

MSM

MAASTRICHT
SCHOOL OF
MANAGEMENT



MSM TEACHING & GRADING GUIDELINES MBA & MM PROGRAMS

Working together for better global management

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1. Introduction

The information in this handbook provides lecturers with a simple set of references which should assist in course preparation, delivery and assessment for a course as part of a Maastricht School of Management MBA or MM degree – at Maastricht or with a partner institution (please note that there is a separate guideline available for the Online MBA).

By following these guidelines, lecturers will be well placed to meet the subject parameters, quality and transparency standards which must be properly administered to meet the requirements to issue a Dutch national degree.

This manual is not exhaustive and if a lecturer has any questions, they should seek advice from either their program administrator contact or if subject specific, the Discipline Head for the subject being taught. A link to MSM's website listing the Discipline Heads is [here](#).

2. Program Administration

Each program is administrated and coordinated by a program administrator. They are the first contact point for any questions or issues arising during your assignment. It is expected from faculty to cooperate and coordinate in a collegial manner on all relevant items with the respective program administrator.

MSM uses Moodle as its Learning Management System. For instructions on how to use Moodle, please be referred to the Moodle instructions on the [MSM website](#).

3. Education and Examination Regulations (EER)

The Education and Examination Regulations (EER) contain the academic standards of all programs, MSM's mission, vision, core values, and the participant code of conduct. They apply to the teaching and assessments within the MSM degree programs and include specific information about academic misconduct (including but not limited to fraud, plagiarism, forgery or academic outsourcing) as well as the disciplinary actions that will be taken in case of academic and/or non-academic misconduct.

For each academic program of MSM there is a separate version of the EER that is updated every academic year.

All faculty is expected to know and be aware of the latest version of the applicable EER and to cooperate with staff and report when participants are not complying with the EER.

Please find the latest versions of the EER [here](#).

4. Dublin Descriptors

The learning goals and assessment structure of MSM's degree programs are based on the “Dublin Descriptors” (DD's) that are set in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area¹. The DD's phrase the general competence levels and expectations of achievements and abilities associated with the award that represents the end of the respective study, and include the following five components:

1. Knowledge and understanding
2. Applying knowledge and understanding
3. Making judgements
4. Communication
5. Learning skills

4.1 Learning goals

Based on the generic DD's, MSM has developed general learning goals for its MBA and MM program, and specific learning goals for each course within the program. All assessments need to reflect the associated learning goals in order to determine the competence level of each student. Moreover, the results are taken for further analysis regarding quality assurance and improvement.

Please find below an overview of the learning goals per DD and program.

Dublin Descriptor	General MBA learning goals	General MM learning goals
DD 1: Knowledge and understanding	Students will recognize and evaluate the nature, the impact of and the concepts of management in a globalizing, multicultural context.	Students are able to demonstrate their advanced knowledge and comprehension of the various management-related disciplines.
DD 2: Applying knowledge and understanding	Students will identify and apply the appropriate methods and tools to solve contemporary business challenges.	Students are able to apply principles, theories and models pertaining to the management discipline in the context of 21 st century organizations that are active in or for global, emerging markets.
DD 3: Making judgements	Students will evaluate and determine responsible business decisions that impact on both organizational performance and society.	Students will be able to propose appropriate solutions for fundamental management challenges of sustainable organizations.
DD 4: Communication	Students will be able to discuss, debate as well as provide convincing ideas to a variety of multicultural stakeholder groups.	Students will be able to present and defend views effectively through a variety of oral and written communication modes.
DD 5: Learning skills	Students will be able to work autonomously and determine their own learning needs.	Students will have the ability to reflect on their own learning & professional development.

4.2 Bloom's taxonomy

Both for defining the learning goals and the evaluation criteria in the assessment rubrics, the framework and expressions of Bloom's (revised) taxonomy should be used.²

¹ More information can be found on <http://www.ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks>.

² More information can be found on <https://www.bloomstaxonomy.net/>.

5. Course Preparation

5.1 Course manual

Course manuals should stress the competencies participants develop in each course in terms of knowledge, application, critical judgment, and learning and communication skills. Each course manual needs to define these competencies, as linked to a specific field of expertise, and show how they are developed and tested. The course manual templates are updated each academic year.

