

Programme Specifications and Regulations

2023/2024

1.0 General

The Saint Martin's Institute of Higher Education (referred to as SMI) Computing Diploma with specialisation are split as follows over a minimum period of one year:-

- Diploma in Computing
- Diploma in Computing with Games Design and Development
- Diploma in Computing with Information Systems

Our programmes provide flexibility to our students to gain a better understanding of a number of disciplines during the first year of studies since it provides learners with a broad spectrum of subject areas in the field of ICT. It covers important aspects such as computer architecture, databases, software engineering, algorithmic design, programming in various languages, interaction design, artificial intelligence, computer security, compression and information systems. As a result, this programme is general enough and gives learners the required skills and competencies to be employable in different environments and occupations at the place of work. The programme includes a number of units to support study in ICT, including a number of units covering different areas of mathematics.

2.0 MQF Level

The Diplomas are conferred by SMI and are pegged at Level 5 by Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA).

3.0 Language of study and assessment

The language of study and assessment for these programmes is English.

4.0 Mode of study

4.1 Students are required to attend a full or part-time course of instruction at SMI in order to attempt the examinations.

4.1.1 The full-time academic year is spread over a total of thirty (30) weeks, ten (10) weeks for the Autumn semester (until the Christmas recess), 10 weeks for the Winter semester (until the Easter recess) and ten (10) weeks for the Spring Semester until the end of the academic year (30th June).

4.1.2 A minimum of one hour of lectures is normally scheduled per week for units which are equal to 2 ECTS, whilst tutorials are scheduled throughout the academic year. The tutorials are scheduled according to the lecturers' needs.

4.1.3 A minimum of two hours of lectures are normally scheduled per week for units which are greater than 2 ECTS, whilst tutorials are scheduled throughout the academic year. The tutorials are scheduled according to the lecturers' needs.

4.1.3 In the case of part-time units, two hours of lectures are normally scheduled per week, whilst tutorials are scheduled throughout the academic year. The tutorials are scheduled according to the subject lecturers' requests.

4.1.4 The provisions of the foregoing bye-laws shall apply mutatis mutandis to units followed on a part-time basis, and subject to such changes as may reasonably be deemed by the Saint Martin's Admissions and Advisory Board (referred to as SAAB)¹ as necessary due to the part-time nature of the course of study.

5.0 Structure

5.1 Each Diploma consists of a number of units and further details regarding the individual units may be found in **Appendix 1 – Unit Structure**.

5.2 Students registered for any one of the Diplomas offered by SMI, will not be allowed to transfer their registration between these diplomas after **30 November** in the first year of their registration.

5.3 From a student's effective date of registration, the minimum and maximum period of registration is one and three years respectively. Registration may be extended, subject to SMI's approval and payment of applicable fees. Study materials are made available after registration is completed and the respective fees are settled.

5.4 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) credits are not granted for any unit for these Diplomas except for students who have successfully completed University of London examinations.

5.5 The total credits for the award of the Diploma are a minimum of 60 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)².

6.0 Entrance Requirements

6.1 An applicant must normally be at least 16 years of age on or before the SMI Autumn Semester examinations (December) in the year of registration and must be in possession of:

6.1.1 Four ordinary level passes, including Mathematics and English at SEC grades 1 to 5 or grades A to C in the case of GCE/GCSE or equivalent. Successful completion of ECDL will be treated as an ordinary level.

6.1.2 International equivalents to the above requirements will be considered and the decision taken at the discretion of SMI.

6.1.3 All students are required to attend an interview set up by the SAAB³ and attempt the

¹ Or any other board constituted by Saint Martin's Institute of Higher Education to offer academic direction.

² The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is a system adopted by the European Union authorities to determine the value of a learning experience of a student at every level. 60 ECTS is equivalent to 5 contact hours to every credit which may include formal lectures, tutorials, supervised group work and other learning activities which are under the guidance of a lecturer and 15 hours of student self-study.

³ Ibid.

English Placement Test (and / or any subject matter that SMI may decide to include from time to time), which is normally scheduled during a period which coincides with the start of the programme of studies.

6.1.4 Students who do not hold an ordinary level qualification in the English Language must provide proof of competence in English, which is acceptable to SMI. A test of proficiency is required and may be demanded.

