GENREAL COMMENT OVERALL

Standard 1. Mission and strategic management ....

The La Valletta Institute aspires to be a leading further and higher education institution based in Malta that promotes knowledge, skills and competencies through innovative learning that will contribute to the social development by providing conducive environemnt enhanced by any possible internatiional collaboration. Our vision is to utilize a face to face system in collaboration with stakeholders which in future years will become a HYFLEX system. Our strategic Plan in a nutshell is to emphasise the mission through our vision utilizing the face to face system to deliver the programmes including wherever possible entrepreunerial skills. The emphasis is on innovation and entrepreneurship intended as good initiatives. This refers to the Teaching and Learning and where applicable also through research and consultancy. The Institution will create a culture of Innovation through its stakeholders in line with the mission and vision.

The Stratigic plan covers the year 2023 to 2028 and is seen as a Roadmap of the Institution. Work on the strategic plan started in 2022 with the planning process led by the Head of the Institution. The Strategy involved all necessary internal and external stakeholders prior to submission of approval by all stakeholders. The strategy lists seven themes: Governanace and Mangement, Teaching and Learning, Research and Innovation, Community engagement, student experience and support, Performance, and facilities, systems and infrastructure.

The strategic plan will have a business plan to make sure the strategy is succesful. It will be monitored through the PDCA cycle.

The Institutional financial resources will be allocated as 15% for administration, 70% for teaching and learning while the rest will cover the reamining expenses. Any programme will have a minimum number of admissions to make sure that at least it is break even to run it. If the minimum number is not reached then the course will not run. A budget plan will be prepared according to the calendar of each year.

Governance and Management- The governance and management will make decisions on staffing and action plans on a yearly basis after evaluations coming from all internal and external stakeholders.

Teaching and Learning- The educational model is based on the educational needs of people committed to life long learning and make maximimum of the potential offered by the Web for educational purposes. The model is also flexible as it is open to very diverse range of learning activities to suit knowledge, skills and competencies. Valetta Academy is committed to provide student learning activity with excellent technological and communication elements such as Social tools (ex: Blogs), multimedia content for presenting course content in different formats. Excellent communication systems include adapted content such as videos and webinars. The strategy also includes access to education through mobile devices to support mobility.

Research and Innovation- Valletta Academy is more of a Teaching Institution but Research is done at Level 5 onwards. The research is desk based research- secondary research carried out by students under the guidance of the Lecturers. This type of research is used for teaching and learning and can be added as part of reading lists or used as part of discussions taking place. The Valletta Institute can make use of published research in order to enhance its courses and also the Institution itself. By so doing it will be able to be innovative both in content and Institutional wise.

Community Engagement- Valletta Academy will enage the community by offering them the possibility to comment and forward suggestions through the website. And wherever possible Valletta Academy will also deliver short courses that can be accredited or informal free of charge to the community at large. This contributes to social responsibility.

Student Experience and support- Valletta Institute will provide a friendly access to students from application stage to enrollment through its website. The guidance for students will be through the co-ordinator/administrator. Students will be involved in decisions through focus groups while tutors/Lecturers will assist students in decsions on an academic level. The Tutor/Lecturer function is to make dynamic the educational action from the start of the semester to the students final assessement. The tutor designs the learning plan and semester activities. He also monitors them, moderates discussions and debates where applicable, clears any concerns about content, motivates students, answers student questions and assess the activities students do throughout the semester and provides feedback so students can meaningfully gain new learning. For

better student support a Complaints e mail address will be available on the website.

Performance- For students and staff. For students performance is recorded and monitored by the Tutors/Lecturers and Administration. A report will be issued. For staff an Appraisal will be carried out on a Yearly basis and discussed with Head of Institution.

Fcailities, systems and Infrastructure-

Quarterly monitoring will be carried out by the Internal Quality assurance Committee as approved by the Head of the Institution. The IQAC will be responsible for internal auditing as per MFHEA standards . Reports by IQAC will be issued monthly to all necessary stakeholders to keep ongoing monitoring.

Standard 2. Governance, organisational structure and administration ....
Valletta Institute is registered as a company with the MFSA as a private further and Higher education and is subject to the MFHEA regulations. Institutional policies and procedures at Valletta Institute are found in the Quality Assurance Manual as approved by the Head of the Institution onDecember 2023.……
There is a Board and an IQAC as pivotal to Valletta Institute Governance The Board represents the shareholders and has fiduciary responsibilities while IQAC is a management tool for good governance in monitoring and enhancing the operations. The Board meets once every 6 weeks and the IQAC meets every month.Both have their main duties described underneath the Organgram. According to the terms of duties the board creates policies and procedures while IQAC is responsible to review every 2 years the Policies and procedures that apply to all standards as required by MFHEA. Updates are done if necessary. The latest are always found on the website with an indicated version number.
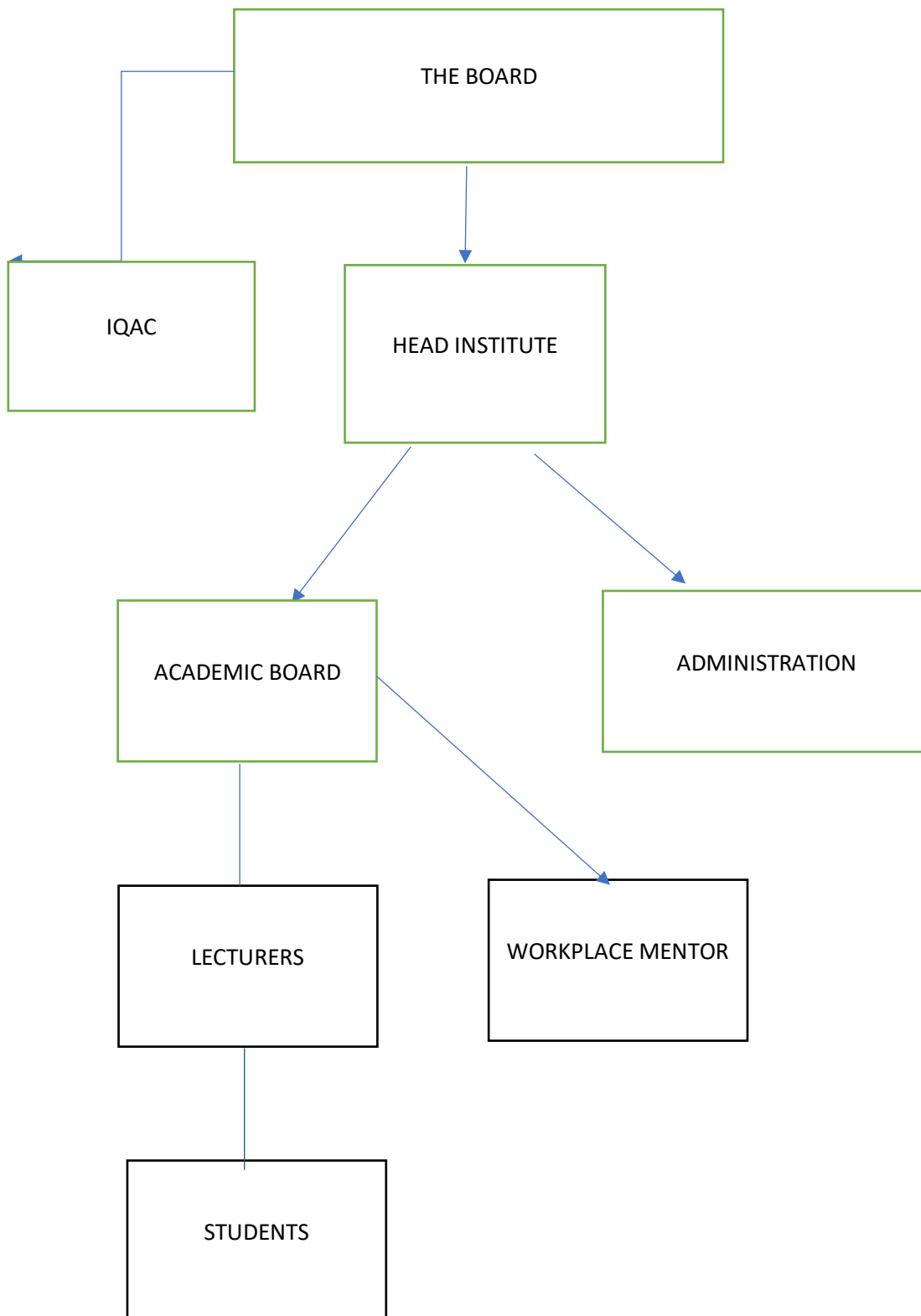*The main functions of the Board with 5 members are to approve the organisational structure, propose policies and procedures along with developmental budgets that are synchronised with the strategy, internal processes and making decisions after consulting the IQAC reports.*
The Academic nature is led by the Academic Board leader for all programmes. The

Leader posesses a high level of technical academic knowledge to advice the Board for making the right informed decisions. There are also informal meetings between the Board members to facilitate ongoing enhancement and minimise risks. Papers and minutes are circulated before any meeting so that there is ample time for discussion during the meeting. This facilitates the meetings as all stakeholders will be prepared up front.

The governance structure for such a small Institution provides an effective mechanism of oversight. When the Institution will grow more, then this will be reviewed.here is the current organigram and explanation underneath:

All Leadership positions must be filled in by a person with an MQF level 6 or equivalent and an experience for a minimum of 5 years in management. The governance are shareholders and they are business people who recruit the appropriate staff. They are fit for purpose, one because they had this vision to create the Institution and they have engaged consultants to set it up properly. The IQA maintains that all this is transparent and evidence of this is the QA Manual online for public information as well.