In advance of the course the lecturer is required to:

1. Prepare a course manual according to the respective course manual template that can be found in Moodle or will be sent by the program administrator. Please follow the specific instructions mentioned in the course manual template.
2. Upload the course manual to the respective Moodle course **four** weeks prior to the course start.
3. In case you want to deviate from the prescribed literature and/or examination procedures, you are required to discuss this and get the written permission of the Discipline Head.

Course manual template

Please notice that several sections of the course manual are fixed and therefore not possible to change (e.g. course data, course description, learning goals, core literature). Other sections such as the didactic approach or the session structure should be described by each lecturer individually.

The course assessments are added as examples. You can set the same or similar assessments to those suggested in the course manual or you can add your own. However, please be clear in describing the different forms of assessments and include detailed information about the design and nature of the assessments. In case of assignments, for each assignment an assessment rubric needs to be developed. Both the assessment descriptions and the respective assessment rubrics have to be added to the course manual. Please respect the detailed information about the assessment requirements in section 7.

5.2 Teaching material

1. Develop and prepare the teaching material according to the course manual.
2. Upload all literature, cases, lecture slides, etc. in Moodle **four** weeks before the course start.
3. Upload any additional material in Moodle during the course.

5.3 Pre-course audit checks

In order to ensure the quality of education, MSM conducts pre-course audits for all courses in its residential degree programs on a peer-review principle. Therefore, it is essential that all course material is uploaded in Moodle on time so the Examination Board can start the process.

1. The lecturer will be asked by the Examination Board to discuss the course manual and course assessments with the assigned second evaluator. Both the lecturer and second reader must agree that the course fulfils the pre-course audit form criteria. In case of a disagreement, the Academic Coordinator must be consulted.
2. When the lecturer and second reader agree on all course audit criteria, the second reader should submit the course manual and course audit form to the Examination Board.

6. Teaching

Teaching will take place as per indicated schedule in the course manual.

Additionally, the lecturer should be available at least 6 hours spread over the assignment for individual consultation by the participants.

During classes the lecturer should make sure that:

- Actual teaching hours are in line with the teaching hours mentioned in the course manual.
- Interaction is initiated and encouraged among the participants.
- Participants are invited to participate in exercises, discussions, cases etc. giving them the opportunity to test their understanding of the subject.
- They react adequately to questions of participants thereby contributing to realizing learning objectives, both in class and outside class (by use of email, within a few days).
- Classes should contain examples and cases, which should be updated regularly and reflect current practices adjusted to context of education (region, sector).
- A variation of teaching methods is used in order to reach the learning objectives.
- Teaching methods include methods to check participants' progress on the subject.

6.1 Course attendance

Participants, once enrolled in an MSM program, are obliged to participate in all courses of the program, according to the schedule provided. Class attendance is compulsory and any absence from the class requires permission granted by the Academic Coordinator respectively the program administrator with the maximum of two successive courses.

A participant attending less than 80% of the classes, without a compelling reason and approval from the MSM Academic Coordinator, will have to take a course capstone assignment.

A participant attending less than 60% of the classes, without a compelling reason and approval from the MSM Academic Coordinator, is considered to have failed the course and therefore has to repeat the entire course.

Therefore, the lecturer should:

1. Keep track of the class attendance every day.
2. Report any absence directly to the program administrator.

More information on class attendance can be found in section 3.1.1 of the [EER](#).

7. Course Assessments

Course assessments should reflect the learning goals of the course as well as the learning material used and test the knowledge, application (insight) and skills of the participants.

Please be clear in describing the different forms of assessments and include detailed information about the design and nature of the assessment and the level of knowledge the participant is required to possess when participating in the assessment. This includes the material covered in the lectures, self-study and other parts of the course that form the object of the assessment.

The final grade for the course may be based on a combination of individual work and group work.

- Individual assessment must be at least 70% of the final grade for a course. This 70% can be made up of various forms of assessments, such as a written or oral exam(s) and/or written assignment(s).
- The remaining 30% of the final grade for a subject can be made up of alternative forms of assessment, such as class participation, take home assignment, case study, presentation and/or group assignment(s).

