

# AK ART & DESIGN INSTITUTE MALTA: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

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## Policy and Procedure

Date: August 2021

Version: 1.0

Last update: 23/07/22

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## 1. MISSION STATEMENT

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### a. Introduction

The organization is hereby presenting its mission statement upon which it intends to set up its internal quality assurance policies and procedures based on the relevant standards set out in the National Quality Assurance framework for further and higher education.

*This Internal Quality Assurance document is made public on the organisation website upon approved by MFHEA.*

The mission statement is based on three primary principles:

### b. Our Philosophy: Principles Oriented

At AK we aim to offer unparalleled student experiences across a broad spectrum of academic environments. Our mission is based on the integration of both technical and conceptual learning with the aim of delivering a holistic and competence-weighted learning experience for each and every student.

### c. Our Method: Student-Centric and Competence-Based

We not only take personalized learning seriously; we approach it with a bias. It is therefore our core mission to provide a personal learning experience and approach to each and every student.

Our competence-based educational approach prioritizes skill acquisition over other standardized methods. Most of our courses are based on a project-based approach, encouraging students to intuitively learn to apply theory and instructional information to practical and real-life-scenario projects both individually or in group dynamics. To illustrate what is better “in academia there is no difference between academia and the real world; in the real world, there is.”

### d. Led by Professional Artists and Designers

As one of our principal founding missions, we are still led by many of the industry leading artists and designers of the day elected by their peers in recognition of their work. In order to cultivate an educational environment which optimizes growth, diversity and professionalism, our academicians represent many different perspectives, with a shared commitment to art and a strong belief in the contribution that artists make to the world.



## 2. INSTITUTIONAL PROBITY

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The organization is led and managed by professional people at all levels, both at managerial, administrative and at the training programmes level.

### a. Roles and Responsibilities

The following are the leading members of the organization and their own respective responsibilities:

Andrei Scerri	Managing Director
Kelsey May Connor	Director of Classical Art programme BA (Hons) Fine Arts Programme Director

### b. Selection Criteria for the Head of the Organization

The head of the organisation is selected based on his/her ideology, leadership skills and abilities. Ideology – meritocracy based on radical transparency, truth and meaningful relationships with both employees and students. In an effort to overcome bureaucracy as the organisation grows each part of our organisation is divided into autonomous teams. The recruitment process for the Head of Institution starts from opening and marketing the job position on our website and social media platforms, followed by selecting the best candidates for the role. Best candidates are contacted by phone for a short call interview, followed by a live online meeting if shortlisted, followed by a second physical interview for the best few that are chosen.

Each subject area is led by a director of the programme, which relies on the responsibilities and accountability required for ownership of that program of studies.

A leader/head is selected on his/her ability to create a clear vision, communicate clearly and lead. An important key factor is for a leader to recognise and be able to diagnose problems in a transparent and

effective manner. Following our meritocratic organisation, a meritocratic leader of the organisation must be a role model of the ideology that the company shares.

Directors of programmes are selected based on both their expertise and professional experience within the subject area or academic field and their ability to manage and lead. Selected individuals are chosen based on their record of being accountable, reliable and strong communicators with a meritocratic ideal - the ability to look for truth in order to make the best decision for the organisation's benefit and not for the individual. During the recruitment process, all candidates are to send us all qualifications and certifications along with their CV and relevant certificates during the interview stage.

Directors of programmes must be practising professionals with a minimum of 6 years' experience in their respective field. A minimum of an Honours or Masters degree is required depending on the level and criteria of the programme. A premium is placed on the tutor's work portfolio and experience.

### **c. Qualification and experience for Head of departments/programmes**

The selected head of departments/programmes must be practising professionals with a minimum of Bachelors' degree MQF Level 6 or a Masters' degree MQF Level 7, depending on the academic level of the programme. A premium is placed on the tutor's work portfolio and experience.

### **d. Finance**

The total annual turnover is not expected to exceed the 80,000 euro within the first two to three years from first operation. This is expected to reach higher level once the first MQF awards become possible. The accounts are managed and produced by a Certified Public Accountant and are issued for the purpose of Taxation on an annual basis covering a period, that is, from January to December each year.