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The Board (composed of 5 shareholders)

Establishes strategy

Establishes powers, functions and membership of academic Board and IQAC

Approves any outsourcing

IQAC (composed of the QA Consultant, a Lecturer, a student and the Head of the Institution who chairs the committee) The QA Consultant must possess a minimum MQF Level 6 with 10 years experience in Quality assurance.

Oversight of all operations through monthly reports (when applicable)

Writing of SAR after consulting all stakeholders

Check compliance with the MFHEA standards

Check that Policies and procedures are adhered to

Oversee Home grown written programme/awards applications before being sent to MFHEA.

IQAC can invite externals to the meetings depending on the nature of the topics being discussed.

Head of Institute

Liases with The Board

Carries out Day to day Mangement

Oversees the strategy and academic activities

Manges conflicts of interest and risk management

Conducts hearings of allegations of misconduct and disciplinary proceedings

Conducts Appraisals of all staff

Discusses SAR with IQAC

Authorises changes on the website

Takes care of Media

Signs agreements

Discusses reports of work Integrated Learning (WIL) with Academic Board.

Academic Board (made up of Lecturers)

Oversees the Academia teaching and Learning

Creates or outsources programme design and development

Reviews development of Programmes

Decides on mitigating circumstances

Takes care of work placements in collaboration with Administration (student support)

Informs about Academic Integrity through a Charter.

The role of the Academic Board is purely academic and discusses matters concerning academia and research whilst also providing student support in case of mitigating circumstances.The Chair of the Board is elected from amongst the Lecturers by a simple nomination, the Lecturer achieving the most nominations will be Chair, if there are more than one interested in being Chair there will be this election if not the one showing interest will be appointed by Head of Institute.

Administration

Take care of all accounts processing and present anything required for signature to the Head

Take care of work placements in collaboration with the Academic Board.

Support students in administrative matters

Keep track of students lifecycle including at the workplace

Process complaints and documents in the appropriate files

Pre placement briefing in collaboration with Lecturers

Sending and reporting on students questionnaire

Create, send and issue reports of surveys (every 3 years)

Submit a Yearly report on administrative matters

Work Place Mentor

Guides the student at the work place

Issues a final student report and send to the Academic Board.

Lecturers

Teach and tutor (especially during work placements)

Reports on WIL along with the Mentors report and send to Academic Board and administration for filing.

Pre-placement briefing along with Administration

Self assessement report of modules taught

Involve themselves in Focus group of their subject areas

<u>Students</u>

Learn

Research (where applicable)

Fill in questionnaires and surveys

Involve themselves in focus groups of their subject area.

A student sits on the Governors Board but students also contribute into governance through the questionnaire feedback which is discussed on Governors Board. A student representative also sits on the IQAC for full representation of students.

Standard 3. Quality management ....

The overall quality is the responsibility of the Head of the Institution. The Head liaises with IQAC in order to monitor the quality and enhance any areas required. This liaison is done mostly through the IQAC reports but also done an informal level with the rest of stakeholders. An Annual self assessement report (SAR) by IQAC is also presented to the Head for better quality Mangement. This SAR is then discussed at Board level and an action plan devised. IQAC will monitor that action plan and report accordingly in its reports. The Institution will submit itself to an external audit every five years as part of its quality management.

The administrative department is mainly the Admissions and Registration (Co-ordinator-who will be a staff from the Administration). Student affairs can be first dealt with the Co-ordinator or Lecturer first depending on the nature of support required. As regards to Human resources, facilities, public relations and marketing these are taken care of byAdministration. There is no one man band responsibility as the administration shares Quality and all administration are in the know of whats happening to give the best support to students even when an administrator is on sick or leave.This requires flexibility from the Administration but is effective for student support.

The Institution recruits professional or academic staff as part timers to carry out its programmes. All Lecturers are one level up the level they will be lecturing and are required to present their CPDs on a yearly basis if they are engaged on a yearly basis. This depends on the contrcats made. The Lecturers also contribute to Quality Mangement as they write a module self assessement report exactly after they finish lecturing their module. Moreover the Quality is also contributed by students through students questionnaire where students are not only voicing any concern but also being engaged to participate in suggestions. Focus groups with students are organised on a

yearly basis so that the information gathered can feed to the Head who might need to discuss with the Board. In such a manner this contributes to quality mangement by all internal stakeholders. There is also a possibility of meetings or Forums with the Industry to gather information but this depends on the participation of the Industry.

The quality mangement is also reflected in the way the VLE is handled to give the best possible to the students. The IQAC will also monitor the VLE so that quality is overseen but also discussed for enhancement.With the relatively small number of staff of the Institution quality is a shared element and any problems are usually solved in a collective manner. For Quality Mangement to be transparent and effective the stakeholders have a Complaint e mail address where anyone can log the complaint. This is seen by the Head of the Institution and also IQAC for oversight of how the complaint is solved and recorded/documented.

The Quality Mangement at the time is a solid foundation on which growth and development can occur and are unlikely to change radically if the Institution matures.

For best Quality Mangement the Institute has a Code of Ethics as can be seen in the Policies and procedures.Moreover information management is kept up to date and one of the tools is the website where as part of the information it will include a) selection criteria for programmes b) their intended learning outcomes c) the qualifications/awards-their MQF level and passrates.

Standard 4. Integrity, accountability and information management.................................

The administrator collects data and keeps track of the student lifecycle at La Valletta Institute. Participation, retention and success rates are reported annually in the Administrators annual report. This report is discussed at the end of the year to feed forward any decisions required by the Head of the Institution.

Tracer studies will be carried out through a questionnaire every 3 years. The results will be discussed at the end of the 3 years to feed forward any decisions required by the Head of the Institution.

For the sake of Integrity the Institute has an Ethics Policy and procedure together with a code of conduct as seen in the Appendix at the end of the QA standards.This should be respected by all stakeholders. Failure to respect the code of conduct/Ethics may lead to disciplinary action directly by the Head of Instituion. All the staff is accountable to provide the latest and up to date information. In fact the Information Mangement tool also has

the website to inform thr general public about a) selection criteria for programmes b) their intended learning outcomes c)the qualifications/awards- their MQF level and ECTS.

Standard 5. Teaching and administrative staff ....

The Teaching staff is recruited on a part-time basis and has contracts with the Institution. The recruitment is done either through an expression of interest or hand picked- but in both cases the Teaching staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced.All Teaching staff is one level up from the level being taught. Only in rare cases or for visiting experts the Institution recruits someone with experience (minimum 5 years) to actually teach. The Teaching staff after showing interest are subjected to an interview by the Head or his designate after which they are informed if they are accepted or not. The administrative staff is recruited in the same way with adequate qualifications or experience in their particular areas. An induction is given to Teaching and administrative staff- this is also done by the Head of the Institution.

Both the Teaching staff and the administrative staff are obliged to attend the Institutions once yearly CPD. They are also encouraged to do CPDs on their own and revise their CVs with the latest CPDs. The training needs of both Teachers and administartion are discussed yearly through the appraisal more commonly known as professional growth development. In this session both are expected to give their feedback for the Institutions enhancement. This is carried out by the Head or his designate.

Student staff ratio is determined by Human resources which is part of the administrationin this Institution, and after consulting with the Head. Support for students depends on what type of support. If it is academic then the first support is from Lecturers as academics but if it is administrative then of course it's the Admnistration to give support. In this case the average student staff ratio is 1;20.

The right Lecturers will be chosen according to their level and expertise and the iQAC monitors this also by checking CVs and the lecturers agreements.

Standard 6. Design, monitoring and review of programmes...

One of the Institutions startegic priorities is Teaching and learning. In order to do this properly there must be planning, monitoring and reviews. In designing stage wherever

possible the Institution makes use of of market research/analysis of the subject area to see the feasibility of the programme or awards. Desk research is also done before actually discussing if the programme should be offered. The programmes can be either imported or home made. The home made programmes will be constructed after the research and possibly written by experts in the field with the MFHEA template. Once programme/awards are written these are sent to MFHEA for accreditation purposes. Once the programmes/Awards are accredited these will then be uploaded on the website for offering them to prospective students.

As regards to review of programmes initially these will be done yearly as the number would be small. However for the Institution Review means every five years while ongoing monitoring is done on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis.

The review will take into consideration again the Market needs, the Lecturers modules review and the students questionnaire and any other information that may be supplied at the time. The design of the programme/awards are done with ECTS and learning outcomes as per MFHEA application. The IQAC will also oversee all proposed applications before going to the accreditation process at MFHEA.

IQAC makes sure that the stakeholders include the students feedback, the lecturers feedbac and the sectoral skills council if applicable. The review is explained and already in the QA Manual and happens every 5 years with the inclusion of the above stakeholders. This is done through meetings to finalise any required actions. The IQAC will lead this exercise for quality assurance purposes in order to co-ordinate all information to reflect upon before all meetings are scheduled. Once the meetings are done all recommended actions will be followed up again by IQAC to overssee that they have been actually carried out.

[Standard 7. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment](#) ....

The programmes/Awards are designed with a student centred system meaning having 1 credit totalling to 25 hours so that it would be a correct workload. They also include learning outcomes which are discussed with students in focus groups and also commented on in students questionnaire. Moreover the pedagogy used is a student centred one where students are highly involved in carrying out self study and to be able to analyse case studies where applicable and also to comment on each others work.

