



Dear Hon. Bonnici,

The Maltese National Youth Council (KNŻ) and Student Councils call on the Ministry for Education and Employment and the MATSEC Board to hold the 2020 MATSEC Examinations in line with the below recommendations, while taking into account all precautions deemed necessary by the Health Authorities.

Further to a meeting held between KNŻ and the student councils of the University of Malta, G.F. Abela Junior College, St. Aloysius College Sixth Form, De La Salle College Sixth Form, Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary, MCAST and the Institute for Tourism Studies and forwarding the outcome to its member organisations, the following was agreed upon;

All examinations should be pushed by two to three weeks, whilst not excluding the possibility of further delay, taking into account the advice given by the Health Ministry as well as the logistical needs to carry out the MATSEC examinations. It is nonetheless imperative to ensure that enough time is kept for the sitting of resits and for the application into further educational institutions such as University. Furthermore, oral examinations should be reinstated and scheduled for after the written examinations period, during the time when practical sessions take place.

With respect to the safety and health of the students, while noting that these are to be set by the relevant health authorities, the Councils have collectively come up with a list of precautions which the students are currently pushing for. These include *inter alia* that students should be sat at a minimum of one metre away from each other; that social distancing is also to apply for students who are waiting outside the centre as well as inside; that sanitizers are present for all students and staff to make use of while going into examination; that desks and chairs are cleaned between sessions and that screening occurs prior to allowing the students to enter the examination hall. Invigilators attending such sessions should be clearly informed of the respective risks, particularly those who may be more susceptible to contracting the virus, whilst also ensuring that they are able to guide the students as needed.

Students should have the option to do the first sitting in September or split their first sittings between May and September so as to facilitate the process for courses such as medicine that demand examinations be taken at the same time. Those students resitting their O'Level Paper A Examination, should be allowed to still sit for Paper A during the Resit Session and not switch to Paper B as is usually required, given the circumstance surrounding this ordeal.



As a matter of last resort, should the situation arise that examinations have to be pushed further, we advise that the 2020/21 academic year in tertiary educational institutions is pushed forward by a month. This should be treated as a contingency plan as it would entail the academic year for these institutions to commit to starting in November and extending the year by a month into Summer.

We nonetheless encourage all relevant bodies to explore further possible means of assessment in light of the ever evolving circumstances we find ourselves in. It should be ensured that adequate time between when the decision taken regarding the status of this year's MATSEC Examinations is made public and the start date of said examinations.

Students should be constantly updated as at this point in time, there is a pervasive feeling from students of lack of communication between the decision makers and the students themselves.

Regards,

Chiara Vassallo  
President, Kunsill Nazzjonali taż-Żgħażagħ