The Resources engaged are one person, the Managing Director, on a full-time basis and the other seven (7) staff members are engaged on a contractual service agreement basis.

The organization is one where different programmes are headed by different tutors as outlined in the Institutional Probity section. However, for budgetary purposes funds are centrally allocated and managed by the business owner. Before each course, costs are evaluated to check viability and the minimum requirement of students to apply to analyse profit and loss. The organisation also works hand in hand with an accountant for yearly budget plans. Although management accounts for internal budgetary and cost management purposes are developed to take into account the separate programmes, similar to departments, yet there is no obligation to produce such Annual Financial Statements for tax purposes in this way. Financial Statements are always produced in adherence to accounting and taxation legislation and regulations in Malta, at the time.

A professional warranted Certified Public Accountant (CPA) provides as a service direction to the organization heads of the organization on all financial and cost-benefit exercises carried out when courses are being developed to establish their viability and profitability. A yearly budget plan and also a budget forecast is made every 5 years to ensure growth in the business and check profit and loss yearly.

#### Financial Support:

The school is currently in the process of completing a Bank facility to enable our organization to have access to financial support towards its operations and planned investments.

In addition, we are also finalizing an insurance policy to cover for public liability.





### 3. DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES

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The following is the process of how programmes are designed and approved within the organization.

#### a. Planning and Designing of Programmes and courses

The planning and design of current and new programmes of training is carried out after market research is conducted by getting feedback from students by conducting questionnaires mid-way and after each course, and the level and type of student demand is assessed. The ever-changing industry' needs and requirements are well weighted in the planning and design process of such programmes. The respective director of the programme proposes the courses within the programme which are discussed internally with the Head of the organization and other members of the training staff including "Finance" to establish the potential and viability of each programme.

Programmes are developed and updated based on the area of specialization. Each programme contains a number of courses which are based on market demand information, student requests based on collated questionnaires sending online surveys to students after each course and gather their feedback, along with director and tutors' own taste and direction.

#### b. Approval Process of Programmes

Initially, a cost model is built around each programme to establish the viability of each course therein and thus establishing the cost components for setting up each course. The Managing Director in consultation with the respective director of programmes and professional accountant in "Finance" work out the optimum methods of implementing the programmes and courses with a view to providing quality service programmes and courses to the students, which are both financially viable and meet the quality standards required by the organisation. This means that when the organisation is hiring a new tutor, lesson plans/ criteria is handed over to the tutor, which then the tutor is free to amend/ add new lessons/ plan new workshops within the course. This process is then evaluated with the organisation for approval and discussed as a team and check if the plan fits within the course standards.

At this stage once both quality standards and financial viability are established, the Managing Director approves new courses and sets in motion the creation of a new course within a Programme.

#### c. The process of setting up a new Course

The Director of Programmes set out an outline of the course objectives and structure by way of an internal course submission form, similar to the MFHEA procedure, which is submitted for internal review and initial evaluation.

Sections include:

- Course rationale and general learning outcomes,
- Course description and content overview - Course Title and A Lessons plan (curriculum)

- Student description that it is aimed for.
- Duration
- References and bibliography (for theoretical research)

The review is carried out by the Managing Director to ensure that the course respects the cost model and the resource requirements and logistics could be made available for the duration of the course. Hence, the Managing director may request further revisions before final approval or otherwise as may be necessary.

Once approved the director of programmes is requested to develop the course content, curriculum and lesson plans as well as the final project and assessment criteria in more detail taking into account the resources that will be made available for the duration of the course. Once the course content is developed including the total course hours. Together with the Managing director the course structure is reviewed to establish the total number of hours and no of classes required over a period of time. Any course material required, additional staff with a minimum of a Level 6 Degree and other resources are also discussed and agreed to.

The cost model is then reviewed by the professional accountant a number of times to optimise the model, taking into account the administrative and marketing costs required before confirmation of its viability or otherwise. The Managing director, in consultation with all, will ultimately decide when this process is finalized and approve the setting up of the course. The Director of programmes can then proceed with the detailed session-by-session course preparation work itself.