Once yearly a CPD workshop is organised for Teachers to improve quality of

programme/award. The teaching delivery is monitored mostly through students questionnaires and by looking at any complaints in this regard. The Teachers are also subjected to an appraisal by the Head where teaching is discussed. The evidence for such discussion is also based on the lecturers module self review and student questionnaire or any other information available at the time. Teaching and learning is done through face to face system techniques.

La Valletta Institute has the good practice of engaging expert Lecturers in content and pedagogy to write programmes as per MFHEA guidelines in the MFHEA template where they indicate if they use role plays, case studies, videos, discussions etc. This is known as academic freedom to make the best pedagogy for students to reach their learning outcomes. The Institution also ensures to provide CPDs to Lecturers on pedagogy to promote the best teaching and laerning.

The learning activity is central to the educational model. There are three main elements for student learning: resources, collaboration and accompaniment.

• The **resources** are the content, spaces and tools necessary for the learning activities and their assessment.

• **Collaboration** is the communicative and participative dynamics that foster the collective building of knowledge among classmates and lecturers through teamwork for solving problems, doing projects and creating shared products.

• **Accompaniment** is the group of actions carried out by teaching staff to monitor students and support them in planning their work, finishing activities, assessment and decision making. It is though this accompaniment that students receive personalised treatment, benefit from on-going guidance throughout their academic path and establish close ties and relations with the educational community.

The VLE is also a student support system to make it more student centred. The teachers do not normally exceed 15 hours per week to maintain also the right workload both for students and teachers. The 15 hours per week of Lecturing is determined so in order not to experience burnout as of course the lecturers need to plan and do corrections as well and hence also the right workload for students to benefit for self study, and after all it is not possible to have one lecturer teaching everything. The Lecturer guides the student to go into VLE where the criteria and the mothod of assessement as well as marking criteria are to be found. However, as indicated beforehand the website and VLE will also

feature the module write ups along with the type of assessement so that the student can make an informed choice. Once the student is enrolled then the student will be guided to the VLE for further information which of course is understandable to the student. Any clarifications for understanding can be made with the Lecturer of the module. This is done in the first week of a programme.This contributes to Quality. The Institution uses a face to face system in order to reflect the different needs of the learners which in such a case will be applying the Diversity policy and also inclusion by the right support from the Institution.

Assessement is both of a formative and summative type. Assessement is designed by the Lecturer or Lecturers depending how many are teaching the subject. The lecturer will need to map the Learning outcomes with the assessement and this is how it is given green light by the Institition before presenting it to MFHEA for accreditation. IQAC is alos responsible for internal checks before it goes to MFHEA.- what the programme or award contains so that it checks for Validity, relaibility and content up to date. IQAC can also consult with experts in the field before it is sent to MFHEA. All internal checks are guided by the MFHEA referencing report guidelines.Rubrics are also created by the lecturers as they are the experts to emphasise on content- these will be presented with accreditation of programmes. Depending on the programme/Award, assessement can be ongoing monitoring as well. The students know up front the topics to be covered, the ammount of credits, the learning outcomes and also the type of assessement as found on the written templates. Wherever possible an example of an assessement type is also showcased to the students. The assessement methods are designed by the Lecturer or Lecturers who are experts in the content and assesement methods. The design atkes into account the content, the type meaning if it is theoretical or practical. The assessement targets the laerning outcomes and this also makes it fit for purpose. The Institution has at heart academic Integrity and does not allow any plagiarism to take part.

Students are given appropriate feedback by their lecturers- which can either be verbal or written. Assessement is only done on the learniing outcomes stated and these are mapped to the questions or work required for each learning outcome.Assessements can include but not limited to: portfolios, quizzes, tests, course written assignements, power point presentations, exams etc. The Lecturers give timely feedback for it to be effective. The marking criteria for any type of assessement is given to the students before they start their assessement- usually indicated in the first week. Samples of assessements are overseen by IQAC

Students are allowed to re sit twice for an exam or coursework. If they afil the two re sits they will have to repaet the modules. This applies to ongoing assessements and summative assessement.

The Institution currently uses the Google detector or copy pastes the assesement into artificail intelligence asking it if it was the author of such writing. The students are informed in the first week about Plagiarism as much as the criteria and method of assessement.

Standard 8. Student administration and student support services...................................

Students are obliged to sign a student contract upon joining any programme/Award.The contract makes reference to the rules and regualtions which contain the life cycle of a student including admission, assessement, progression, suspension and terminiation of student status, mobility, recognition, certification and qualifications/ awards and diploma supplements. For further information one can see the Policies and Procedures in the AppendixThis is signed both by the student and the Co-ordinator(one of the administration). Student support is given by the Co-ordinator (one of the administration staff) first at admissions stage as he is also the administrator. Once the student engages in learning student support is also given by the Lecturers themselves. The Lecturer will be able to give extra or remedial help to the students since he is the subject expert. Any other type of student support is provided by the co-ordinator/administrator. Support by the co-ordinator is also given to encourage students not to drop out and if the student is finding it difficult to cope with the timeload due to some reason this can be mitigated through the Head. Lecturers can assist in helping students with assignements but of course not doing the assignement for them. The students are asked specifically in the student questionnaire if they are happy with the student support at the Institution. If the necessity arises there might also be focus groups to help assist students in general.

As regards to the student profile this is managed by the Administration/co-ordinator who also assists in any queries about career and employment services.

The Policies and Procedures in Appendix one must be read in conjunction with this standard with special reference to Students Policy and procedure, student support and wellbeing, complaints policy and the complaints and appeals policy, students misconduct procedure, equal opportunities and valuing diversity,code of conduct and acadeic misconduct.

The student is free to attend or not the Lectures but the most important point is that he

meets the learning outcomes through the assessements If a student fails a module or needs a study break in his lifecycle he ahs to pass from that module within a5 year period maximum since after 5 years there is a programme review. This is inline with the Policy- after which he will need to re apply for the course but be exempted from passed modules that might still be part of the course.

Standard 9. Learning resources and facilities ....

The classrooms are well equipped for face to face learning. There ais one large classroom. One is for students to meet at any time and dicsus between them or carry out project work if necessary. As learning the VLE is adequate enough to guide the student to gain maximum learning and reach the intended learning outcomes. The La Valletta Institute has a dedicated website with all required information. The required resources can be seen physically on the spot and there is wi-fi throughout for the benefit of staff and students. There is an inventory documentation for all resources at hand which can be evidenced on the physical environment. The students have ample space where to hang out and there is also a cafeteria for leisure purposes.

The person taking care of Technical support is Mr Taussef Ahmed and can be reached on taharani85@gmail.com All students will be informed about this in a welcome e mail.The support is given on software available and the GC engine VLE.

Feedback is sought from practical users to determine any other reqirements for resources or special needs support. As regards to the library the Institution has an online Library which can be accessed through the GC Engine, the VLE platform.

Staff are also given support by Mr Taussef Ahmed for any support on communications technology.

The Institution is a starting Educational Institution and will enhance its learning resources as it grows to make it financially susatinable. As regards facilities these are already top notch, adequate, attractive and fully licensed.

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Standard 10. Research, development and/or other creative activity ....
 (The only research is done by students to carry out their assignements at the level of their programmes)

Standard 11. Institutional cooperation, service to society and internationalisation ....

La Valletta Institute will strive to attarct foreign students in order to contribute to Internationalization of the classroom. This is the first target as we believe that different cultures in a classroom brings a wealth of knowledge to the programme. Secondly La Valletta Institute will also strive to employ foreign staff in all its areas so that the Institution itself will have a global look and experience in the Educational sector. For the Institute it is important to have foreign students not just in the financial sense but also for the quality of the programmes and the same is to be said for other staff at the Institution. In this manner La Valletta Institute will provide graduates to the society who are well skilled for todays world and competent enough to serve a globalised society.

The programmes will also be designed and developed along with foreign peers in order to make sure that the content is also international and up to date for todays and tomorrows world. The same will happen when La Valletta Institute reviews the programmes.

This is the way we want the Institute to be , we want to reach quality through Internationalisation and so be a service to all global society. Therefore, all staff is encouraged to be members in Non governamental organisations or committees that form part of society which are fit for purpose according to the areas they work in. In this manner the Institute makes sure that its satff contributes to society not only through students graduating but also direct input in committees, NGOs or International membership in the right for a The Institute will dedicate part of its finances for assisting memberships in the right for a..

ANNEX 1 Policies and Procedures:

La Valletta Institute Policies and Procedures:

The Policies and Procedures are divided into:

Academic Governance

Corporate Governance

Operations Governance

People and Culture

Students

ACADEMIC GOVERNANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES:

Academic Governance is concerned with the development and maintenance of reputable, high quality further and higher education activities in teaching, learning and research from MQF/EQF level 5. It ensures that qualifications awarded to graduates are at sufficient quality and standard to meet the requirements of the Maltese/European Qualifications Framework.

Academic Governance is primarily overseen by the Academic Board, established by the Management.

The Academic Board provides the Institute with oversight of Academic responsibilities including learning and teaching and the review and development of programmes and ensuring all delivery is in accordance with the scope of Registration .

The Management has ultimate responsibility for overseeing and monitoring academic activities of the Institute and establishing the powers, functions and membership of the Academic Board. Active, ongoing academic oversight is required by the Institute and by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (every five years). The ongoing monitoring is also scrutinized by the Internal Quality Assurance committee.

