

The Language of College

College has its own language, and as a new student at GMIT, you might not fully grasp what everyone is talking about. Initially much of the terminology may be unfamiliar, but don't panic. We have put together an explanation of some of the more common terms you will come across on a day-to-day basis here at GMIT.

Programme aka Course

You have signed up to do a course in GMIT, which we generally call a '**programme**' of study. Every programme is assigned a level from Ireland's National Framework of Qualifications ([NFQ](#)). The **level** of a programme denotes the standard of learning achievements you will have attained once you successfully complete your programme (i.e. knowledge, skills and competencies).

- Successful completion a **Level 6** programme means you will be awarded a **Higher Certificate**.
- Successful completion of a **Level 7** programme gets you an **Ordinary Degree**.
- Successful completion of a **Level 8** programme qualifies you with an **Honours Degree**.

Credits

In order to pass a programme or course, you must gain the required number of **credits**.

1. Higher Certificate - 120 credits,
2. Ordinary Degree - 180 credits
3. Honours Degree - 180 or 240 credits, as is relevant.

At GMIT we use the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (**ECTS**). This is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required, to achieve the learning outcomes of the module or programme. ECTS weighting suggests that, on average, it takes 20 to 25 hours of student work to achieve ONE credit.

Student work consists of:

- Attendance at classes
- Completion of assignments
- Independent research
- Study
- Exams

At GMIT, all modules are 5 credits or multiples thereof. Each **stage** (year) of a programme consists of 60 credits. You must pass each stage of a programme, before you can progress to the next.

Modules

Each programme consists of a range of subjects, called modules, which you must pass. Some programmes in GMIT have year-long **modules** (subjects) commencing in September and ending in May. Other programmes are delivered in **semesters**. In GMIT a semester is 15 weeks.

- Semester 1 runs from September to December/January
- Semester 2 from January to May.

If a module or programme is semesterised, it means that it is delivered and examined within the semester, and you move on to study new modules the following semester.

All the modules for each year (**stage**) of the programme are outlined in the programme's **Approved Programme Schedule (APS)**. The APS also outlines the number of hours provided weekly for each module, and how the module will be examined.

Each module has a descriptor which your lecturer will provide you with. The module descriptor contains:

1. Module learning outcomes
2. Module syllabus
3. How the module will be assessed
4. Resources which you will find useful in completing the module.

Module learning outcomes are very important, as these indicate what you are expected to know or should be able to do upon successful completion of the module. Your lecturer will assess whether you have achieved the module learning outcomes.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment

Assessment is broken down into **Continuous Assessment (CA)** and **Terminal Examination**. Continuous Assessment is where you undertake work during the semester or year and are awarded marks for it. These marks contribute towards your overall marks for the module. In some cases modules are assessed entirely on Continuous Assessment.

Terminal Examinations

Alternatively all the marks for the module can be based on a **Terminal Examination**, which occurs at the end of the semester or year. In many instances, a mixture of both are used, for example:

- 40% of the marks are from Continuous Assessment
- 60% from the end of module Terminal Examination

Classes

Each week you will attend classes for each module (subject). These classes may be described on your timetable as:

- Lectures
- Tutorials
- Seminars
- Laboratories

Lectures are similar to the classes you attended at school.

Tutorials are where the class is divided into smaller groups to facilitate exercises and revision of material covered in lectures. No new material is covered in tutorials.

Seminars, sees classes divided into small groups, but unlike tutorials, the lecturer will cover *new material* in seminars.

Laboratories or labs are practical classes that may involve working with computers, or specialised equipment.

Yes, it can all seem a bit confusing and even overwhelming at the start. Don't worry.

We are here to help!