Current programmes and courses are constantly reviewed and improved to take into account the student learning expectations and the ever changing industry knowledge and skills requirements.

#### i. Stakeholders

In developing new programmes the input from students, teachers and market demand is a pivotal strategy that we use for each course in order to better understand our students' expectations and obtain feedback from each and every student. We send out constant Student feedback by sending out online surveys and questionnaires during each stage in the student's learning experience, namely:

1. Beginning (upon enrolment) to identify the particular student's subject prior-knowledge, expectations and motivations for enrolling for the course.
2. Mid-course – to assess learning methods being used and also to understand whether the course is meeting the student's expectations.
3. End of course- for a full analysis of the student's learning experience plus any review of documentation for improvement. We send the surveys to our tutors in a timely manner. All surveys are then gathered by the head of the institution to analyse the results and then discussed with the tutor. If the outcome of the survey results are all positive, then this will boost the tutor to work harder and improve, however if there is negative feedback, the organisation discusses with the tutor what went wrong, what can be improved, what the tutor can emphasise more and work better for the next course.

As per our founding mission to be led by professionals and industry experts our teachers are pivotal in the design and constant development of programs.

The teachers themselves bring real-world insight about any relevant employment-oriented skill and competency trends. Such insight and feedback is communicated during periodic performance review meetings.

The school also aims to provide unique Learning and mentorship Experiences, by partnering with the leading organisations to provide our students with hands-on traineeship and work-relevant opportunities.

#### ii. MQF Courses- Design and Approval Process

The Training programmes that will qualify for MQF level certification will need to first obtain MFHEA approval via a separate application to the Qualifying Authority before it can be launched and introduced in the Programmes. Before submitting a new programme for accreditation by the MFHEA, these courses/programmes would be courses that the organisation would already have experience in teaching and confident enough to expand a higher level in the field.

Other than this the organisation undergoes a process for design and approval of vetted programmes in accordance with all NQAF standards, which includes:

- A) Defining of the expected student workload in terms of ECTS or ECVET learning credits
- B) Indicating the minimum eligibility and selection criteria, where applicable;
- C) Outlining appropriate learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences), learning dynamics and a measure of tutor-learner and peer-learning interaction as is appropriate for the course level and content;
- D) Being in line with MQF and the Malta Referencing Report 2012 and subsequent updates;
- E) Being designed so as to enable smooth student progression, where applicable.

During this stage the programme director will coordinate with the respective course teacher(s) in an organic and bilateral process to ensure that the Award or Qualification program meets all the relevant criteria and characteristics set out by NQAF Standards, MQF requirements and subsequent updates.

## TEACHING STAFF

### d. Introduction

All the teaching staff is normally recruited on a contractual service agreement for either a definite or indefinite time period. Programme directors who are engaged on a full programme which consist of several courses are most of the time engaged on a year-long service contract, subject to renewal. Assistant tutors and other supporting staff are normally engaged on a shorter time period service contact in line with the course demand. A Formal Performance Meeting is conducted: after every course, after we collect online survey student feedback and also after visits during class to gather improvements for the next course. A checklist is filled in for performance reviews during visits to gather personal feedback.

### e. Recruitment Process

When new teaching staff is required, calls are issued both internally and externally. An outline job description for the role and job is published online for all interested candidates. For external calls

social jobs are posted on our website together with other digital channels which include: LinkedIn, and Facebook.

#### **f. Qualifications and Experience**

The head or director of programmes is selected based on both their expertise and professional experience within the subject area or academic field and their ability to manage and lead. Selected individuals are chosen based on their record of being accountable, reliable and strong communicators with a meritocratic ideal - the ability to look for truth in order to make the best decision for the organisation's benefit and not for the individual.

Directors of programmes must be practicing professionals with a minimum of 6 years' experience in their respective field. Teaching qualification is not required for the role, but must have a passion to teach and a professional expertise in the field. In addition, a minimum of an Honours or preferably Masters degree is required depending on the level and criteria of the programme. A high premium is placed on the tutor's work portfolio and experience.

