

**MSM** MAASTRICHT  
SCHOOL OF  
MANAGEMENT



Maastricht University



**MSM TEACHING & GRADING  
GUIDELINES**

**MSM-MBA & MSM-MM  
PROGRAMME**

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## 1. Introduction

The information in this handbook provides lecturers with a simple set of references which should assist in preparation, delivery and assessment of a course within the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM programme of Maastricht School of Management (MSM) that is part of the School of Business and Economics (SBE) of Maastricht University.

MSM strives for high quality management education. Faculty is therefore encouraged to contribute to the continuous quality enhancement process which is essential to reach this goal.

By following these guidelines, lecturers will be well placed to meet the subject parameters, quality and transparency standards that are set by MSM and required by Maastricht University, the Dutch law, and national and international accreditation bodies.

This manual is not exhaustive and if a lecturer has any questions, they should seek advice from either their programme administrator contact or if subject specific, the responsible MSM faculty member. More information can also be found [here](#).

## 2. Programme Administration

Each programme is administrated and coordinated by a programme administrator. They are the first contact point for any questions or issues arising during your assignment.

The programme administrator is also responsible for checking if all relevant and required course and examination documentation is available and conform to these guidelines. This documentation forms an important basis of MSM's quality enhancement process and is therefore emphasized in these guidelines.

It is expected from faculty to cooperate and coordinate in a collegial manner on all relevant items with the respective programme 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 all information about the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM programme such as programme content, examinations, assessment, and academic standards.

All faculty is expected to know and be aware of the latest version of the MSM-MBA-MM-EER and to cooperate with staff and report when students are not complying with the EER (for example in case of academic misconduct).

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

## 4. Dublin Descriptors

The learning goals and assessment structure of MSM's degree programmes are based on the "Dublin Descriptors" (DD's) that are set in the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area<sup>1</sup>. 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 programme, and specific learning goals for each course within the programme. These have been set according to the framework and expressions of Bloom's (revised) taxonomy.<sup>2</sup>

All examination (components) 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 programme.

Dublin Descriptor	General MBA learning goals	General MM learning goals
<b>DD 1: Knowledge and understanding</b>	Students are able to 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.
<b>DD 2: Applying knowledge and understanding</b>	Students are able to 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 21st century organizations that are active in or for global, emerging markets.
<b>DD 3: Making judgements</b>	Students are able to evaluate and determine responsible business decisions that impact on both organizational performance and society.	Students are able to propose appropriate solutions for fundamental management challenges of sustainable organizations.
<b>DD 4: Communication</b>	Students are able to discuss, debate as well as provide convincing ideas to a variety of multicultural stakeholder groups.	Students are able to present and defend views effectively through a variety of oral and written communication modes.
<b>DD 5: Learning skills</b>	Students are able to work autonomously and determine their own learning needs.	Students are able to reflect on their own learning & professional development.

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

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

## 5. MSM Academic Course Coordinators

According to the Dutch law only examiners that are officially appointed by the Board of Examiners, are allowed to set and grade examinations. At MSM for all MBA and MM courses Academic Course Coordinators are assigned who act as the examiners for those courses.

Therefore, lecturers who teach a course within the MBA or MM programme are required to meet the MSM Academic Course Coordinator about six weeks before the course takes place to discuss and agree upon the course content and the examination (components). The syllabus needs to be approved by the Academic Course Coordinator before it is uploaded to Moodle.

After the grading is finished, the MSM Academic Course Coordinator needs to check and approve the grades before they are published to the students.

Courses or grades that are not approved by an MSM Academic Course Coordinator are invalid.

## 6. Course Preparation

Please first log in to Moodle ([moodle.msm.nl](https://moodle.msm.nl)) and go to the respective course. All relevant documents and instructions are added to the course. Please note that ALL course information, documents, material, assignments, etc. need to be uploaded to Moodle by both lecturer and students. Also grading is done directly in Moodle.

