

Assessment Policy



POLICY # EAAS/2024/240265

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European Academy of Advanced Studies (EAAS)

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1. Purpose

This Policy addresses issues relating to assessment, marking, and moderation procedures in relation to learning within the EAAS, as well as the application, ratification, and classification of awards in accordance with the grades specified in the Grading System Policy. This Policy is an implementation of Section 8 of the General Academic Regulations. Assessment should be valid, reliable, fair, transparent, secure, and consistent with the level of the Malta Qualifications Framework at which each award lies.

As a fully online institution, EAAS assesses students remotely. This Policy therefore sets out not only the grading architecture common to any HEI but also the arrangements specific to online assessment: submission through the Virtual Learning Environment, originality screening, identity verification, proctoring, and the treatment of technical failure.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all summative and formative assessment on every EAAS programme and study-unit, to all students, and to everyone involved in setting, marking, moderating, or examining assessment, including internal staff and external examiners. It applies alongside the linked policies named in Section 3, which govern matters of integrity, conduct, and data.

3. Status and Legal Framework

This Policy is a linked policy under the EAAS General Academic Regulations and is to be read together with the Grading System Policy (# 20260045), which is the authoritative source for the grading scale, grade points, the Grade Point Average, and the honours classification bands; the Academic Integrity, AI, Online Assessment and VLE Use Policy; the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy; the Student Grievances and Redressal Policy; the Ethics Policy; and the Privacy and Data Protection policies. This Policy governs the assessment process; the Grading System Policy governs the grading scale. Where a linked policy provides greater operational detail, that policy governs the detail; where there is a conflict on an academic matter, the General Academic Regulations prevail.

The Policy is made under, and interpreted consistently with, the Further and Higher Education Authority Act (Chapter 607) and S.L. 607.03; the Malta Qualifications Framework and the ECTS Users' Guide; the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG 2015); the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF); and the MFHEA Guidelines for Quality Assurance for Online Learning Providers in Malta.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Study-unit	A discrete, credit-bearing component of a programme, expressed in ECTS, with its own intended learning outcomes and assessment.

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Intended learning outcomes (ILOs)	The knowledge, skills, and competences a student is expected to demonstrate on completing a study unit, written at the appropriate MQF level.
Formative assessment	Assessment for learning: it develops and gives feedback on progress. At EAAS it carries a 40% weight within each study-unit.
Summative assessment	Assessment of learning: it judges achievement of the ILOs. At EAAS it carries a 60% weighting within each study-unit.
Component	A single assessed task — the formative or the summative element — each of which carries its own pass requirement.
GPA	Grade Point Average: the ECTS-weighted mean of grade points, used for academic standing and progression.
FWAM	Final Weighted Average Mark: the ECTS-weighted mean of percentage marks in the units that contribute to the award, used to classify the degree.
Reassessment	A further attempt at a failed component or unit — a re-sit or a repeat — within the permitted number of attempts.
Didactic Board	The board of examiners that ratifies marks, determines mitigating-circumstances claims, and confirms progression and award decisions.
External Examiner	An independent subject expert who scrutinises assessment standards and a sample of marked work.

5. Principles of Assessment

- **Validity.** Every assessment measures the intended learning outcomes of its study-unit, and nothing else.
- **Reliability.** Marking is consistent between markers and over time, secured through rubrics, moderation, and external examination.
- **Fairness and inclusivity.** Students are assessed against published criteria, without bias, with reasonable adjustments for those with disabilities or specific learning difficulties.
- **Transparency.** Criteria, rubrics, weightings, and deadlines are published on the VLE in advance, so students are judged against standards they were able to see.
- **Security and integrity.** Assessment is designed and conducted so that the work assessed is the student's own, using originality screening, identity verification, and proctoring proportionate to the risk.
- **Constructive alignment.** Learning outcomes, teaching, and assessment are designed together, so that what is taught is what is assessed.