#### **g. Adaptability and Direction**

To ensure that they are in line with the direction of the organization, it all depends on their respective roles, some are programme curators and directors and tutors.

#### **h. Interviewing process**

After a shortlist of applicants, "potentially qualifying" candidates are called for an interview.

To ensure that the recruitment process is proper and unbiased and efficient, triangulation and different evaluators are involved during the hiring process. Generally, the hiring team is made up of 2 or more persons in order to minimise interviewing-bias during the recruitment process. The interview process – is performed by the Managing Director, Program Director and another member of staff (tutor in a similar and relevant field). The interview process is made up of a 3 stage- process.. A three (3) stage hiring process includes: the shortlisting being the first stage, secondly a thorough assessment of the candidate's abilities & capabilities (knowledge, skills and experience) and beliefs (how they are wired, what motivates and drives them to do what they do) and cultural fit.

Our organisation follows a semi-structured approach during the 1<sup>st</sup>-shortlisting-phase and structured interviewing approach during the subsequent 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> interview stages. This allows for a comprehensive assessment of all candidates and the ability to compare and evaluate fairly among all the candidates.

Following an initial shortlisting of qualified candidates for the position the majority of the interview questions are behavioural oriented; hence to access the candidates past behaviours and decisions. This presents itself to be the optimal approach to determine how an individual is likely to perform in a real-case environment.

#### **i. Personal Training development**

All directors and training staff are industry professionals with plenty of experience and exposure. It is their responsibility to keep themselves updated with the latest development and subscribe to journals or other material which can be useful for their upskilling. Provisional Remuneration Bonuses are also included in the terms of employment with the aim to incentivise the continual research and development of the courses.

Dedicated sessions are held with directors in search of developments in their specialization as this can provide an opportunity to upgrade each programme and bring in new courses for students and on the market.

All professional staff are also encouraged to take on industry related personal training to improve and update their knowledge as part of their continuous professional development, which shall also be taken into account in their performance review.

#### **j. Education, Research and Practice**

As one of our principle founding missions, we are led by many of the industry leading artists and designers of the day. We believe that to achieve an Excellent student-learning environment inspiration, ambition and a growth mindset are to be catalysing features of our educational attitude and experience. In turn, each of AK Malta's leading instructors is a professional and practicing artist or designer selected specifically for their professional experience by the organisation in recognition of their work.

This selection method aims to drive an ecology of ambition and also puts a premium on real world skill acquisition.

In addition to the professional in-field experience required- for which we put a premium upon, leading instructors are required to have a minimum of a Bachelor's or Honours in their respective field.

## 4. PUBLIC INFORMATION

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### a. Introduction

All relevant course information on our website including: course syllabus, objectives and learning outcomes, course schedule, qualifications rewarded or MQF level along with pass rates, requirement entries, information about the course tutor, career opportunities, together with a lesson-by- lesson curriculum overview are made available online for the student to download from the organisation website. Further details may be requested through our website online query form.

The website includes all the necessary information (to provide a good profile on every course to both prospective students as much as current students undergoing their own course.

All information is published on the website and social media by the Managing Director who is responsible also for the Marketing and Administration functions.

The Managing Director ensures that all material for publication has been discussed and agreed to with the respective Director of Programmes.

The website and other social media marketing activity are maintained over 7-days a week by support services which report to the Managing Director.

In relation to our continued effort to make the website evermore relevant several feedback forms are strategically placed on our website to access and improve the user friendliness and website content relevance.

### b. Marketing and Sales

Once a course is to be launched the Managing director is responsible to publish the course on the social media and website of the organisation – AK Arts Classes. An international Marketing and Sales social media provider enables the marketing and sales process to kick-off immediately. Student information starts to be collected with immediate effect once they access the online web application and register on the online filing system providing both e-mail address and payment were appropriate. The filing system, which automatically saves all the details on both on our website system and filing on drive: contains information about the student taking the course- personal details, email address, any health issues/allergies we should know of, payment details, course details.

In future once a course is to be MQF level certified a formal application is to be made to the MFHEA for approval prior to formal publication on the social media and website.