Programme design, review and compliance

The Academia programs are developed with clear *learning outcomes*, coherent structure and manageable workloads for *students as per MFHEA Referencing report 4th Revised edition of February 2016.*

Through a cycle of development, implementation and evaluation, programs are customised and/or contextualised appropriately to meet the needs of the *learner* and reflect industry trends. *Program* development incorporates the development of academic knowledge, *skills* and *graduate* attributes/capabilities and are designed with clear evidenced based *assessment* outcomes. The programmes are also based on the National Occupational standards where applicable and other professional requirements where applicable.

Program designs include opportunities for students to access seamless educational *pathways* and networks that encourage and support *lifelong learning.*

The names of qualifications and awards are proposed and confirmed at the program approval stage by the Academic Board. The nomenclature must reflect the level of the qualification or award and be readily understood within the Institute and the broader community.

The programmes are reviewed every 5 years. The review process includes all internal and external stakeholders through focus groups. A report by the focus group is presented to Management for any desired action.

The procedure for Design is according to the MFHEA programme, qualification or awards templates. First filled in templates by experts are to be presented to the Academic Board for approval. Secondly if the programme is approved by the Academic Board it will go to Management for further approval. Thirdly once management approves the programme it will go to MFHEA for accreditation. Fourthly once it is presented to MFHEA and it is accredited then the Programmes, qualifications and awards will be part of the marketed courses of the Institute.

Any changes to the modules or Programmes , qualifications and awards will have to be re submitted as above.

Teaching and Learning:

The Institute provides appropriate knowledge, resources, and facilities to support the student learning journey. This includes, but is not limited to library facilities, Information Technology, study spaces, laboratories, simulated environments, and classrooms. These resources are appropriate in size, design, and availability to support students and ensure quality teaching and learning.

The diversity of our students is recognised and welcomed. Equal opportunities will be offered to all students to succeed through reasonable adjustments for protected attributes under mitigating circumstances, engagement, reflection and commitment to learning. The Academic Board is also responsible for mitigating circumstances. Any student wishing to take a break in the studies for valid reasons (example death in the family, pregnancy etc) has to write to the Academic Board and with 5 days the Academic Board will either approve or disapprove of the request. The student will be informed by e mail.

Teaching requirements

Academic staffing is guided by legislative and regulatory requirements and academic teaching staff must have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to teach at the Institute. Usually all Lecturers are one level up the Level they are teaching. In cases where there is a difficulty recruiting a one level up the Institute can employ someone with great experience in the subject area.

Approaches to teaching at the Institute are varied and adaptive to new demands in learning and will include effective use of appropriate technologies and innovation. Enhanced teaching is achieved through:

- recognition of excellence in teaching;
- support for innovative and inclusive learning and teaching practices;
- supportive and sustained professional/educational development that is meaningful, applicable, cooperative and collegial; and
- critical inquiry and research into aspects of HE/VET teaching, education and training which links teaching practice with research.

Review of Programmes:

The procedure for Review of Programmes applies to all staff involved in the delivery and addresses 5 stages for enhancement:

1 Planning- Determine if the qualification is listed on the National Occupational standards (NOS) or any other professional bodies.

2 Pre training preparation- Any required specific CPDs for Lecturers if there is a new element in the content and assessement.

3 Delivery- Any new required resources for delivery.

4 Transition and Teach out- check if the teach out now requires any different modes of delivery for any specific needs.

5.Continous improvement – To review schemes of work and check that the assessement is fit for purpose.

The planning is carried out in teams made up of Lecturers and a report is issued annually to the Management.

Work integrated learning and associated learning opportunities

Work integrated learning incorporates a wide range of learning and teaching activities which integrates theoretical learning with its application in the workplace. The Institute promotes Work Integrated Learning (WIL) across some of the programs. Placement opportunities are an important component of employability, engagement and skills development , ensuring our graduates are fully prepared for entry into the workforce.

The Institute may also provide opportunities for students to undertake voluntary placements, industry-based projects, simulated work experiences and Industry Placement Program with a host organisation in the same field as their studies to further enhance the educational experience. Reasonable adjustments will be offered for protected attributes under the Maltese/European law.

The procedure for evidence of student participation includes recorded attendance by the Lecturer, completed assessements and Moodle activities (where applicable). The Lecturer will make a general report by class/cohort about the student participation and indicates any shortcomings in his report to the Head of Institution. This report will be discussed at Management level with the Head in order to evaluate the situation and carry out any actions as required.

Procedure for Work Based Learning

The procedure applies to all over 18 years of age students undertaking a work based practical placement.

La Valletta Institute is responsible to find work placements if they form part of the programme. The Academic Board will take care of placements.

The teaching staff is informed about this practical placement element and the teachers serve as tutors to students and as a liaison with the Industry's Human resources department.

The administration is responsible to identify potential host employers and carry out all necessary documentation for all the lifecycle of the student at the workplace.

Both the Lecturer and the administration will keep track record of the student and employer. Any complaints must first be raised in writing to the Administration. The complaints Policy and procedure shall apply as much as the Appeals.

The administration/lecturers must ensure that the students on placement must be supervised at all times since they are in a learning process.

The administration and/or the lecturer must provide a pre placement briefing to the student and what is expected from him during the placement and after the placement.

The student is monitored at the place of work by his workplace mentor and Lecturer. Both the workplace mentor and the Lecturer will need to issue a student work placement report after the student has finished his placement. The reports must indicate a Pass or a Fail.

In rare cases there might be a need to terminate the placement. When this is agreed by the Institute and the Industry then the students placement will be immediately discontinued and communicated by e mail to all parties involved.

The student can be assigned one repeat work placement. Should the student not complete the requirements of his placement, after undertaking a repeat placement he will not be allowed to continue the programme.

Assessment conditions

Assessment is central to the vision, mission, culture, activities, practices and educational development of the Institute.

Assessment must:

- Encourage and reinforce learning.
- Enable robust and fair judgements about student performance.
- Be fair and equitable for all students.
- Be authentic and meaningful.
- Maintain academic standards.

Assessment seeks to assure all stakeholders that:

- exemplary practice in assessment is being applied consistently across the Institute, its programs and by partner providers;
- student performance is being properly, fairly, equitably, consistently and transparently judged across all students undertaking the same course of study; and
- standards expected of, and achieved by students are appropriate, reliable and comparable to best practice at the Institute, including partner providers.

Moderation (where applicable example : Thesis) is a crucial mechanism for assessment quality assurance for coursework programs and as a collegial process by which the Institute develops, maintains, and monitors good practice in the assessment of students. Moderation contributes to the continuous improvement of assessment practice and to sharing good practice among colleagues.

Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)

Credit, on the basis of prior formal learning or recognition of skills and knowledge, through the credit transfer process towards qualifications and awards, is available to students. Credit can accelerate student progress, completion and mobility, however, the integrity of the Academy is paramount and credit will not be granted if it would impair the integrity of the qualification or award, or reduce a student's likelihood of success in the program.

Credit arrangements for students are made on the basis of:

- formal credit agreements within the Institute;
- formal credit agreements between the Institute and other tertiary institutions (where applicable);
- formal agreements between the Institute and industry partners (where applicable); and
- credit granted by the Institute in response to applications from individual students.

RPL and Credit Transfer are alternative pathways to achieving partial qualifications up to 50% as per MFHEA RPL guidelines. They are distinguished by the way they relate to learning achieved through recognition of equivalence of formal education and training (Credit Transfer) and assessment of an individual's relevant prior learning (RPL). By removing the need for duplication of learning, RPL and Credit Transfer encourages diverse and inclusive pathways to lifelong learning, formal qualifications and improved employment outcomes.

Granting of RPL and Credit Transfers in VET is established and maintained in accordance with:

- The Standards for National Education .
- MFHEA standards and Educational Framework.

The Institute implements an assessment system that ensures that assessment (including Recognition of Prior Learning) complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or accredited programs conducted in accordance with the Principles of Assessment and the Rules of Evidence.

The responsibility for RPL lies within the Academic Board.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to excellence in learning, teaching, research and scholarly endeavour. This policy applies to all Institute students and staff (both current and former) including those at partner organisations (where applicable) as is consistent with our contractual arrangements. The Institute is committed to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in academia and is committed to promoting a culture of academic integrity for students and staff. The Institute also acknowledges that academic integrity is vital to employers and the community and accordingly regards academic integrity as a critical element.

Academic Integrity Procedure

Academic misconduct

The Institute is committed to minimising any academic misconduct that conflicts with the principles of academic honesty and academic integrity and leads to an unfair advantage. The Academy undertakes preventative strategies to mitigate the risk of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct is concerned with all breaches of academic integrity, which includes (but is not limited to):

- Plagiarism

- Contract cheating
- Examination cheating
- Duplicate submission
- Fabrication
- Impersonation
- Academic Fraud
- Solicitation and promoting the breach of academic integrity
- Collusion
- Non-compliance with examination instructions/requirements

Academic Honesty is the responsibility of all members at the Institute. It refers to behaviours and standards of ethical conduct as expected in order to encourage a learning environment of Academic Integrity.

The Institute educates students about their expectation of Academic Integrity as a risk prevention. This is done through a Charter uploaded on the Institutes website.

The Lecturers themselves are also supporting students on how to research, present and reference their work in an educational environment.

The Teaching staff is also given information about Academic Integrity by the Head when joining the Institute. The teaching staff will present to students material of high quality , avoiding plagiarism by developing original material and proper referencing too.