The deadline for the individual assessments will be communicated by the program administrator. Lecturers can deviate from deadlines for individual participants only with mutual agreement of the program administrator and only based on special personal circumstances.

More information on course assessment regulations can be found in section 3.2 of the [EER](#).

7.1 Assignments

In case individual or group assignment(s) are used as course assessment, the lecturer should comply with the following:

1. Provide detailed information about the design and nature of the course assignment(s) and their weighting in the course manual.
2. Develop an assessment rubric per assignment that will enable evaluating the participant's performance against set standards, rather than assigning a single subjective grade. The assessment rubric makes explicit a range of assessment criteria and expected performance standards and specifies the points given per component and according to the Dublin Descriptors. In this way participants will be able to verify how their results were determined. Please find an example in **annex 1**.
3. Both the assignment description(s) and assessment rubric(s) need be added to the course manual and not distributed by e-mail, in class or on Moodle.
4. Participants have to submit their course assignments in Moodle.

7.2 Exams

In case a written exam is used as course assessment, the lecturer should comply with the following:

1. Prepare an exam that is at graduate level and meets the following requirements:
 - a. The exam should include discussion type questions, case studies or problems that indicate a solid understanding of the material presented.
 - b. The subject of the questions should cover the complete course content and reflect the learning goals of the course as well as the learning material used.
 - c. Examination questions should be clear and unambiguous and such that participants can correctly judge how extensive and detailed their answer should be.
 - d. Multiple-choice questions are only allowed if they are combined with open questions.
 - e. Unless stated otherwise in the course manual, all exams are closed book and notes exams.
 - f. Each exam question should be linked to a Dublin Descriptor and the percentage of the overall weighting should be mentioned.
2. Develop model answers including the points assigned to each answer, making clear to the participants the points they will have obtained.
3. Send the exam questions and model answers to the program administrator in electronic format preferably before the start of the course or, at the latest, on the last teaching day.

8. Grading

Grading should be fair, objective and transparent to participants. Each lecturer should therefore strictly follow the instructions as described below.

More information on the grading policy can be found in section 3.8 of the [EER](#).

8.1 Grading scale

Grades are given on a scale from 1.0 to 10.0 (see the table for interpretation of the grades).

Pass: All assessments should be graded separately and require a minimum grade of 5.5 apart from having a final grade for a subject of 5.5 or above, as a requirement to obtain a final pass grade.

No Pass: The final grade for a subject is under 5.5 and higher or equal than 4.0 or the course assessment(s) are under 5.5 (after first attempt) but the final grade is higher or equal than 4.0. The participant then must take a resit.

	Grade	Description
Pass	10.0	Outstanding
	9.0 – 9.9	Very Good
	8.0 – 8.9	Good
	7.0 – 7.9	More than satisfactory
	6.0 – 6.9	Satisfactory
	5.5 – 5.9	Pass
No Pass	5.0 – 5.4	Almost satisfactory
	4.0 – 4.9	Unsatisfactory
Immediate Fail	3.0 – 3.9	Very unsatisfactory
	2.0 – 2.9	Poor
	1.0 – 1.9	Very Poor

Immediate Fail: The final grade for a subject is less than 4.0 (after first attempt).

In case of detected academic misconduct, the participant will receive a “No Grade” for the course assessment.

8.2 Grading assignments

After the assignment submission deadline, the lecturer should take the following steps:

1. Go to the assignment area in Moodle and first check the indicated plagiarism rate shown under “Similarity” and check the Turnitin reports. However please note that those percentages only give an indication of possible plagiarism.
2. Read the assignments (either directly in Moodle via the preview option or download it).
3. Review on and report academic misconduct (see 8.4 below). In case academic misconduct is detected there is no need for further evaluation of this course assessment. The participant will then receive a “No grade” for this course assessment.
4. Grade the assignments using the developed assessment rubric.
5. For each participant / group (in case of a group assignment) a separate assessment rubric has to be filled in that includes grades and comments per section and Dublin Descriptor.
6. Grading should be finished within 3 weeks after the assignment submission deadline either directly in Moodle or by submitting the completed assessment rubrics to the program administrator.
7. Faculty who have extenuating reasons why they cannot meet the deadline should send an official request for extension to the Director Education.