### c. Online Marketing

The organization puts a huge emphasis in online marketing using Facebook ads as a prime source of advertising. Most of the ads include what we offer as an art tuition centre, marketing based on the demand. The main purpose is to inspire individuals by implementing and managing our digital marketing strategy. The organization also makes use of paid ads on both Facebook and Instagram, spreading the ideology behind what the business offers. We also make use of email marketing to registered contacts, past and current students and mostly those who would want to stay updated with what we are offering.



## 5. STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT, LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

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### a. Organisation of Programmes

The following outlines how each programme is taught, assessed by the respective tutor:

Name	Responsible for teaching or assessing the subject?	Method of Assessment used?	Assignments (Y/N)
Ritianne Camilleri	Teaching Interior Design	Final Project and Course assignments	Project work and final presentation
Kelsey May Connor	Drawing and Painting instructor teaching the Fine Art Classical Realism program	Observation & Final Project	Assignment only
Alistair Azzopardi	Teaching Game Design	Final Project and Course assignments	Project work and final presentation
Mireille Attard	Teaching Elementary Engineering & Design Thinking	Final Project and Course assignments	Project work and final presentation
Luana Abela	Teaching Art & Design	Final Project	Project Work
Elizabeth Camilleri	Teaching Game Design & Development	Final Project and Course assignments	Project work and final presentation
Redent Camilleri	Teaching Art & Design	Final Project	Project work and final presentation
Elise Vella	Mentorship	Observation	/
Rebecca Ranieri	Teaching Art & Design	Final Project and Course assignments	Project Work
Martina Vassallo	Teaching Science	Final Project	Project Work
Marie Claire Scicluna	Elementary Engineering	Final Project and Course assignments	Project work and final presentation



### **b. Assessment of programs for Quality, Consistency and Fairness**

To ensure consistency of learning quality and fairness in assessment criteria all course or program objectives as well as lesson learning objectives are clearly outlined in the program curriculum. Every tutor is to maintain the same learning objectives for each of the course plan. Any program changes or developments must be clearly communicated and approved by the school directors.

Furthermore, an evaluation of final projects is made by the school directors. This ensures that quality of work and final projects by students is maintained or improved upon.

Provided that all our Art and Design courses are project-based there is no particular marking scheme, however, a student will earn his certification if he meets all the:

1. Pre-set project criteria in relation to the program objectives
2. and based on a favourable performance and program participation (an attendance of 70% or more is considered favourable).

In cases when students do not manage to complete or fall short in their projects they will be allowed to re-present during the next periodic/term.

The director of programmes is responsible to ensure that all tutors involved in the management assessment process are familiar with any changes and updates made to the respective assessment methods, by formally communicating this in writing or through staff meetings.

### **c. Allocation of Resources**

Responsibility to define and allocate what resources are required falls under the - school management who in consultation with the respective tutors need to establish at planning stage such resources to ensure that the programme and individual courses are well equipped within the approved budget and in line with the cost benefit analysis carried out at the planning stage. All course details including resources and materials required are communicated directly by the tutor with the students in advance.

The learning resources are made available via email and/or any other online computer system which enables accessibility to available documentation in the school's own documentation library. Every tutor is responsible to communicate with students about the availability of learning resources and any additional materials, including online or physical textbooks that they may need to either procure themselves or be provided to as part of the course.

Directors and teachers who are experts in their profession review available material and documentation in the planning stage of the course to ensure that the materials, documentation and textbook are fit for purpose and made available to students before commencement and while the course is underway.

### **d. Student Diversity**

At the planning stage the different types of students of different age groups, disabilities, or other material considerations are deeply structured in our programmes since the school organises courses specifically for adults, children of two group ages, below 12 and between 13-16 years of age. Equally, the school considers that all school premises are well equipped to facilitate access to disabled students whom we have already had the experience ever since we have been in operation.

## e. Student Support

### i. Diversity of students

Each and every course is project based. This gives each and every student the opportunity, time and space to practice, research and experiment individually at ones' own pace and aptitudes. Mentoring and critique is provided at an individual level at each and every stage of the student's learning experience thus to provide a personalized approach towards the student's learning.