Where allegations of academic misconduct arise, hearings may be conducted by the Head. Where a student disagrees with a decision made by the Head, they have an opportunity to make an appeal to the Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) based on perception that there is new evidence or there has been a display of procedural failure. The same will apply for the Teaching staff. Should these two steps are not accepted by the student or the teaching staff they can further take their case to the Malta Ombudsman.

Students Misconduct Procedure

This procedure applies to all students. Where there is suspected or evidenced misconduct the Institute will take action by bringing the student under disciplinary proceedings. The student has a right to a support person of his choice during disciplinary proceedings by the Head. A support person can be anyone who supports the student also by speaking to defend the student. The Institute also has a right to bring any person during the disciplinary proceedings to give evidence for misconduct.

Every report must be in good faith, but the Institute will not tolerate false reports. Those who make false reports will be disciplined.

Academic Misconduct is the breach of Academic Integrity and this is also dealt under disciplinary proceedings.

In all cases above all will be informed through e mails and within a reasonable time by the Head.

Students appeals procedure

The student has a right to appeal a decision by the Institute if the student feels dissatisfied with the outcome of a decision. The appeal needs to be lodged within 3 days from when the student receives the decision from the Head. In case of an academic appeal on a final grade this needs to be directed to the Academic Committee. The academic committee will have 10 working days to come up with a statement which should be communicated to the student. An appeal statement is final and if the student is not happy with the appeal he can take it to the Ombudsman. Other appeals need to go to the IQAC. Same number of days apply for an IQAC response. and as last resort any appeal can go to the Malta ombudsman. The Institute reserves the right to take formal action against a student who lodges an appeal based on false or malicious grounds.

Freedom of speech

The Institute acknowledges the importance of academic freedom and freedom of speech to the Institute community and commits itself to those freedoms

Freedom of lawful speech of staff and students of the Institute and visitors to the Institute is treated as a paramount value and therefore is not restricted nor its exercise unnecessarily burdened by restrictions or burdens other than those imposed by:

- law;
- the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct necessary to the discharge of the Institute's teaching and research activities;
- the right and freedom of others to express themselves and to hear and receive information and opinions;
- the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct to enable the Institute to fulfil its duty to foster the wellbeing of students and staff; and
- the reasonable and proportionate regulation of conduct necessary to enable the Institute to give effect to its legal duties including its duties to visitors to the Institute.

Academic freedom at the Institute is treated as a defining value by the Institute and therefore not restricted nor its exercise unnecessarily burdened by restrictions or burdens other than those imposed by law and set out in the Principles of this Policy.

The Academy places significant importance of the Institute's institutional autonomy under law in the regulation of its affairs, including in the protection of freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Library services and academic resources

Library Services should provide support for learning, teaching and the research needs of the Institute. This includes all enrolled students and the partner provider employed staff who teach or provide services to the Institute, enrolled students who have access to the Institute's library website.

The library is responsible for supporting the implementation and provision of Library Services. This includes the use of electronic resources, access to print resources held in the Institute Library collection, inter-campus borrowing and online information for international students.

Library Services are responsible for ensuring appropriate and timely responses are provided to feedback enquiries received through the on-line Library Feedback link/s on the Institute Library website.

Open access resources (Library)

The Institute is committed to Open Access principles providing educational resources that are freely accessible and openly licensed. These teaching and learning materials can include, but are not limited to, textbooks, lecture notes, assignments and tests. That can be reused, shared and revised. The Lecturers will indicate at the beginning of their modules where the student can carry out desk research which is specific to the area being taught.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Institute is committed to quality assurance and continuous improvement across its activities. The Quality framework (PDCA) describes the approach to quality assurance by embedding principles of good practice in quality management in accordance with the statutory quality standards of its regulatory bodies through a system of mature quality assurance processes, compliance auditing and the capture and implementation of continuous improvement.

Plan- Strategic and operational, Delivery of programmes, schemes of work for lecturing, meeting students needs

Do- Programme delivery, collection of Data, Boards/Committees meetings where applicable

Check- Policies and Procedures, yearly reviews, Internal audit (SAR), student's questionnaire, surveys, complaints and appeals, support services.

Act- CPDs, implementation of recommendations, review mechanisms for operational systems.

The MFHEA framework and standards which establish the minimum requirements for Institutional requirements and Programmes delivered to students, outline the Institute's approach to compliance with the requirements stipulated within these legislative requirements for all Institute programs delivered including international students holding a student visa.

The Institute will provide a quality tertiary education experience that inspires its students to succeed, serves its society and communities, and is international in its outlook and impact.

Quality Assurance and Review Process Procedure

The procedure describes the operational aspects of the Institute Quality Framework. The Institute is committed to ensuring effective internal governance and quality assurance procedures.

Quality assurance processes at the Institute are continually monitored by the Internal Quality Assurance committee to determine whether policies, procedures and operational practice are effectively implemented and maintained. A meeting is held every month and monthly reports

are produced and documented at the Heads office. The Head will sign the reports as an approval that the report has been seen and read. It will be discussed at top management.

The Institute carries out a yearly self assessment report (SAR) based on the monthly reports (where applicable), the students questionnaire, appraisals of staff and external stakeholders (where applicable).

The SAR serves as a review. It is discussed with the Management for any actions desired by the Institute.

Governance documents framework

The Institute has an operational framework for developing, approving, implementing, reviewing, and maintaining the Institute's governance documents (including policies, procedures, operation manuals, work instructions and guidelines) in a clear and consistent format. Adherence to the framework through its associated procedure, will ensure that all Institute's policies and procedures are necessary, relevant, useful, and current. The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible to recommend the Policies and procedures to be ultimately approved by the Management.

The Institute governance documents (example the QA Manual) will reflect and promote qualities that are consistent with the Institute's core values and strategic intent.

Our values

The Institute embraces the values of Inclusion, Innovation, Excellence, Empowerment and Collaboration. The values will:

- cornerstone our organisational culture;
- unite us to support our transformational strategy;
- build on our passion, goodwill and collective vision;
- guide our actions and empower us to succeed; and
- lead to a professional standard of excellence on which we and our stakeholders can rely.

Risk management

Managing risk is an essential component of the Institute's governance and leadership. Effective risk management both creates and protects value in an organisation by

improving decision making. The Institute's commitment to enterprise risk management and principles that will be used to guide this process are outlined in the procedure.

To achieve its strategic goals, the Institute must accept a measured degree of risk. Through identification and analysis of risk the Institute can innovate and deliver a successful and sustainable future.

A risk management framework provides a coordinated and managed approach to critical risks that, if they were to occur, would impact on the achievement of strategic and organisational objectives.

A positive risk culture	• Creating a culture where risk identification and management is acknowledged as a driver of positive outcomes. • Driving excellence in corporate governance by increasing accountability, awareness, and a positive attitude to risk management.
Risk based decision making	• Decision making and responsiveness which is prioritised and informed by risk analysis.
Embedded risk management	• All operational functions and processes should include a linkage to risk. • Risk analysis and identification will include broad stakeholder consultation.
Strategic safeguards	• Assisting the Institute to operate safely and securely.
Accountability	• Clear accountability for each category of risk, individual risk and plan to ensure action and monitoring is implemented.
Transparency	• Providing transparency and oversight to senior management and the Institute that strategic, enterprise and critical operational risks are managed effectively.
Informed investment	• The consideration of the balance between risk and benefit in the development of investment strategies.
Informed resource allocation	• Adoption of risk-based approach to the allocation of resources to mitigate future risks

Fraud risk identification and prevention	• All operational areas actively identifying fraud risks and implementing appropriate plans to reduce the risk to an acceptable level

A risk management framework provides a coordinated and managed approach to critical risks that, if they were to occur, would impact on the achievement of strategic and organisational objectives. The Yearly SAR will indicate all the above. This is the responsibility of the IQAC.

Conflict of interest

The Institute values integrity and is committed to ensuring that both its activities and those of its community members conform to the highest standards of administrative conduct. It is the responsibility of all members of the Institute community to avoid (where possible) and transparently declare and manage conflicts of interest.

Where a conflict of interest exists (or may exist at some time in the future) the member of the Institute must declare and manage that conflict of interest in accordance with the Managing Conflicts of Interest Procedure.

Procedure for managing conflicts

A conflict of interest is a conflict between the duty of a staff and the persons private interest. A private interest can be direct or indirect and financial or non financial.

The procedure is very simple: any staff needs to declare his conflict of interest up front in writing to the Head of the Institute. The Head of the Institute will then give his decision about the conflict in writing.

- # Strategic planning and performance monitoring
- The Institute adopts a robust strategic planning and performance monitoring environment, ensuring it can meet the ongoing challenges of a changing sector.

- ### Strategic planning

- The Institute has developed and adopted a strategic plan to identify strategic objectives and outcomes and adapt to external trends and challenges. Our five-year strategic plan, 2024 to 2029, builds on our strengths and prepares for a future that will include major changes in how we deliver educational opportunities.
- The Strategic plan objectives are structured as that internal and external stakeholders report back against success measures on a Yearly basis and report prepared for Management. There is an annual review process by which the Institute realigns the strategic measures with strategically transformative areas of the Institute.
- Strategic plan objectives along with the values provide the framework for the individual performance review (appraisal) and development cycle along with broader organisational plans within the Institute.

Review and performance monitoring

The Institute conducts regular performance monitoring and review activities to measure the Institute's performance and ensure best practice.