Please note that the steps above need to be followed for each course assignment in case several assignments are used as course assessment (for example individual and group assignment).

8.3 Grading exams

After the lecturer has received the exam scripts via e-mail or DHL, the following steps should be taken:

1. Grade the Exams according to the developed model answers and grading scheme indicating comments and marks per question on each exam script.
2. Review on and report academic misconduct (see 8.4 below). In case academic misconduct is detected there is no need for further evaluation of this course assessment.
3. Return the graded exam scripts to MSM by e-mail or regular mail.
4. The grades and graded exam scripts should be submitted within 3 weeks after receipt of the exam scripts.

8.4 Reporting academic misconduct

MSM handles a 0% plagiarism rate. Therefore, each lecturer, supervisor or evaluator is required to:

1. Review examination scripts, presentations, written assignments, final assessment, including draft version of any submission, not only for their “quality”, but also for plagiarism and any other form of academic misconduct such as data forgery and academic outsourcing.
2. Review the plagiarism report generated by Moodle: Written assignments including final assessments are submitted in Moodle by the participants and are automatically scanned for plagiarism with Turnitin software.
3. In case any form of academic misconduct is observed, report the case in writing to the MSM Examination Board by filling out the [Reporting Academic Misconduct Form](#). There is no need for further evaluation of this course assessment.
4. In case of academic misconduct, the participant will receive a “No Grade” for the course assessment.

More information can be found in the [MSM Academic Misconduct Policy](#) and [Procedure for reporting academic misconduct](#).

8.5 Oral examination

In case of an oral assessment (only in exceptional cases), the lecturer should determine an assessment norm and make it available to the participants taking the assessment. The examiner should assess and document the oral assessment through a short report written by him or her, including the questions asked, a summary of the answers given by the participant and the way in which the examiner calculated the grades (given marks per question). Besides the respective lecturer and participant, a second examiner must be present during the oral examination.

8.6 Resits

When a participant obtains a “No Pass” (a score less than 5.5 but the final grade is higher or equal to 4.0), (s)he is required to improve his/her grade by taking a resit written or oral exam and/or by redoing and re-submitting a (new) course assignment.

In case one or more participants need to take a resit, the lecturer has to provide a resit assessment.

- Resit exam: submit a resit exam including model answers to the program administrator.
- Resit assignment: indicate whether the original assignment can be improved or a new assignment needs to be written. In this case, please send a new assignment description to the program administrator.

Resit assessments should be graded in the same manner as the first attempt assessment.

8.7 Right of inspection, objection and appeal

It is important that faculty is aware of and comply with the right of inspection, objection and appeal for participants. Participants have the right to inspect their evaluated assessment within four weeks after notifications of result and/or receipt of the graded assessment.

In case the participant has reasons for a grade objection, (s)he is advised to discuss the issue with the respective lecturer or (if the lecturer is not available) fill out the grade objection form. The lecturer is expected to review and react on the grade objection form within three weeks.

If the participant has motivated grounds for further action after the review, (s)he may object to the grade in writing to the MSM Examination Board stating the reasons for disagreement. In case the grade objection is accepted, the MSM Examination Board can ask a second evaluator to re-evaluate the grading. This can result in the same or different (higher or lower) grade than originally obtained.

More information can be found in the sections 3.10 and 6.7 of the [EER](#).

9. Grading of the Final MBA & MM Assessment

After approval of the final assessment by the supervisor, the participant is required to present and defend his or her final assessment in front of an evaluation panel. The evaluation panel usually consists of two evaluators.

1. An evaluator will receive the final assessment at least one week before the scheduled defense date.
2. Each evaluator is requested to complete the Final Evaluation Form. Please check with the program administrator for the latest version.
3. All evaluators need to complete each facet of the final evaluation form with a specific grade and justifying comments (also for re-evaluations).
4. The final evaluation form is based on the 1.0 to 10.0 grading scale. The pass-fail boundary of 5.5 accounts for the overall as well as for each competency (connected to the DD's) measured in the assessment rubric.
5. During and after the defense both evaluators will combine their findings into one Final Evaluation Form.
6. After the final evaluation (defense) the Final Evaluation Form should be sent to the Program Administrator within two days.