Maturity Clause

6.1.5 Students who are 21 years and over and do not hold a recognised MQF Level 3 qualification **or** have not successfully completed the minimum number of MQF Level 3 qualifications noted in section 6.1, are eligible to apply subject to having at least **two** years relevant uninterrupted full-time work employment

7.0 SMI Admission Tests

7.1 As noted in section 6.1.3, prospective students are required to attempt the English Language Placement Test (and / or any subject matter that SMI may decide to include from time to time) in order to be eligible for the award of the respective Diploma.

7.2 The test is normally scheduled between the second/third week of October.

7.3 The purpose of the test is to ensure that students have the required level expected at Level 5 programmes. Students, who do not reach the level expected, will be supported by means of additional sessions throughout the academic year. Attendance and participation to these sessions is **compulsory**.

7.4 International students registered for any of the SMI Diplomas **MUST** attend **compulsory** English Language sessions throughout the academic year.

8.0 Students with Special Needs and/or Specific Access Requirements

SMI welcomes applications from prospective students with special needs and will make every reasonable effort to make sure that their experience of studying with SMI is rewarding. The support we can offer may include specific requirements during day-to-day lectures and tutorials, special examination arrangements or the provision of study materials in an alternative format.

Examples of such provisions may include:

- Large print question papers
- Special seating
- Extra time
- Use of an amanuensis
- Use of a word processor
- Breaks during the examination
- Permission to take food into the examination hall

An application form must be completed by the applicant and submitted to the Registrar, together

with the relevant support documentation for assessment by SAAB⁴.

9.0 Attendance requirements

9.1 SMI has strict rules about attendance. A student is required to attend at least 80% of lectures for each unit in order to be allowed to sit for SMI examinations. An attendance report is sent on a monthly basis by mail to all students. Upon return from absence due to sickness, a medical certificate must be submitted to the Registrar and the attendance record will be updated accordingly. Absenteeism due to illness will count towards the 20% allowable absenteeism. SMI has the right to bar students from sitting exams if this requirement is not fulfilled.

9.2 Temporary leave of absence is allowed only in extreme circumstances and will be allowed only after written permission has been granted by SMI Registrar. The attendance requirement as per 9.1 will apply in such circumstances.

9.3 A student may seek to postpone the completion of part of the programme for the next intake of the programme. If a student is absent for more than the stipulated time, SMI may force the student into an extension of the programme.

10.0 Latecomers

Students arriving more than 10 minutes late for the respective lecture will be marked 'absent' on the attendance sheet even if a lecturer opts to allow the student to attend class. The lecturer has the prerogative not to allow the student to sit in class if a student is 10 or more minutes late **according to the lecturer's time piece.**

11.0 Assessment Method

11.1 The Diploma is awarded to students who achieve a minimum of 40% of the available marks of all four components taken together.

11.1.1 The final assessment for a **theoretical unit (TU)** which falls **between 1 ECTS and 8 ECTS** will be computed using the following weighting system:

- 30% to 40% of the final marks will be composed of the average of the marks awarded for the assignments submitted by the student throughout the academic year;
- 60% to 70% of the final marks will be composed of the marks attained for the term examination.

11.1.2 The final assessment for a **theoretical unit (TU)** which falls **between 9 ECTS and 16 ECTS** will be computed using the following weighting system:

- 30% to 40% of the final marks will be composed of the average of the marks awarded for the assignments submitted by the student throughout the academic year;

⁴ Ibid.

- 30% to 35% of the final marks will be composed of the marks attained for the first term examination.
- 30% to 35% of the final marks will be composed of the marks attained for the second term examination.

11.1.3 The final assessment for a **practical unit (PU)** which falls **between 1 ECTS and 8 ECTS** will be computed using the following weighting system:

- 60% to 70% of the final marks will be composed of the average of the marks awarded for the assignments submitted by the student throughout the academic year;
- 30% to 40% of the final marks will be composed of the marks attained for the term examination.

11.1.4 The final assessment for a **practical unit (PU)** which falls **between 9 ECTS and 16 ECTS** will be computed using the following weighting system:

- 60% to 70% of the final marks will be composed of the average of the marks awarded for the assignments submitted by the student throughout the academic year;
- 15% to 20% of the final marks will be composed of the marks attained for the first term examination.
- 15% to 20% of the final marks will be composed of the marks attained for the second term examination.

