams (usually 15 minutes per hour of writing time).

9. If you have other exam accommodations, please contact the Disability Office disability.office@mu.ie to discuss whether they can be provided in a remote exam.

10. If you are unable to submit your answer on time, please submit it as soon as you can. The system will put a time-stamp on your submission, and the Department can then decide how to deal with the late submission.

11. If you know in advance that you will unable to complete a timed exam, please contact the Professor/Lecturer leading the module, and explain your difficulty. In some cases, an alternative may be available.
Technology
Most assignments will be managed through Moodle, and you should make sure that you are familiar with Moodle and have practiced using it on the machine you will use during assessments.

Most assignments will be submitted in a typed format. You should ensure that you are familiar with the word processor (MS Word or equivalent) on your computer, and that you know who to save files. You should make sure to save copies during any long assessment, to avoid the risk of losing your work if there is a power cut or computer crash.

In some cases Departments will ask you to hand-write your exams and scan or photograph them. This may be the preferred option where the answers will need to include formulas and symbols.

If you do not have access to a computer, please contact the department and explain your situation. They may be able to allow you to hand-write your work and submit a photograph of it. However this should be used as a last resort, and may not be allowed in all modules.

Maynooth University has a limited number of laptops to lend to students who do not have a laptop and cannot afford to buy one. This scheme is part of the package of Covid-19 supports for higher and further education institutions approved by Government. Details are at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/student-services/student-budgeting-advice-service/laptop-loans.

Internet: As far as possible, Departments will use assessments that you can download, work on offline and then upload. However, there will be some cases where online quizzes or other “live” activities are used.

You will also need a reliable internet connection, particularly during timed exams. If you are in a house with other users sharing the connection, you may be able to ask them to switch off when you are doing assessments. Live gaming, videoconferences and video streaming are all heavy users of data and can cause your connection to slow down.

Some of you may be accessing the internet through the mobile phone network, either by using your phone (tethering or hotspot) or by using mobile broadband. To improve your connection you should turn off other apps that use the connection.

On-campus exam venue and PC facilities: Recognising that some students may not have ideal exam conditions at home, the University will provide some limited on-campus venues where students can take exams. Students can use the PCs provided (where the venue is a PC lab) or can bring their own laptop and materials. It will be necessary to book a space in these venues for each exam as space will be limited. If you think that you may want to use this facility, please consult the Timetable section of the Exams Office website for further details of how to make a booking. https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams/examination-timetable-information.

These venues will be supervised and will only be available to students who are taking exams. Students will be expected to behave in a manner appropriate to an exam venue. Students will be required to wear face coverings in these exam venues. In order to comply with covid-19 rules, students will be required to bring their Maynooth University student card (or other photograph ID) for possible contact tracing purposes.

Assessment during COVID-19 restrictions: Information for students on semester one assessment
Help during exams
You may have a general query during exams (about the timetable, duration of paper), which can be answered by using the Exams Office online chat service – click on the ASK icon from the webpage https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams.

If your query is in relation to the content of the exam paper, then you are advised to email the academic member of staff directly.

IT support for students is available via the ASK button https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/itservices/students.

If you have a Moodle/Turnitin query during an online exam, you can email moodlesupport@mu.ie (please include the module code and a contact phone number to help us resolve the issue as quickly as possible).

August 2021 re-sits
We normally have a re-sit exam in August from almost all of the written exams. This gives a second opportunity for anyone who missed the exam because of illness or other unavoidable difficulty, or anyone who did not pass the exam.

This year we plan to have re-sit examinations in August for both first semester and second semester modules. If for some reason it is not possible to have re-sits, we will replace them with alternative assessments.

Resit caps: In a small percentage of modules there is a cap on the re-sit exam. This means that if you do the re-sit in one of these modules the maximum mark you can get is fixed (usually at 40%).

Module condition caps: Some modules have a module condition, and the module mark is capped at 35% if the condition is not met. These caps will remain in place. If you have not met a module condition, you should contact the relevant Department to ask about your options.

Fees for re-sit: There is a fee for re-sit assessments.

Rules for resit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First attempt (January or May)</th>
<th>August Resit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Your first mark is below the pass mark (40%) | The August re-sit mark will normally be used in calculating the annual result.  
If your August mark is lower that the first attempt, we will use the first attempt. This may be important if the first attempt was good enough to allow compensation. |

| Your first mark is above the pass mark. | If you pass you cannot normally resit, except in final year, where you can resit up to 15 credits.   
However if you think you underperformed you can ask permission to resit. |
If you resit a module that was passed, the result is the resit mark or the pass mark (40%), whichever is higher. This means that there is some risk in resit in a passed module.
In some exceptional cases we may waive this rule.

### Some re-sit FAQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can I resit a module I did not pass in the first semester?</td>
<td>Yes, we will have resits for first and second semester modules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I need to register to resit?</td>
<td>Yes. You will need to register. We need to know how many people are taking the resit to prepare exam papers, timetable etc. Information about how to register for resits will be available on the exams office website when the results are available in June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I wait and do my exams in August?</td>
<td>Yes you can. You can also do some modules now and leave other modules until August. However this should be a last resort, as it is better to do the assessments now if you can. If you decide not to take an assessment in January or May, there is no need to inform us in advance. You can register for the resit and take the alternative assessment in August.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I try the assessment now and pass, can I resit to improve?</td>
<td>Resit to improve is not normally allowed, except in final year when you can resit 15 credits of modules you have passed. However, if you feel you have not done yourself justice at the first attempt you can apply for permission to resit a passed module. If we can see that your result is out of line with previous results, we may allow you this opportunity. Note that if you resit a module you have passed your result could fall. The result we will use is the resit mark, or the pass mark (40%), whichever is higher. Information on how to apply will be available when the results are available in June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have done some of the assignments and not all, do I need to do them all in the resit?</td>
<td>No, in the August resit the department will normally carry forward the results from the work already completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a module with a mark capped at 35%, what can I do?</td>
<td>This is probably because you did not meet some module condition, which might be an attendance requirement, or passing a specific part of the module. You need to contact the Department to see if there is any way to recover from this. If not, this may block your progression in the subject.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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