More information regarding the final assessment can be found in the Final Assessment Guidelines and in the Final Assessment Supervision Guidelines.

10. Post Course Activities

10.1 Course evaluations

After each course, the participants are requested to complete a course evaluation. The course evaluation covers the relevancy of the subject matter, the subject coverage, the subject organization, the lecture content, the teaching methodology, overall presentation, textbook used and individual comments.

The outcomes of the course evaluation will be sent to you by the program administrators after the submission of the grades.

10.2 Quality checks

Peer evaluation of teaching is a critical component of a quality program of education. Faculty members benefit from the feedback and recognition. Participants benefit from the ongoing improvement in faculty instruction. Peer assessment provides faculty members with feedback from their peers that will assist them in identifying strengths and areas for improvement in their teaching.

One of the tasks of the Examination Board is to monitor and ensure the quality of course assessments, by checking the validity, reliability, transparency and efficiency of assessments and grading procedures. Therefore, a random sample from all course assessments is taken and evaluated by a peer faculty member. The objective of the quality checks is to encourage transparency in the grading process and to guarantee that lecturers use proper materials and suitable assessment methods.

In case the peer reviewer is recommending points of improvement, the lecturer is requested to submit an improvement plan.

11. Annex 1: Example Assessment Rubric

When you set up an assessment rubric, think about what you want to evaluate and how you will evaluate. This gives you the assessment criteria and the expected performance standards. Please adhere to the instructions below:

- Per Dublin Descriptor (DD) at least two criteria have to be defined including their corresponding weighting (percentage) of the total grade. Each criterion can only measure one component. In general, more criteria are better than less, allowing you to provide a more accurate evaluation.
- For defining the assessment criteria and expected performance standards, the framework and expressions of Bloom’s (revised) taxonomy should be used.³
- The expected performance standards need to include five assessment levels (1 to 5 points), each level with a clear description of what is expected for this level.
- Additional to the points given per assessment criterion, a comment should be provided to the student explaining the chosen points.
- The final grade in this example is calculated by first multiplying the points for each criterion with the weighting for this criterion, and then multiplying the sum of all these proportionate points with 2. This will give the final grade out of 10.

Example Assessment Rubric

DD	Weigh- ting	Assessment Criteria	Expected performance standards					Points	Comments
			1 point (very poor)	2 points (unsatisfactory)	3 points (satisfactory)	4 points (good)	5 points (outstanding)		
DD1	10%	Criterion 1: Does the participant appropriately mention the concepts/tools covered in the course (showing clear understanding)?	Concepts/ tools not mentioned or referred to incorrectly in every case	Some of the concepts/ tools mentioned but references inadequate to show understanding and mostly misunderstood	Around half the concepts/ tools are mentioned and generally correctly referred to, but very basically	Most of the concepts/ tools are mentioned and mostly showing evidence that clearly understood	All of concepts and tools mentioned in detail and all clearly understood		
	5%	Criterion 2: Does the participant remember the origins, purpose and authors of the concepts/tools referred to in class?	None of the origins, purpose and authors are mentioned	Some of the origins, purpose and authors are mentioned but mostly misunderstood or omitted	Many of the origins, purpose and authors are mentioned, correctly	Most of the origins, purpose and authors are mentioned, correctly	All of the origins, purpose and authors are mentioned correctly		

³ More information can be found on <https://www.bloomstaxonomy.net/>.