11.1.5 The final assessment for a **special unit (SU)** such as the 'Job Shadowing Programme' will be computed using the following weighting system:

- 70% of the final marks will be composed of the average of the marks awarded for the first assessment components, typically in the form of a report;
- 30% of the final marks will be composed of the average of the marks awarded for the second assessment components, typically in the form of a presentation.

11.2 The percentage between assessment types (such as coursework and examination) for the different unit types (theoretical, practical and special) vary as per clause 11.1 above, depending on the nature of the subject. However, these percentages are fixed within each subject.

11.3 Each theoretical or practical unit with a credit value between 1 ECTS and 8 ECTS is examined through a minimum of one home / class assignments and one unseen examination of no less than two hours each.

11.4 Each theoretical or practical unit with a credit value between 9 ECTS and 16 ECTS is examined through a minimum of two home / class assignments and two unseen examination of no less than three hours each.

12.0 Examinations Schedule

Examinations for the Diploma are through timed unseen written papers.

The following examinations are normally scheduled throughout the academic year as follows:-

Autumn Semester Examinations	December
Winter Semester Examinations	March
Spring Semester Examinations	June
Summer Semester Examinations	July

12.1 Re-sits will be offered for **ONE** examination paper only with a priority for the final examination.

12.2 Should a student pass the final examination, however does not achieve the required pass mark of 40% to successfully complete the unit, the student will be allowed to re-sit **ONE** examination paper (Autumn or Winter Semester examination).

12.3 Re-sit examinations are normally scheduled in July.

12.4 Re-sits will NOT be offered to students who achieve less than 30% in their cumulative total marks and whose performance is unsatisfactory throughout the academic year.

12.5 Re-sits will NOT be offered to students who do not satisfy the attendance requirement throughout the academic year.

12.6 A re-sit examination fee applies per unit and the student is required to settle the fee prior to attempting the re-sit examination.

13.0 Assignments Schedule

13.1 The summative assignment must be uploaded online on the SMI Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) by latest midnight GMT on the following dates:

November	Autumn Semester Deadline
January	Winter Semester Deadline
February	Winter Semester Deadline
April	Spring Semester Deadline
May	Spring Semester Deadline
July	Summer Semester Deadline
August	Summer Semester Deadline

13.2 Students who do not submit their assignment by the stipulated deadline, will have their mark reduced by 10% of the maximum mark available and will only be given an extension of five days.

13.3 Students who do not submit their assignment will normally receive a mark of zero.

14.0 Materials Permitted in the Examination Room

14.1 A student must not, unless expressly permitted by the examiners, bring to an examination room any blank paper, books, dictionaries, notes, any form of recording device (including mp3/mp4 players) or any pencil cases.

14.2 All books and papers not approved for use in the examination, along with any spare personal belongings brought to the examination, must be left in such part of the room as the invigilator directs.

14.3 SMI does not guarantee safekeeping of students' possessions in any circumstances, inside or outside examination rooms. Students concerned about the security of their possessions during examinations will need to make alternative arrangements for their care, or ensure that they do not bring these possessions on days when they are required to attend examinations.

14.4 A student may not bring into an examination an electronic calculator except by the direction of the examiner. Any calculator permitted to be taken into the examination room must be hand-held, self-powered and noiseless. It must not make use of an audible alarm or facilities for 'wireless' transmissions or reception of information.

14.5 No other electronic device is allowed in the examination room unless specified by the examiner.

14.6 Mobile phones are not permitted in an examination room.

14.7 Students should produce a means of personal identification if requested to do so by the invigilators. The following are acceptable if requested:

14.7.1 Current passport;

14.7.2 Identity Card;

14.7.3 Driving Licence.

14.8 Students should also bring their acknowledgement e-mail to the exam. The electronic acknowledgement serves as a ticket of admission **and is the source for the index number. The index number must be written on every answer sheet.**

15.0 Timekeeping and Conduct of Examinations

15.1 A student will not be allowed to enter the room after the first thirty (30) minutes of an hour of the examination, without a valid and approved reason due to exceptional

circumstances⁵, or leave the examination room, whether temporarily or permanently, only AFTER at least an hour (1) from the start of the examination and NOT WITHIN the last fifteen (15) minutes of an examination.