### 6.1 Syllabus

The syllabus of a course should stress the competencies students develop in each course that are set in the learning goals. Each syllabus needs to define these competencies, as linked to a specific field of expertise, and show how they are developed and tested. The syllabus templates are updated each academic year.

In advance of the course the lecturer is required to:

1. Complete/adapt the syllabus according to the respective syllabus template that can be found in Moodle. Please follow the specific instructions mentioned in the syllabus template.
2. Meet with the Academic Course Coordinator to discuss the content of the course and possible deviations in the examination (components), assessment rubrics and prescribed literature.
3. Send the final syllabus to the Academic Course Coordinator and receive approval for it.
4. Inform the programme administrator about any deviations in the examination (change of components, assessment rubrics, weighting, etc.).
5. Upload the approved syllabus to the respective Moodle course **three** weeks prior to the course start.

### 6.2 Teaching material

1. Develop and prepare the teaching material.
2. Upload all material in Moodle **three** weeks before the course start. Please respect copyright restrictions for all material. Articles should not be uploaded as pdf but only the link to the article in the online library or on the internet. Paid cases need to be requested at the MSM InfoCenter ([msm-infocenter@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:msm-infocenter@maastrichtuniversity.nl)) before the course start.
3. Additional material can also be uploaded during the course.

## 7. Teaching

Teaching will take place as per indicated schedule in the syllabus.

Additionally, the lecturer should be available for individual consultation by the students.

All MSM faculty are experienced lecturers and we trust that every lecturer will deliver inspiring classes that facilitate the studiousness of our students by taking care that:

- Interaction is initiated and encouraged among the students.
- Students are invited to participate in exercises, discussions, cases etc. giving them the opportunity to test their understanding of the subject.
- Lecturers react adequately and timely to questions of students thereby contributing to realizing learning objectives, both in class and outside class.
- Classes 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 students' progress on the subject.

### 7.1 Class attendance

Class attendance is compulsory for courses of the MSM-MBA and MSM-MM programme. Students should report any absence from class (also if classes are delivered online) to the lecturer and programme administrator before the start of the class.

A participant attending less than 75% of the classes of the course, will be required to submit a course assignment<sup>3</sup>.

Class attendance is recorded by means of a pass/fail examination component in Moodle.

Therefore, the lecturer should:

1. Keep track of the class attendance every day.
2. Complete the "Class attendance" examination component in Moodle (instructions on how to do this can be found in Moodle in the section "Lecturer instructions").

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<sup>3</sup> A course assignment is a written assignment where participants are asked to provide a summary of the core literature covered in a course. This summary will ensure that participants have a complete overview of the course content. Course instructors must provide participants with a list of key articles covering the essential concepts of the course. The course assignment must be between 2.000 and 3.000 words in length. Participants will only receive a "Pass" or "Fail" grade for the course assignment.

## 8. Examination

The examination (components) of the course 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 students.

The final individual assignment (70%) is fixed and should not be changed as well as the according assessment rubric.

The examination (components) for the remaining 30% is added as example to the syllabus. You can set the same or similar examination (components) to those suggested in the syllabus or you can add your own. However, please be clear in describing the different forms of the examination (components) and include detailed information about the design and nature of the examination (components). This includes the material covered in the lectures, self-study and other parts of the course that form the object of the examination (components). For each assignment an assessment rubric needs to be developed. Both the description of the examination (components) and the respective assessment rubrics have to be added to the syllabus.

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

- The final individual assignment of 70% is set for the course as well as the corresponding assessment rubric and cannot be changed by the lecturer.
- The remaining 30% of the final grade for a subject can be made up of alternative forms of examination (components), such as group assignment(s), take home assignment, case study, presentation and/or participation.