6. Types and Weighting of Assessment

Each study-unit is assessed through two components: a formative component weighted at 40% and a summative component weighted at 60%. Formative assessment develops learning and carries feedback; summative assessment judges' achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Diagnostic activities may also be used at the start of a unit but do not contribute to the unit mark.

The assessment method is stated in each study-unit specification and is appropriate to the outcomes assessed — for example essays, reports, case analyses, portfolios, presentations, timed online assessments, or the final-stage research project. Assessment is designed to be authentic and, wherever possible, resistant to substitution by another person or by a generative-AI system.

7. Grading Scale

All study-units are marked as a percentage and converted to a letter grade and a grade point using the grading scale set out in the EAAS Grading System Policy (# 20260045), which is aligned to the MQF and the ECTS and applies uniformly across all study-units and programmes. That Policy is the authoritative source; this Policy does not restate the scale, so that the two documents can never diverge.

For the operation of this Policy, it is sufficient to note that grades A to E (50–100%) are pass grades and that FX (40–49%) and F (0–39%) are fail grades. The minimum passing grade is E (50%). The distinction between FX and F determines the reassessment route in Section 9: a marginal failure (FX) is re-sat eligible, while an F normally requires the unit to be repeated.

8. Passing a Study-Unit

To pass a study-unit a student must achieve at least 50% in each assessment component — the formative and the summative — not merely 50% on the weighted aggregate. A

student who reaches the aggregate but fails a component has not passed the unit and is reassessed in the failed component.

This component-level rule reflects the requirement stated in every study-unit specification and ensures that a student cannot compensate for a serious shortfall in one element with a strong mark in the other. The research project carries an additional requirement, set out in Section 13.

9. Reassessment

A student is entitled to a maximum of three attempts at any study-unit: the original attempt and two further attempts. Reassessment addresses only the failed component or unit.

Attempt	When it applies	Outcome and cap
First (original)	The scheduled assessment.	Full mark stands.
Second (re-sit)	A component or unit graded FX (40–49%), or E/above where a component was failed.	Mark capped at the pass mark, E (50%), unless mitigating circumstances were upheld.
Third (repeat)	A unit graded F (0–39%), or a failed re-sit, at the Board's discretion.	The unit is repeated in full; the mark is capped at E (50%).

- A re-sit or repeat mark is capped at the pass mark, E (50%), so that a reassessed unit cannot yield a higher grade than a first-time pass at threshold. The cap does not apply where a mitigating-circumstances claim has been upheld, and the Board has permitted a further first attempt.
- Reassessment is normally scheduled in the following teaching period, so that a student is not delayed longer than necessary.
- A student who exhausts three attempts without passing is considered under the progression and exit-award provisions of the General Academic Regulations and may be eligible for a lower exit award.

10. Averages, Progression and Classification

The calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA) and Cumulative GPA, and the honours classification bands, are set out in the Grading System Policy (# 20260045). This Section does not restate them; it explains how they are applied within the assessment process, and how progression is determined.

10.1 Academic standing and progression

Academic standing is measured by the Cumulative GPA as defined in the Grading System Policy. Under that Policy a learner must hold a Cumulative GPA of at least 2.50 in all coursework attempted to remain in good academic standing, and at least 2.00 across all study-units taken to graduate.

Progression between stages is governed by Section 9 of the General Academic Regulations, which requires that all study-units of the current stage are passed. Where

the General Academic Regulations and the Grading System Policy differ on the numerical GPA threshold for progression, the discrepancy is resolved in favour of the Grading System Policy pending a single aligning amendment to General Academic Regulations Section 9, so that one figure governs across all documents.

10.2 Classification of the award

The honours classification of the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Tourism and Hospitality Management is determined from the credit-weighted average of the learner's study-unit marks, on the classification bands set out in the Grading System Policy and is confirmed by the board of examiners named in that Policy. The following operational rules apply to that determination.