15.2 Latecomers will not be given any extra time for the examination.

15.3 Students arriving later than thirty (30) minutes will not be allowed to attempt the respective examination and will be marked as ABSENT.

15.4 Any requests to postpone examinations due to travelling, unless related to the exceptional circumstances defined above or for other justifiable reasons acceptable to SMI, will NOT be entertained.

15.5 Students are to endeavor to be seated in the examination room at least fifteen (15) minutes before the start of the examination. During this period the students may not use any writing materials until the invigilator announces that they may do so.

15.6 Students must write out answers to the examination questions in the official script book that is provided by SMI unless otherwise directed by the respective examiner in the exam instructions.

15.7 Students must not directly or indirectly give or seek to give assistance to, or seek to obtain or accept assistance from any other student. Students must not communicate with another student in the examination room or copy from another student's answers.

15.7.1 Plagiarism is treated as a serious offence and may result in the suspension of the student's examination session and the student being called for a disciplinary hearing which may lead to suspension from SMI.

15.8 During the examination session, the hall must be in PERFECT SILENCE at all times, and the invigilator may suspend the exam due to disruption and rowdiness.

15.9 No student is allowed to leave the examination room without authorisation from the invigilator.

15.10 A student who has surrendered the examination script to the invigilator and has left the examination room will not be re-admitted for any reason whatsoever.

15.11 The student must not write their name on any part of the examination book or make any other mark thereon calculated to disclose their identity to an examiner.

15.12 In case of illness, the student must submit a doctor's certificate and same must be presented to the Registrar within 48 hours from date of examination. In these circumstances, the transcript will be marked as 'SICK'.

15.13 Students may not consult the invigilator as to the meaning of the question.

⁵ These include a major accident, a national calamity, a death in the family, injury or accident to the student, illness of a next of kin for which the student must prove mental and psychological incapacity to sit for the examination.

15.14 Smoking is prohibited in the examination room by law.

15.15 A student must not continue writing an answer after the invigilator has announced the expiration of time.

16.0 Misconduct

16.1 Misconduct includes any breach of rules relating to the conduct of examinations, as well as any dishonest practice occurring in the preparation or submission of any work which counts towards the attainment of a pass in any subject.

16.2 Any report received of any misconduct will be referred to the Head of Department to determine whether the report should be investigated.

16.3 If the Head of Department decides that a report should be investigated, the matter will be referred to the Disciplinary Board.

16.4 If the Disciplinary Board is satisfied that a student/s is guilty of misconduct then it may:

16.4.1 Cancel the student's examination;

16.4.2 Disqualify the student from sitting any examination for such period as it may prescribe;

16.4.3 Suspend the student's academic benefits, rights and facilities. During the period of suspension the student shall not be allowed to enter or remain on SMI's premises;

16.4.4 Permanently expel the student from SMI.

16.5 Decisions taken by the Disciplinary Board shall have immediate effect.

17.0 Appeals

The student may appeal to SMI's Arbitor in writing on arbitror@stmartins.edu within ten days from the occurrence of the incident that the student feels aggrieved.

18.0 Examination Markings and Results

18.1 Autumn Semester and Winter Semester examination scripts are marked by the examiner and a sample of the scripts is verified by an independent examiner. The final result will be confirmed and approved by SAAB⁶.

18.2 Spring Semester and Summer Semester examination scripts are marked by the examiner and all scripts are double marked by a second examiner. The final result will be confirmed and approved by SAAB⁷.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

18.3 Results for written-based examinations are normally released six weeks after the examination date.

18.4 Results will NOT be published for those students who would not have settled SMI fees in full.

18.5 In the event that a student attends the Summer Semester examination session, the higher grade of the marks achieved will apply.

18.6 Students who have sat for and passed the unit/s during the final examinations session will not be allowed to re-sit the examination to achieve a higher result.

19.0 Revision of Final / Re-Sit Script/s

19.1 Students are entitled to ask for an administrative re-count of the marks obtained in the final / re-sit examination/s and will be charged an administrative fee.