Each year a Self Assessment report (SAR) is carried out, with an external review conducted every five years by MFHEA.

In compliance with best practice, the Management receives regular reports on:

- the operations of the Academic Board and any committees (where applicable);
- the operations falling under corporate governance
- other matters at their request (e.g., the implementation of budget, policies, plans or similar).

The Institute's monitoring and reporting framework is subject to independent external audits, with all findings reported to Management. The Institute's Annual Report also includes externally audited financial statements and a governance report .

Data governance

Information privacy

The Institute maintains the privacy of personal and health information collected by the Institute concerning staff, students and other individuals associated with the Institute. The Institute abides by the GDPR which is Maltese/European law.

Records management and data storage

The Institute's records are to be managed, captured, accessed, stored and disposed of in accordance with Institutes procedures and guidelines to ensure compliance with Standards. Records created, received or used by the Institute staff in the normal course of business are the property of the Institute, unless otherwise agreed. This includes reports compiled by external consultants commissioned by the Institute.

The Institute's corporate records constitute its corporate memory, and as such are a vital asset for ongoing operations, and for providing evidence of business activities and transactions. Corporate records assist the Institute in making better informed decisions and improving business practice by providing an accurate record of previous activities.

1. Procedure for Records Management

The Institute is bound to manage records and dispose of them according to GDPR. A record records an action, policy or decision-making process and renders the Institute accountable or commits the Institute to an action. Wherever possible records will be digital. Where needed hard copies will be done.

The administration is responsible for keeping all records.

The Institution Brand Standards ensure all communications deliver a single, recognisable and concise message. The maintenance of the Institute's brand is important to:

a. ensure consistent marketing and brand objectives;
b. enhance the Institute's strategic direction; and
c. ensure compliance with legislation and regulatory requirements.

The Brand Guidelines is the authoritative reference source for the Institute's brand and is the official register of all aspects of the Institute branding including logos, devices, emblems, colours, and typefaces.

All staff are required to adhere to Institute's brand

The Institute acknowledges the rapidly growing use of social media by staff and students and encourages its use for the primary purposes of learning, engaging, connecting, collaborating, and promoting the Institute.

Emphasis is placed on guiding principles of behaviour and a common sense approach to the use of social media to ensure that all social media posts are in line with the Institute brand guidelines and that individual views are not implied as reflective of that of the Institute.

Marketing

All marketing and promotional activities undertaken by the Institute are completed in accordance with internal and external compliance requirements. Marketing and advertising information will be compliant with the Institute's policy.

The principal objectives of marketing for the Institute ensure that:

- only transparent, accurate and relevant information is provided to all prospective and current students; and
- prospective students can make informed decisions regarding studying at the Institute based on transparent, accurate and reliable information.

Marketing includes a range of platforms and contexts relevant to disseminating the Institute brand. Materials prepared for marketing to International students must comply with the Brand.

Web management and publishing

The Institute considers web publishing to be a key strategic resource for communication, teaching, marketing, and administration. Appropriate use of this technology by the Institute community is required.

Institute resources may only be used to create and publish web pages where the purpose and effect of the published information is in support of the Institute's objectives and Strategic Plan. This means that the content of web pages hosted on the Institute resources must relate to the activities and functions of the Institute or relate to the specific role of members of the Institute community.

Web-based publishing has an important impact on the reputation and standing of the Institute and must therefore occur in the context of an official policy framework. The following principles and requirements, along with the Web Publishing Standards, apply to all information published on the Institute's website.

Procedure for web management.

The procedure for process approval for changes on the website homepage and main landing pages is the responsibility ofMr Tauseef Ahmed

The registered domain is......https://lavallette.mt............................. and the website is kept up to date with the latest information. All information must be ultimately authorised by the Head of the Institute.

Media relations

Staff must notify the Head when contacted by the media. The Head will assist with drafting media releases, interview techniques and providing advice on protocol for visits to the Institute by media representatives. All media releases must be released through the Head.

Staff are encouraged to speak to the media about issues relating to their area of specialisation in teaching and/or research. The Head is the principal official Institute spokesperson on matters relating to the governance, strategies and management of the Institute. In certain circumstances, the Head may nominate a staff member to provide comment on a specific issue.

Public comment by staff, including interviews on television, radio, newspapers, on-line and speaking engagements (conferences, guest lectures) should be limited to topics related to their area of expertise in teaching and/or research. Staff expressing public comment on political or social issues as individual citizens should not use their Institute title/position.

Complaints

The Institute aims to resolve complaints and concerns from students and members of the public in a transparent, consistent, fair and timely manner.

Feedback received through the complaint process provides the Institute with valuable insights, allowing the Institute to improve the experience of its students and that of members of the public.

At all stages of the Complaints Management process, the Institute is committed to:

- an accessible, impartial and fair process;
- transparency and consistency;
- natural justice and procedural fairness;
- the timely resolution of complaints (including keeping the complainant informed of progress);

- the informal resolution of complaints wherever possible;
- equal opportunity and recognition of diversity; and
- privacy and confidentiality.

The Institute will not tolerate retribution to or victimisation of a complainant.

Complaints and Appeals Management Procedure

The Institute aims to resolve complaints in a transparent, consistent, fair and timely manner.

Feedback received through complaints allows the Institute to improve and enhance its systems and operations.

First the complaint should be dealt by approaching a staff member (academic or administrative) to solve the problem amicably. Should this approach prove futile then the complainant can write an e mail directly to the Head copied to IQAC for oversight.

The complainant must clearly provide all necessary explanation and any evidence available to sustain the complaint. The Head overseen by IQAC must resolve the complaint within 10 days from receiving the written complaint. The complainant will receive an e mail confirming receipt. Within 10 days the Head will write to the complainant with the final decision on the complaint.

Should the complainant not be satisfied with the result he can appeal it by taking his case to the Ombudsman for complete transparency and inform the Ombudsman of the process and decision by the Head of the Institute.

Health, Safety and well Being

The Institute creates a culture that values health, safety, and wellbeing as fundamental components of the environment, supported by safe systems of work and study, appropriate governance, training, management structures and operational strategies.

Reporting to the Head, the   health and safety committee considers and makes recommendations for compliance and improvement on Institute-wide health and safety matters relating to:

- the performance of portfolios against the requirements of the Institute's health and safety management system;
- the prevention of injuries and illnesses among members of the Institute community;
- employee consultation regarding health and safety issues and workplace change;
- the management of incidents and emergencies arising in the context of Institute activities;
- the rehabilitation and compensation of injured Institute employees;
- legislative compliance, auditing programs and monitoring the implementation of actions incorporated in Annual Plans; and
- the performance of the Institute in relation to health and safety.

Ethics, **Equal opportunity and valuing diversity**

The Institute is committed to providing equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination, verbal, sexual harassment, Sexual Harm, racial or religious vilification for all members of the Institute community, and to creating an environment which reflects and values the social and cultural diversity within the Institute community and the communities it serves.

The Institute will not tolerate discrimination, sexual or discriminatory harassment, racial or religious vilification or victimisation, as defined in the procedure, in any Institute activities. The Institute will take proactive, reasonable, and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination, sexual and discriminatory harassment, vilification, and victimisation within Institute activities, and recognises the potential for the Institute to be vicariously liable if all such measures have not been taken.

This applies to all students and prospective students, staff and prospective staff, and other individuals associated with the Institute in all situations or activities related to their roles at the Institute. Such situations and activities may extend beyond Institute campuses and day-to-day activities e.g., field trips, conferences, events and functions, student groups/club volunteer activities, Institute on- and off-campus residences. It is Ethical to respect the code of conduct and equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination for the good practice of adaequate social dimension and to respect diversity. Since the Institution is in Malta the laws of Malta on Ethics and discrimination which are featured in the human rights are applicable. The Institution has the right to proceed for disciplinary action by the Head should these be breached.

Code of Conduct

1. Communicate respectfully with all members of the Institute community refraining from offensive, discriminatory or aggressive behaviour or language in person, by phone, in messages, in writing and online including social platforms.
2. Respect Institute property and the property , including intellectual property, refraining from damage or theft.
3. Conduct their studies with honesty and integrity, and not engage in fraudulent behaviour, plagiarism, contract cheating or collusion.
4. Respect the privacy of other students and staff and not access, copy or share private information or confidential university information.
5. Treat all members of the Institute community with respect and not engage in bullying, threatening or harassing behaviour either in-person or online OR coerce or incite another person to engage in those behaviours.
6. Uphold principles of equity, respecting the diversity of the Institute community and not behave in a discriminatory way against any person or group on the basis of disability, gender, race or cultural background, religious or spiritual belief, sexual orientation or physical appearance. Discriminatory behaviour can include behaviour in-person, comments made in class and written in academic papers, in email, message or online platforms including social media.
7. Not engage in sexual harm. Sexual harm includes sexual harassment and sexual assault and can include threatening, controlling, stalking behaviour or image-based abuse (sharing of intimate images without consent).
8. Not engage in criminal activity or commit an unlawful act while on Institute premises or in connection with Institute activities.
9. Act in accordance with Institute legislation, policy, guidelines, procedures or rules that apply to students. These may include academic policies or rules relating to use of services or facilities.

OPERATIONS GOVERNANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Operations Governance Policy mandates a range of procedures, the quality assurance manual and work instructions developed to ensure that physical and financial resources are available and responsibly utilised by the Institute, minimising duplication, and maintaining internal controls to mitigate identified risks.