- **Credit weighting.** The classification average is weighted by the ECTS value of each contributing study-unit and is rounded to the nearest whole mark only at the final step, so that an average of 79.5 or above is treated as 80.
- **Stage weighting.** The contribution of each stage to the classification average is confirmed by the Senate on adoption. The common practice for a three-stage MQF 6 award is to exclude the first (foundational) stage and to weight the later stages — for example Stage 2 and Stage 3 in the ratio 40:60. Until the Senate confirms otherwise, the average is computed across the credit-bearing units of Stages 2 and 3, weighted by ECTS.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning.** Credit awarded through RPL is ungraded and is excluded from the GPA and from the classification average, as provided in the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.
- **Borderline cases.** A candidate whose average falls within two percentage points below a classification boundary is reviewed by the board of examiners, which may raise the classification where the profile of final-stage marks supports it. The rule is applied consistently and recorded.
- **External oversight.** All classification-boundary and failed final-stage decisions are seen by the External Examiner before the award is confirmed.

11. Setting, Marking and Moderation

- **Setting.** Assessment briefs and rubrics are prepared by the study-unit lecturer against the intended learning outcomes and are reviewed by an internal moderator before release to students.
- **Marking.** Work is marked against the published rubric. Marking is anonymous wherever the nature of the assessment allows.
- **Internal moderation.** A second academic moderates a sample of each cohort's marked work — including all fails, all firsts, and a spread across the range — to confirm that standards have been applied consistently. Moderation confirms standards; it does not re-mark individual scripts to alter marks without cause.
- **External examination-**An External Examiner reviews a sample of marked summative work, all borderline and failed final-stage cases, and the operation of the assessment process, and reports annually to the Academic Head. The External Examiner does not change individual marks but may require the Board to review standards.

12. Online Assessment and Academic Integrity

- **Submission.** Summative work is submitted through the VLE, which records the time of submission. Late submission is treated under the published late-submission rule in the study-unit specification.
- **Originality screening.** Summative submissions are screened through Turnitin. A similarity report is never determinative on its own; a human academic reviews every flagged case before any finding is made.
- **Identity verification and proctoring.** Where a timed online assessment is proctored, students are told in advance what is captured and for how long it is kept. Such measures are proportionate and applied consistently and are governed by the Privacy and Data Protection policies.
- **Alternative arrangements.** A student who raises a substantiated objection to proctoring on privacy grounds is offered an alternative assessment, such as a supervised oral examination, without disadvantage.
- **Use of generative AI.** Permitted and prohibited uses of AI are stated at study-unit level and published with the assessment brief. Undeclared use of AI to generate assessed content is academic misconduct, determined under the Academic Integrity, AI, Online Assessment and VLE Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct Policy.
- **Technical failure.** Where a documented failure of the VLE or of a student's connection materially disrupts a timed assessment, the student may submit a claim; the Didactic Board may permit a further attempt as a first attempt, without the reassessment cap.

13. Assessment of the Research Project

The final-stage research project is assessed against its own study-unit specification and carries a compound pass requirement: the student must achieve at least 50% overall and at least 50% in the final research report. The project cannot be recognised through RPL and must be undertaken and assessed at EAAS.

The project is second-marked, and a sample is seen by the External Examiner. Ethical approval, obtained before data collection under the Research Policy, is a precondition of assessment: the Didactic Board will not except for assessment a project for which approval was absent or retrospective.

14. Mitigating Circumstances

A student whose performance in an assessment is materially affected by circumstances beyond their control illness, bereavement, or comparable serious disruption may submit a mitigating-circumstances claim, with evidence, before the Didactic Board meets.

- Claims are determined by the Didactic Board together with the responsible lecturer, consistently with Section 11 of the General Academic Regulations.
- Where a claim is upheld, the Board may permit a further attempt as a first attempt (without the reassessment cap), extend a deadline, or disregard the affected attempt.
- A claim is not a route to a higher mark for work already submitted; it addresses the opportunity to be assessed fairly.
- Medical and personal evidence is handled as special category data under the Privacy and Data Protection policies and is seen only by those who must.

15. Feedback and Release of Marks

Timely, usable feedback is part of assessment, not an addition to it. The following timeframes apply.