### 8.1 Assignments

For each assignment that is part of the 30%, the lecturer should comply with the following:

1. Provide detailed information about the design and nature of the assignment(s), their weighting, and the deadline(s) in the syllabus.
2. Develop an assessment rubric per assignment that will enable evaluating the student'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 weighting and the associated Dublin Descriptors per component. In this way students will be able to verify how their results were determined. Please find specific instructions and an example in **annex 1**.
3. The assessment rubric needs to be imported into Moodle and attached to the respective assignment. Please inform the programme administrator about any deviations from the standard course template.
4. Both the assignment description(s) and assessment rubric(s) need be added to the syllabus and not distributed by e-mail, in class or on Moodle.
5. Students have to submit their course assignments in Moodle and not send by e-mail.

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

## 8.2 Written exams

In case a written exam is used as examination component, 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 MSM Academic Course Coordinator together with the final syllabus about four weeks prior to the course. If a written exam is not approved by the Academic Course Coordinator, it is invalid and must be repeated.

## 9. Grading

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

### 9.1 Grading scale

The final grade of the course is given as a whole or a half grade on a scale from 0.0 to 10.0. A grade as from a 5.5 is considered sufficient. A grade below 5.5 is considered as an insufficient grade.

In case it is not possible to determine a result, for instance if a student is registered for the examination but has not actually taken the examination or part thereof, the examination will be graded with a No Grade (NG).

The grading scale should be interpreted as in the table on the right.

It is important to understand that this scale is based on the Dutch grading system. You can read more about it here:

<https://www.studyinholland.nl/dutch-education/dutch-grading-system>.

**Please note that at least a 5.5 grade and/or a pass must be obtained for each examination component of the course in order to secure a pass in the course.**

	Grade	Description
Pass (sufficient)	10.0	Outstanding
	9.0; 9.5	Very Good
	8.0; 8.5	Good
	7.0; 7.5	More than satisfactory
	6.0; 6.5	Satisfactory
	5.5	Pass
Fail (insufficient)	5.0	Almost satisfactory
	4.0; 4.5	Unsatisfactory
	3.0; 3.5	Very unsatisfactory
	2.0; 2.5	Poor
	1.0; 1.5	Very Poor
	0.0	Use is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners
No Grade (NG)	Inability to determine result	



## 9.2 Grading in Moodle

All grading needs to be done directly in Moodle using the rubrics attached to each assignment. Grades submitted via e-mail in e.g. Excel sheets will not be accepted.

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. Please note that those percentages only give an indication of possible plagiarism.
2. Review on and report fraud (see 9.3 below). In case fraud (including plagiarism) is detected there is no need to further evaluate this examination component. The student will then receive a “No grade” for this examination component.
3. Grade the assignments using the corresponding assessment rubric. For detailed information on how to grade using the Moodle rubrics, please consult the PowerPoint and video instructions available in the respective course area in Moodle in the section “Lecturer instructions”.
4. Grading should be finished within 3 weeks after the assignment submission deadline. Faculty who have extenuating reasons why they cannot meet the deadline should send an official request for extension to the Director Education. Once all grading is finished, please inform the programme administrator.
5. In case the course is taught by an external lecturer, the MSM Academic Course Coordinator will first check the grading.
6. Grades are always published by the programme administrator and not by the lecturer.

## 9.3 Reporting fraud (including plagiarism)

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

1. Review assignments, presentations, Master’s Theses, including draft version of any submission, not only for their “quality”, but also for fraud, 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 the Master’s Thesis are submitted in Moodle by the students and are automatically scanned for plagiarism with Turnitin software.
3. In case any form of fraud is observed, report the case in writing to the Board of Examiners by filling out the [Reporting Fraud Form](#). There is no need for further evaluation of this examination (component).

More information can be found on the [MSM website](#).

## 9.4 Oral examination

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

## 9.5 Resits

When a student obtains an insufficient grade (a grade less than 5.5) or a “No grade”, (s)he is required to improve his/her grade by taking a resit of the examination (components).

In case one or more students need to take a resit, the lecturer needs to 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 programme administrator.