19.2 Revision of term / re-sit examination script/s on the basis of academic ground will not be entertained. Hence, the script will not be re-examined or re-marked by the examiner.

19.3 Requests by students to view the examination script/s following correction will not be entertained by SMI.

20.0 Number of unit attempts

20.1 A student who fails a unit/s is permitted to repeat the failed unit/s the following academic year.

20.2 The maximum number of unit attempts permitted for the final examination ONLY is **three**.

20.3 The three attempts include any attempt during the Summer Semester Examination session.

20.4 Students who do not attempt an examination due to illness and submit the medical certificate as noted in Clause 15.12 will not count as an attempt and will be allowed to attempt the examination during the Summer Semester. Students who do not provide a valid reason for not attempting the final examination during the Spring Semester will NOT be allowed to attempt the examination during the Summer Semester.

20.5 Students who fail the first attempt and subsequently pass the final examination at the second or third attempt will not receive a mark greater than 40% in the overall grade.

20.6 A student is not allowed to sit for examinations without attending lectures for the programme as per Clause 4.0.

20.7 Students who fail **ONE** unit during the re-sit session and hence are not awarded the respective Diploma are allowed to re-sit the unit the following academic year without

attending lectures at SMI subject to having achieved the required attendance the previous year.

20.8 Students who do not satisfy the attendance requirement will not be eligible to register for this unit without attending lectures at SMI.

20.9 In these circumstances, the student is required to re-submit the respective assignments published throughout the academic year and **MUST** re-attempt all scheduled examinations.

20.10 An administrative fee of €300.00 applies and the student is required to settle the fee before the start of the academic year.

20.11 Registration will cease in the event that a student exhausts the three attempts.

21.0 Progression

21.1 The Diplomas provide an entry route to a number of MQF Level 6 Degree programmes.

22.0 Interpretation of the marks

22.1 Units are marked according to the following scale:

Mark range	Classification
70% and over	Distinction
60% – 69%	Credit
50%-59%	Merit
40%-49%	Pass
39% and below	Fail

22.2 SAAB⁸ may consider increasing the overall grade should the student achieve 2% or less below the classification band mentioned in Clause 22.1.

23.0 Award Classification

23.1 To be considered for the Diploma award, students must attempt and successfully complete **ALL** compulsory units in addition to a number of elective units and must reach a minimum total of 60 ECTS. The unit codes and titles are listed in **Appendix 1 – Unit Structure**.

⁸ Ibid.

23.2 The average of the final marks attained for each unit (as per Clause 5.1) will be classified as per table below for the Diploma award:

Mark range	Classification
70% and over	Distinction
60% – 69%	Credit
50%-59%	Merit
40%-49%	Pass
39% and below	Fail

23.3 The best marks of the equivalent of 85% of the ECTS's taken at Level 1.

23.3 A student who is granted an award will receive the following Graduation documents:-

23.3.1 A final Diploma certificate⁹;

23.3.2 A Diploma supplement, which is a detailed record of a student's studies

23.5 The Graduation Ceremony is normally scheduled on the last Friday of the month of August every year.

24.0 Exit Awards

24.1 Students who do not qualify to be awarded the Diploma may be eligible for an exit award. In such circumstances, SMI will issue the student with a certificate listing the unit/s in respect of which the student would have obtained a pass.

24.2 Students who have accepted an exit award will not be eligible for the MQF Level 5 Diploma and will normally not be eligible to re-register for the Diploma.

⁹ The Certificate will be issued with the details of the candidate as listed on the Institute's records of application for the qualification and/or as updated upon written request of the candidate which would include evidence of change in details. A certificate will be issued ONLY ONCE free of charge. If a student will request the re-issue of a certificate an administrative charge of €100 or that fee applicable at the time of request.

Appendix 1

Unit Structure

Diploma in Computing (MQF Level 5)

<https://stmartins.edu/programmes/DiplomaComputing.pdf>

Diploma in Computing with Games Design and Development (MQF Level 5)

<https://stmartins.edu/programmes/DiplomaComputingGamesDesign.pdf>

Diploma in Computing with Information Systems (MQF Level 5)

<https://stmartins.edu/programmes/DiplomaComputingInformationSystems.pdf>