### ii. Students' challenges

On-going support and interaction is provided between the tutor and student both face to face and through online channels (email). Tutors are available during all times during class hours if there are any difficulties. They can also be contacted during after-class hours via email. Each tutor/course is allocated a different email for any queries from the students. During class tutors can repeat as necessary about any particular issue if a student is having any issues, or if the course is more hands-on, the tutor can demonstrate any particular technique which needs more attention. Feedback and advice is provided to students all throughout (in accordance with NQAF Standard.4)

As a school one of our founding missions is to provide learning experiences which are student-centric and competence-based.

In order to assess students at different learning stages tutors make use of periodic hands-on projects which students are tasked with. These strategically-timed projects and creative tasks allow the tutor to obtain more data-points about their students' progress and performance. This approach has been proven to improve not only the student's skills-acquisition and application of new knowledge but also the overall learning engagement and satisfaction both at the individual student level and the shared classroom environment – students are more engaged when they work on hands-on and personalized projects and more committed when the rest of the class is supportive.

In instances where a student fails to catch up and/or is having difficulties initially tutors may offer the student with more personal attention and feedback. Tutors may even adapt the project and tasks to reflect the learning aptitudes of the particular student. Most often this customized learning path enables the student to maintain track. However, in instances where a student fails to successfully complete a course - most often attributed to repeated absenteeism or poor participation which hinders the student's ability to deliver a satisfactory final project- student is provided with extra time to make up for any shortcomings. During this period the student is supplied with lesson recordings of any missed sessions as well with personal feedback by the tutor (in line with NQAF standard 7).

In cases where a substantial part of the course is missed the option to retake the course during another commencement is granted. If the student fails to make up for any shortcomings despite all-odds and the project is still unsatisfactory no certificate is rewarded.

In addition to this and in accordance with NQAF Standard 8, periodic student feedback surveys - are emailed to the students to obtain student feedback, expectations and thoughts about different aspects of the course. The program director reviews the surveys from the

school website. The feedback is communicated with the respective course tutor and taken into consideration for course improvements and developments.

### iii. Students' feedback and Complaint procedure

As a school the student is always the centre of our activities, to ensure that all potential challenges which the student may encounter from time-to-time; from the application stage and throughout their learning experience, whether attending physically or online, the course teacher is responsible of informing all their students about their learning and assessment responsibilities in order to be successful in meeting the course objectives, and leading to the appropriate certification. In so doing students are informed that the school and teaching staff are there to assist them in their learn process and achieve their objectives.

For this purpose, the course teachers are responsible to inform the students that should the students have any issue they are there to support them and any issues are to be referred to them.

However, if any student (or parent) feels the need to escalate the matter, for any reason, does not consider to being adequately heard off, then a formal complaint in writing directly by e-mail to the programme director or school management, within 4 weeks from the date of incident. The Programme director and school management are to follow up the matter at the earliest by contacting the complaining student and/or by writing back the appropriate response to the student.

If the response to the student complaint is not considered acceptable, the student has the right to make an appeal by submitting in writing within 15 days of the response letter to the Head of the Institution, or delegate, who eventually calls in the student to hear the appeal. A final decision is communicated to the student thereafter by the Head or his delegate.

## f. **Information Systems and On-line Learning**

The school has introduced new programmes and courses through on-line learning and intends to extend these services once MQF awards become possible. The Managing Director is responsible for the Information Systems Management process within the organization and will be providing 24/7 international ISP support once the on-line learning is made available.

Information Management is already in place today for the purpose of marketing, on-line web-site application and registration process through ICT platforms and providers of social media.

These providers all provide System and Database Backup services to ensure proper business continuity.

Current system operational backups are taken regularly and timely by these providers.

These backup services will be extended further to cover for on-line learning once the service becomes available.

An annexed document for the "provisioning of on-line training services" provides full technical information on the subject matter.

## 6. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

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### a. Student Admission and Life Cycle

The application process is offered primarily online via the organisation's web-site or other social media links meant to promote the courses at the appropriate time. The traditional manual process is also provided for those that prefer to come to our premises and register for the particular course.