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DD	Weigh- ting	Assessment Criteria	Expected performance standards					Points	Comments
			1 point (very poor)	2 points (unsatisfactory)	3 points (satisfactory)	4 points (good)	5 points (outstanding)		
DD2	10%	Criterion 3: Does the participant show the ability to apply the concepts/tools to a new situation, rather than just quoting class examples?	The participant cannot apply any of the concepts/ tools and either has no examples or just reuses class examples	The participant can apply only a few of the concepts/ tools and either has just a few own examples or just reuses class examples	The participant can apply around half of the concepts/ tools from class and has own examples for about half	The participant can apply most of the concepts/ tools and has own examples for most of them	The participant can apply all of the concepts/ tools and has own examples for each		
	5%	Criterion 4: Does the participant answer the question/respond to the task given as required? (Applying concepts to another case)	The participant does not answer the question or respond to the task given in any way – completely irrelevant	The participant attempts only a partial answer of the question or response to the task given – mostly irrelevant	The participant's answer of the question/ response to the task given is only about halfway so at least half incomplete	The participant answers most of the question/ response to the task given in a mostly complete way	The participant answers all of the questions/ responds to all aspects of the task given in a totally complete way		
	10%	Criterion 5: Are the examples given by the participant detailed and relevant?	The participant either has no examples or they are lacking in detail and/or irrelevant	The participant has some examples but few and mostly lacking in detail and/or irrelevant	At least half of the participant's examples are detailed and relevant	Most of the participant's examples are detailed and relevant	All of the participant's examples are detailed and relevant		
DD3	5%	Criterion 6: Does the participant identify the most important problems/issues to be addressed?	The participant does not identify any problems/ issues to be addressed	The participant identifies only a few problems/ issues to be addressed	The participant identifies several important problems/ issues to be addressed	The participant identifies many important problems/ issues to be addressed	The participant identifies all of the most important problems/ issues to be addressed		
	5%	Criterion 7: Is the argumentation logical, clear and consistent throughout the journal?	There is no argumentation in place in this journal	There is some attempt at argumentation but is not clear or consistent	There is some attempt at argumentation and is partially clear and consistent	There is a strong attempt at argumentation and it is mostly clear and consistent	There is a very great attempt at argumentation and it is all clear and consistent		
	10%	Criterion 8: Are the arguments backed by research-based facts/evidence and not by opinions?	The participant's work has no arguments backed by research-based facts/and only opinions	The participant's work has few arguments backed by research-based facts/and is mostly opinions	The participant's work has several arguments backed by research-based facts/and relatively few opinions	The participant's work has many arguments backed by research-based facts/and very few opinions	The participant's work has all arguments backed by research-based facts/and no unsupported opinions		
	10%	Criterion 9: Do the conclusions follow from the analysis and discussion?	The participant has no conclusions	The participant's conclusions are not based on the previous work at all	The participant's conclusions have some clear connection with the previous analysis and discussion	The participant's conclusions have a very clear connection with the previous analysis and discussion	The participant's conclusions have a totally clear connection with the previous analysis and discussion		

MSM Teaching & Grading Guidelines – MBA & MM Programs

DD	Weigh- ting	Assessment Criteria	Expected performance standards					Points	Comments
			1 point (very poor)	2 points (unsatisfactory)	3 points (satisfactory)	4 points (good)	5 points (outstanding)		
DD4	5%	Criterion 10: Is the journal presented effectively, without ambiguity or repetition?	The journal content is ambiguous and repetitive	The journal content has a lot of ambiguity and repetition	The journal content has only a small amount of ambiguity and repetition	The journal content has almost no ambiguity and repetition	The journal content has absolutely no ambiguity or repetition		
	10%	Criterion 11: Does the journal have a clear structure: introduction, analysis, and conclusion?	The journal has no clear structure whatsoever	The journal lacks a clear structure: introduction, analysis, and conclusion are mostly missing	The journal has the beginnings of a structure: with some attempt at intro-duction, analysis, and conclusion	The journal has a clear structure: intro-duction, analysis, and conclusion are mostly in place	The journal has a very clear structure: introduction, analysis, and conclusion are all in place		
DD5	5%	Criterion 12: Is there a holistic appreciation of the range of issues here (big picture thinking) and why they are significant?	There is no concept of holism or seeing the big picture	There is almost no concept of holism or seeing the big picture	There is some concept of holism or seeing the big picture	There is a clear concept of holism or seeing the big picture	There is a very clear and developed concept of holism or seeing the big picture		
	5%	Criterion 13: Does the participant show their own value-added to strengthen the journal with personal reflections?	There are no personal reflections in the journal	There are very few personal reflections in the journal	There are some personal reflections in the journal	There are many personal reflections in the journal	There are very many personal reflections in the journal		
	5%	Criterion 14: Does the participant include a personal action plan for their own future development?	There is no personal action plan in the journal	There is a very brief and under-developed action plan in the journal	There is only a brief action plan in the journal	There is a clear and well-developed action plan in the journal	There is a very clear and detailed and very well-developed action plan in the journal		