Resit examination (components) should be graded in the same manner as the first attempt.

## 9.6 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 students. Students have the right to inspect their evaluated examination (components) within four weeks after notifications of result and/or receipt of the grades.

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

## 10. Grading of the Master's Thesis

After approval of the Master's Thesis by the supervisor, the student is required to present and defend his or her Master's Thesis in front of an evaluation panel. The evaluation panel usually consists of two evaluators.

1. An evaluator will receive the Master's Thesis at least one week before the scheduled defence date.
2. Each evaluator is requested to complete the Final Evaluation Form. Please check with the programme 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 (based on the average of both evaluators) 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 defence both evaluators will combine their findings into one Final Evaluation Form.
6. After the final evaluation (defence) the Final Evaluation Form should be sent to the Programme Administrator within two days.

More information regarding the Master's Thesis can be found in the [Master's Thesis Guides](#).

## 11. Course evaluations

After each course, the students 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 the lecturer by the programme administrators after the submission of the grades.

## 12. 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:

- Each criteria should be connected to one of the Dublin Descriptors (DD) and indicate the 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 (see <https://www.bloomstaxonomy.net/>).
- The expected performance standards need to include five assessment levels (very poor, unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good outstanding), each level with a clear description of what is expected for this level.
- When grading, additional to the level selected per assessment criterion, a comment should be provided to the student per criterion and/or for the entire assignment.
- Assessment rubrics need to be imported to Moodle and attached to the respective assignment. Please contact the programme administrator for support.

## Example Assessment Rubric

DD	Weigh-ting	Assessment Criteria	Expected performance standards				
			Very good	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Outstanding
DD1	10%	Criterion 1: Does the student 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 student 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
DD2	10%	Criterion 3: Does the student show the ability to apply the concepts/tools to a new situation, rather than just quoting class examples?	The student cannot apply any of the concepts/ tools and either has no examples or just reuses class examples	The student can apply only a few of the concepts/ tools and either has just a few own examples or just reuses class examples	The student can apply around half of the concepts/ tools from class and has own examples for about half	The student can apply most of the concepts/ tools and has own examples for most of them	The student can apply all of the concepts/ tools and has own examples for each
	5%	Criterion 4: Does the student answer the question/respond to the task given as required? (Applying concepts to another case)	The student does not answer the question or respond to the task given in any way – completely irrelevant	The student attempts only a partial answer of the question or response to the task given – mostly irrelevant	The student's answer of the question/ response to the task given is only about halfway so at least half incomplete	The student answers most of the question/ response to the task given in a mostly complete way	The student 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 student detailed and relevant?	The student either has no examples or they are lacking in detail and/or irrelevant	The student has some examples but few and mostly lacking in detail and/or irrelevant	At least half of the student's examples are detailed and relevant	Most of the student's examples are detailed and relevant	All of the student's examples are detailed and relevant
DD3	5%	Criterion 6: Does the student identify the most important problems/issues to be addressed?	The student does not identify any problems/ issues to be addressed	The student identifies only a few problems/ issues to be addressed	The student identifies several important problems/ issues to be addressed	The student identifies many important problems/ issues to be addressed	The student 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 student's work has no arguments backed by research-based facts/and only opinions	The student's work has few arguments backed by research-based facts/and is mostly opinions	The student's work has several arguments backed by research-based facts/and relatively few opinions	The student's work has many arguments backed by research-based facts/and very few opinions	The student'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 student has no conclusions	The student's conclusions are not based on the previous work at all	The student's conclusions have some clear connection with the previous analysis and discussion	The student's conclusions have a very clear connection with the previous analysis and discussion	The student's conclusions have a totally clear connection with the previous analysis and discussion
<b>DD4</b>	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 introduction, analysis, and conclusion	The journal has a clear structure: introduction, analysis, and conclusion are mostly in place	The journal has a very clear structure: introduction, analysis, and conclusion are all in place
<b>DD5</b>	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 student 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 student 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