This policy should be read (where applicable) in conjunction with procedures, manuals, and supporting documents to guide decision making and ensure all information is captured accurately, completely and managed in accordance with all relevant legislative acts and regulations. The Institute will provide access to formal or informal learning material to

ensure staff have the knowledge, competencies, and ability to interact with information in their roles.

Sustainability

The Institute is committed to improving the sustainability performance of the organisation through promoting a culture of sustainability, managing our operations in a manner that minimises our environmental and social impacts and enabling the integration of sustainability principles and practices into teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

The Institute will meet this commitment by:

d.   Ensuring sustainability is reflected in the Institute's strategic documents.
e.   Reporting annually in the SAR.
f.   Developing education for sustainability through utilising the Institute's's curriculum and administrative practice to enhance organisational sustainability.
g.   Providing training and support for staff to adopt sustainability principles and practices to achieve sustainable behaviour change in the workplace.
h.   Undertaking Institutional research which will develop and strengthen partnerships that address sustainable development.
i.   Building capacity in the community by producing graduates who are sustainability literate through their experience at the Institute.

Property and infrastructure

The Institute is committed to the appropriate utilisation, allocation and management of space in support of the teaching and research goals and objectives of the Institute.

As the Institute's physical space is a valuable asset, this policy and its associated procedures and quality assurance manual endeavour to maximise efficiencies of use through effective facilities management strategies and sustainable planning for all its current and future operations.

This policy applies to all physical spaces owned or operated by the Institute and utilised by members of the Institute's community whether for learning and teaching, research, administration or other operational purposes.

Information and communications technology

The Institute expects reasonable and appropriate use of Information Technology Services and associated systems. This policy, combined with procedures and other mandated documents, provides direction regarding acceptable use of all computing and communications facilities provided by the Institute. It applies to all users and includes the implementation of measures to protect corporate Information Technology Services (ITS) systems, services and equipment of the Institute.

The Institute will take reasonable and necessary steps to ensure information security protection. Information Security Classifications and associated access will enable appropriate management of information including securing the Institute's assets against theft, fraud, malicious or accidental damage and breach of privacy or confidentiality.

The Institute has practice developed to ensure the integrity, authenticity, availability, access, confidentiality and security of data produced and/or utilised, minimising duplication and fragmentation and introducing internal controls to mitigate identified risks.

At the Institute, Information will be:

1. collected, created, managed, used, re-used and shared according to ethical practices, any applicable laws (mostly GDPR) and with due consideration to individual privacy.
2. appropriately stored to ensure protection from loss and unauthorised access.
3. accessible, transparent and available to be used and shared whilst respecting matters of identity, privacy and confidentiality. This applies to internal as well as third party data.
4. managed in accordance with records management and archiving requirements.
5. adhere to the principles that govern:
    1. web-based content and
    2. the processes surrounding the publishing and hosting of web-based content on the Institute website
    3. The Institute operates under a set of Information Technology rules and requirements covering information privacy, material and data copyright, information security, control and use of intellectual property and records management.

The Institute will implement and action procedures to ensure all information is captured accurately and completely and managed throughout its lifecycle.

The Institute will provide access to formal or informal learning material to ensure staff have the knowledge, competencies, and ability to interact with information in their roles.

Information technology usage, support and management

The Institute provides students and staff with access to computing and communications services in support of its teaching, learning, research and administrative activities. The Institute provides access to standalone or networked personal computers, multi-user computers and to other resources accessible via on-campus networks.

It is expected that all users will make use of Institute computing and communications facilities in a manner which is ethical, lawful, effective, efficient, in accordance with other Institute policies and not to the detriment of others. Usage must also be in line with a current course of study or job function.

The Institute acknowledges its obligation to ensure appropriate security of personal data in relation to all relevant legislation while providing approved data storage solutions to accommodate the varying needs of the Institute community. The data is recognised as a valuable asset and will be efficiently managed and availed through development of a best practice approach to data management.

Through its applied practice the Institute will:

1.   define the roles, responsibilities and accountability for different data usage;
2.   ensure best practice processes for effective data management including access, retrieval, reporting, managing and storing; and
3.   protect the Institute's data against internal and external threats.

The Institute is also required to produce evidence of its activities to external regulators, internal auditors, accreditation and funding bodies. Adherence to this policy will ensure the Institute is able to meet these requirements.

Finance management and operations

The Institute expects clear and transparent Finance Management practices, consistent with Maltese legislation and appropriate regulatory bodies. This policy sets out the direction regarding the collection, distribution of funds, allocation of purchasing cards where applicable and acceptable use. Collection of revenue or cash equivalent, student fees management, budgeting, forecasting, reporting (internal and external), debt management, investment,

procurement of goods and services, purchasing of Institute's motor vehicles, travel, and asset management.

The Institute will take reasonable and necessary steps to ensure financial management of accounts, budgets including securing the Institutes's assets against theft, fraud, and breach of privacy or confidentiality

System will be in place to maintain the integrity, authenticity, availability, access, confidentiality and security of financial data produced and/or utilised by the Institute through minimising duplication and introducing internal controls to mitigate identified risks.

The Finance data will be:

1. Collected, created, managed, used, re-used, and shared according to ethical practices, any applicable laws and with due consideration to individual privacy.
2. Appropriately stored to ensure protection from loss and unauthorised access.
3. Accessible, transparent, and available to be used and shared whilst respecting matters of identity, privacy and confidentiality.
4. Managed in accordance with records management and archiving requirements.
5. In adherence to the principles that govern:
   1. revenue collection, recording, expenditure;
   2. credit card usage and limits;
   3. procurement of services and goods including motor vehicles and travel; and
   4. management of Assets.

Fundraising and philanthropy

The Institute manages funds and monies received from bequests, donations, endowments, and gifts. Funds raised provide scholarship opportunities for students (where applicable).

All philanthropic gifts received by the Institute, are protected, accurately and processed in a timely manner, whilst documented and reported accurately in the yearly self assessement.

The responsibility for managing the above is that of...Head of the Institute...................................... The Institute has yearly audited accounts.

Procurement of goods and services

The Institute maintains consistent procurement practices. Effective internal control procedures must be implemented and maintained by the Institute to ensure all procurement activities of the Institute are authorised in accordance with the delegated authorities and business requirements within a documented procurement framework.

Procurement to purchasing activities within the Institute includes ethical, compliance and financial obligations, as well as opportunities for financial savings, improved sustainability, service and quality.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Document owners are responsible for identifying and managing information-related risks and issues for their assigned information entities and for escalating these to the Head accordingly. Owners of Policy documents are accountable for their respective procedures, manuals and work instructions in alignment with their position

People and Culture is concerned with the recruitment, professional development and working conditions of the Institute's staff (and contractors and volunteers where relevant). It ensures equitable workplace practices that reflect the knowledge and skills of general professional and academic employees, encourage ongoing professional development and the conditions that make the Institute an employer of choice.

This policy statement covers the employee life cycle, from recruitment through to exit.

Recruitment

Recruitment, merit and selection

The Institute is committed to the recruitment and appointment of staff using fair, transparent, and equitable practices that support the Institute's strategic direction.

Our recruitment and appointment decisions are aligned to the strategic goals and priorities of the Institute and the Strategic Plan. They will support our values of inclusion, innovation, excellence, empowerment and collaboration as outlined in the Institute's Values with the principles of equal opportunity, wherein individuals are appointed based on their achievements relative to opportunity.

The qualifications, experience and capabilities required for each position is determined to ensure that the quality of the Institute's operations and services is maintained and continually improved. Preference for appointment will be given to current Institute's employees. Appointments will be made based on an applicant's merit and will be free from bias and unlawful discrimination. The Lecturing staff will be one Level higher than the level they are teaching.

Where an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest exists within the recruitment of staff, this must be declared and appropriate processes followed to ensure the principal of fairness, transparency and equitability are maintained.

The Institute reserves the right to advertise vacancies and make no appointment.

To recognise distinguished persons, who are not staff members of the Institute, and to establish a mutually beneficial formal relationship between the individual and the Institute contributing to teaching and research, the Institute may recommend a Visiting Appointment.

The Institute utilises probation periods in determining an appropriate match between an employee, the position, and the work environment, and whether the person is able to perform the inherent requirements of the position.

Probation periods may be extended for a period no longer than the initial probation period or a maximum of six months to allow the employee to address performance and/or conduct issues. Probation periods may also be extended in circumstances where the employee has taken an extended period of approved leave.

The Institute may terminate an appointment if:

1. an employee is unsuited to the position they hold, either by reason of performance or conduct; and/or
2. claims made by the employee during the selection process were either untrue or not substantiated by performance in the position.

The employee will be advised of the reasons and justification for the decision and given an opportunity to respond. The Complaints and Appeals procedure also applies in this case.

Supporting diversity and inclusion

The Institute's staff appointments must support our commitment to enable staff of all backgrounds, cultures, abilities, gender, and other identifiers to succeed at work. All appointments will be in accordance with the Equal Opportunity and Diversity policies and procedures as applied by Maltese legislation and be made free of bias and unlawful discrimination using the principles of equity, merit-based appointment, privacy, and transparency.

The Institute will also undertake tailored recruitment processes to respond to Institute's strategies or needs specific to a role.

Induction

The Institute will ensure that all staff members are provided with a robust, welcoming and empowering induction and provided with the information required to be successful in their roles. Employees are provided with key information about working at the Institute including policies, procedures, compliance requirements and legislation associated with their employment through an appropriate induction.