Stage	Timeframe	Responsible
Feedback on formative work	Within 10 working days of submission	Study-unit lecturer
Provisional marks on summative work	Within 15 working days of submission	Study-unit lecturer
Ratified marks released to students	After the Didactic Board	Programme Coordinator
Reassessment scheduled	Normally within the following teaching period	Programme Coordinator

- Feedback identifies what was achieved against the criteria and how future work could improve.
- Marks are provisional until ratified by the Didactic Board, and students are told so when provisional marks are shown.
- A student who considers that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with this Policy may seek review under the Student Grievances and Redressal Policy; disagreement with academic judgement, properly exercised, is not itself a ground of appeal.

16. Boards of Examiners

- The Didactic Board ratifies all marks; no mark is final until ratified.
- The Board determines mitigating-circumstances claims, confirms reassessment decisions, and confirms progression, classification, and award.
- The External Examiner's report is received by the Board, and classification-boundary and failed final-stage cases are considered in the External Examiner's presence or with their prior sight.
- Board decisions are minute, with reasons, and retained.

17. Retention of Assessment Records

- Marks, progression decisions, and award decisions form part of the core academic record, retained for 40 years under the institutional retention schedule and the Privacy Policy.
- Marked summative scripts and submitted coursework are retained for at least 12 months after the award is confirmed, to support appeals and external examination.
- Proctoring recordings and identity-verification data are retained for the period stated in the Privacy Policy and deleted thereafter unless an integrity case is live.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility in assessment
Study-unit lecturer	Designs assessment to the ILOs; marks against the rubric; provides feedback within the published timeframe.
Internal moderator	Reviews assessment briefs before release and a sample of marked work, to confirm standards and consistency.
Programme Coordinator	Maintains the assessment schedule; oversees moderation; manages the reassessment process.
External Examiner	Confirms that standards are appropriate to the MQF level and comparable to the sector; reviews a sample of work and all classification-boundary cases; reports annually.
Didactic Board	Ratifies all marks; determines mitigating-circumstances claims; confirms progression, reassessment, and award decisions.
QA and Compliance Unit	Audits assessment practice; maintains assessment records; feeds data into the Annual Programme Analysis.
Data Protection Officer	Oversees the lawful handling of assessment data, including proctoring and identity-verification data.

19. Monitoring, Review and Version Control

- The QA and Compliance Unit monitors assessment outcomes, marking consistency, feedback timeliness, and reassessment volumes, and reports through the Annual Programme Analysis.
- External Examiner reports and student feedback on assessment inform each review.
- This Policy is owned by the Senate / Academic Council, maintained by the QA and Compliance Unit, and reviewed at least annually or upon regulatory change.
- Amendments are approved by the Senate / Academic Council and communicated to staff and students.

Appendix 1 — Generic Grade Descriptors (MQF Level 6)

These descriptors are marking guidance. They expand, for the marker, the short grade definitions in the Grading System Policy, and are elaborated in each study-unit rubric against its specific intended learning outcomes. Where a percentage boundary is needed, the Grading System Policy governs.

A (90–100) — Outstanding

Comprehensive, authoritative command of the subject; critical, original insight; flawless use of evidence and scholarly conventions; work of near-publishable quality.

B (80–89) — Very good

Strong, well-organised achievement of the outcomes; clear critical engagement; accurate and well-supported argument; minor lapses only.

C (70–79) — Good

Sound grasp of the material; a coherent, mostly analytical argument; competent use of sources; some descriptive passages where analysis was expected.

D (60–69) — Satisfactory

Competent achievement of the outcomes; largely accurate but more descriptive than critical; adequate but limited use of evidence.

E (50–59) — Threshold pass

The outcomes are met at a minimum level; understanding is present but limited; argument is thin or uneven; sources are used sparingly or imperfectly.

FX (40–49) — Marginal fail

The outcomes are not quite met; significant gaps or errors; the work is close enough to threshold to justify a re-sit.

F (0–39) — Fail

The outcomes are not met; fundamental gaps, errors, or omissions; the unit must normally be repeated.