Our induction activities will reflect our strategic and operational objectives, our Values and enhance our commitment to being a first-choice Institute and destination for students.

Induction will be relevant to the role undertaken and may differ between professional and academic staff.

Staff requirements

The Institute staff are required to conduct work outlined within their position description and as directed by their Head.

The Institue's staff are expected to adhere to their signed agreements that provide a set of principles to guide staff , designed to assist staff to understand their responsibilities and obligations and provide guidance on expected behaviour in the workplace, or if faced with an ethical dilemma or conflict of interest in their work.

The Agreements will assist the Institute to safeguard public trust and confidence in the integrity and professionalism of its staff by ensuring that all staff:

1.   maintain appropriate standards of conduct;
2.   exhibit fairness, impartiality, honesty and equity in decision making; and
3.   foster and protect the reputation of the Institute.

As part of the approach by the Institute to providing a fair, safe and productive work environment, consideration of grievances will be dealt with fairly, consistently, promptly and with sensitivity to all parties.

Health, safety and engagement

The Institute is committed to providing and maintaining, as far as is reasonably practicable, a healthy and safe environment for its staff members and members of the Institute community.

If a staff member sustains a work caused injury or illness, the Institute is committed to providing them with support and assistance pursuant to the provisions of the injury

Workplace bullying, violence or threats of violence are totally unacceptable at the Institute. All workers and other members of the Institute are expected to treat each other with respect.

The Institute's commitment to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe environment free from bullying, violence or threats of violence or restriction of academic freedoms and freedom of speech. Bullying leads to individual distress and organisational disruption. It can cause physical and psychological harm.

Reasonable management action, carried out in a fair way is not bullying. The Head has a right to direct the way work is carried out and to monitor and give feedback on performance, giving due consideration to the manner in which this is done.

The Institute encourages the early reporting of any allegations of bullying, violence and/or threats of violence and is committed to implementing a prevention program. This includes dealing with complaints towards a reasonable and fair outcome.

Performance and professional development

Performance review and development

The Institute is committed to the implementation of an effective process of performance review and development which links the performance and development of the individual employee to the strategic priorities, objectives and values of the Institute and relevant work area through an appraisal.

The Performance Review and Development applies to all full-time and part-time employees of the Institute employed on a fixed-term appointment for more than one year; or in a continuing appointment.

The Head is responsible for planning, monitoring and reviewing the performance and development of employees overseen by IQAC. This annual process should provide staff with sufficient professional development opportunities and support in developing an evidence-based sustained portfolio towards meeting target goals and key performance .

STUDENTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Enrolment

This policy provides a set of principles for determining application to enrolment across the Institute:

The following principles apply:

Compliance

The Institute's administration is responsible for ensuring that all selection, offers, admission and enrolment processes for students enrolling at Institute comply with quality and legislation requirements as advertised.

Access and equity

The Institute's program entry requirements together with all relevant information for applicants are published in the website Course Guide which inform applicants of the selection criteria. The Institute is committed to ensuring quality access and equity in its selection process. In its admissions, the Institute also seeks to provide access to persons who have experienced educational or social disadvantage and to address under-representation of specific community groups.

Confidentiality and privacy

All personal information collected from prospective students will be for the purpose of determining enrolment suitability and meeting legislative reporting requirements. The Institute will only collect personal information using lawful and fair means, and not in an unreasonably intrusive way. Application to Enrolment information will be treated as confidential. The Institute will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the personal and health information it holds is protected from misuse, loss, or unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

The Institute will also take all reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal and health information if it is no longer needed for any purpose. Under the GDPR act and the MFHEA standards the Institute is required to keep full and accurate records and implement a record disposal program. Destruction of personal and health information will be carried out accordingly .

Admission and enrolment

Admission to the Institute's programs will be consistent with requirements, codes of practice and guidelines detailed within current national legislation. Offers of admission are made to applicants who are judged to have met the published entry requirements. A person is eligible to enrol once they have received and accepted a formal offer from the Institute and once enrolled, the student is bound by the Institute's policies and procedures.

Enrolment variations

Variation to enrolment processes are often required as part of the student journey. The Institute supports student flexibility of enrolment with options for deferral, leave or changes to enrolment as identified on a case by case basis.

Scholarships, bursaries and grants

The Institute is committed to supporting the development, administration and management of all scholarships, bursaries grants and scholarships (where applicable) for students as part of recruitment, retention and success of students. Principles associated with the process include the following:

1.   Confidentiality and privacy.
2.   Clear eligibility criteria and selection criteria.
3.   Focused on students with the greatest need.
4.   Reflects strategic intent of the Institute and/or donor.
5.   Awarded through a consistent, equitable, transparent and coordinated process.
6.   Abide by the Institute's financial rules and regulations.

Student engagement and participation

Student academic participation

Students are required to progress throughout their enrolment, building skills, knowledge and employability. The Institute is committed to student engagement and success and recognises and values cultural and ethnic diversity.

A student who does not make satisfactory academic progress will receive written warning that their academic progress is unsatisfactory and request a meeting with the Academic Board or administration to develop an intervention strategy.

Students often require additional support throughout their learning journey. Support may include triaging students to several support services, adjustments related to program load, variations in assessment practices and familiarity with systems can assist with identifying and communicating with students regarding options towards success.

Student complaints and appeals

The Institute is committed to providing a fair, safe and productive study environment. However, the Institute recognises that from time to time, decisions made by the Institute and its staff may adversely affect a student, and that students may wish to lodge a complaint or appeal such a decision. In all instances, the Institute will respond to complaints and appeals

in a way that contributes to the Institute's supportive and fair learning environment, and consistent with the principles of fairness, equal opportunity, and natural justice.

Appeals

At all stages of the the student can appeal at the Malta Ombudsman.

the Institute is committed to:

1. an accessible, impartial, fair and equitable process;
2. transparency and consistency;
3. resolution of appeals at the earliest possible stage; and
4. privacy and confidentiality.

The Institute will respect appeals to the Ombudsman in a timely manner, while keeping the parties fully informed of the progress of the matter.

All staff and students are expected to cooperate with the Student Appeal process fully, openly and in good faith, with the aim of reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution. Any student who uses the Ombudsman procedure to make a frivolous or vexatious claim may be subject to disciplinary action.

Students are encouraged to liaise with the Internal Quality assurance committee who can provide clear and independent advice for students navigating the Institute's processes. Students who are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaints results and may make a complaint to an external agency, such as the Malta Ombudsman.

Student surveys

Student surveys provide the Institute with important feedback to assist in the planning, delivery and improvement of services available across the Institute. Student surveys distributed using the Institute branding and/or sent from the Institute email addresses or profiles will have a clearly defined purpose, are appropriately planned, designed and implemented and the acquired data achieves that purpose, thereby enabling:

1. coordination of the timing and quantity of student surveys based on the target respondents, thus managing the student survey load of particular groups and avoiding survey fatigue;
2. avoidance of excessive student surveying through the provision of shared data and survey analysis;

3.   quality assurance on the questioning, sampling, delivery, data collection, privacy and storage of surveys; and
4.   identification of surveys where Human Research Ethics approval is required.

Timetabling

The development and release of the timetable is a critical component of the student learning journey. The timetable should provide students with clear information related to their scheduled learning and teaching activities. Numerous key principles are considered as part of the planning process including accessibility, consultation, time periods and implementation prior to the commencement of the teaching semester. The time table will be sent by the administration.

Student support and wellbeing

Equity and inclusion

The Institute is committed to providing equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination, harassment and vilification for all members of the Institute community, and to creating an environment which reflects and values the social and cultural diversity within our communities. The Institute will take proactive, reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination, sexual harm, discriminatory harassment, vilification and victimisation within the Institute's activities.

The Institute will provide reasonable adjustments for protected attributes under law and use inclusive practices wherever practicable to ensure all people have equal opportunity to access and participate in the Institute's activities.

Special consideration and learning access plans

Special Consideration and Learning Access Plans are essential strategies and are a part of study support and progression for all the Institute's students The process must maintain confidentiality, privacy, integrity and alignment with both internal codes of conduct and external reference points (including legislation). All students are entitled to reasonable adjustments of their learning environments towards meeting student success goals and sustainable student progression.

The Institute is committed to supporting students through the provision of formal and informal learning supports. Learning supports will be available to all students, with student access to special considerations and Learning Access Plans for students with a disability.

Student safety

As part of creating safe learning environments, the Institute is committed to eliminating inappropriate behaviour to all students, staff and affiliates by creating a culture of respect and inclusivity, proactive action against harm and managing issues using evidence-based best practice. The Institute is diligent in providing clear processes, professional learning opportunities and resources to support all stakeholders whilst maintaining confidentiality and privacy.

Students have access to broad range of safe and appropriate Work Integrated Learning experiences. These placements will be in an area relevant to the study interests of the student and will help broaden workplace knowledge and skills.

The Institute is committed to the delivery of holistic student support services.

Graduations

Students have to meet all requirements of their program of study , then confirmed as having met all program requirements.

Every student who satisfies the requirements and conditions for completion of a program of study is eligible for formal graduation. The Institute will provide graduands with academic statements, including academic transcripts and diploma supplements.

Revocation of Qualifications and Awards

Qualifications and Awards may be revoked where they have been obtained through either fraud or administrative error. Graduates found to have been engaged in academic misconduct may have their awards revocated, subject to the appropriate processes being conducted and the principles of natural justice.