Any qualifying criteria necessary to apply for the course is outlined as part of the course requirements on the website itself where students are urged to check before making their application for such a course. Qualifying criteria can vary from qualifications and experience in the subject to whether you are a child or an adult, or a beginner or advanced. All courses have their own minimum requirements.

The Managing Director and Director of Programmes School management will review these applications for verification and registration purposes and accept or otherwise accordingly.

The administration team will firstly review each and every enrolment to check for any discrepancies in student details with the class age requirements.

Apart from the age related categorization of courses (children 5-12 y.o , teenagers 13-15y.o, adults 16+y.o) classes can be 'Open for all levels', 'For Beginners' or 'For Intermediate/Advanced'. These level criteria act more as a recommended learning pathway and ensure that each student start or enrolls for the class which is most relevant to their skills.

At any point in time during the application and admission process the student has access to the course syllabi and brochures for each different programme which are always available online on the website. Furthermore, a program and school induction are provided by the class tutor during a first introductory session, whereby all aspects of the program structure, learning criteria and school assessment methods and protocol are explained in detail.

The school offers 24/7 online support and assistance for any type of queries or concerns.

### b. Progression

Student learning is evaluated and assessed all throughout the course cycle by the respected tutor at each level of the course and especially at the end product/tasks at the final stage of the programme for evaluation. Tutor assesses both formally and informally by analysing and gathering information about each student's progression by seeing their work, analysing their progressions in skills and techniques, and also gathering data if every student is finishing all the tasks according to the programme criteria which are then evaluated and given individual feedback, or more time if necessary to reach the standard of the programme.

From the early beginning till the end of the course each of our learning modules and programs are designed with a project-based approach whereby students work on different creative tasks both in-class and outside class hours.

These projects or creative personal tasks are set together by the student and the lecturer and reflect both the personal interests of the student as well as the overall learning outcomes of the course. This educational approach allows for better personalisation and feedback at the individual

level throughout the whole learning experience. This non standardised process creates the right environment for diversity, personalised learning and innovation to happen.

Tutors are responsible to keep their record on students' progression (including any assessment outcomes, marks, student participation and other performance aspects) on the internal computer system by accessing it from their own laptop or that provided by the school, which is connected to the "cloud" for backup and resilience. This information is then reviewed at different stages of the process and eventually marked as complete. All new tutors are familiarised with the internal system and processes once they join the school for the first time.

### c. Recognition and Certification

A certificate is presented to students who successfully complete the course. The criteria for a successful completion is based on

- i. **An active participation** and attendance of not less than 70% of a course.
- ii. **High quality work and performance** are reflected throughout the culmination of projects and creative tasks assigned throughout the course.

Course Certification falls in two categories:

- a) Courses that require no MQF qualification are issued with a "Certificate of Successful participation"
- b) Eventually, following the application for awards to the qualifications authority these certificates will be issued accordingly, in the future
- c) When MQF Level Courses are held in future the relevant award or qualification will be in line with the MFHEA framework and in accordance with the pegged levels.
- d) MFHEA 03/2021 communication requires that:
  - a. the design of the certificate complies to the sample certificate made available on the website, and
  - b. the certificate shall include the following detail;
    - i. the full name of the awarding body as approved by MFHEA;
    - ii. the full name of the student as per passport / local identification;
    - iii. Licence number as assigned by MFHEA when the licence is issued;
    - iv. The licence category
    - v. The exact title of the qualification or award as approved by MFHEA in the programme's final course description;
    - vi. The MQF/EQF level for the programme
    - vii. The number of ECTS
    - viii. The day/month/year when the certificate is conferred
    - ix. The duration for the completion of the programme in days, weeks months or years
    - x. A clear indication that the programme has been accredited by MFHEA (re quotation)
    - xi. The logo of the awarding body
    - xii. The logo of the MFHEA
    - xiii. The Head of Institution's as approved by MFHEA including position and signature
    - xiv. The education provider to incorporate security features such as watermarks
    - xv. The education provider must give each certificate a unique identification number

Other conditions in the MFHEA 03/2022 communication apply.

## 7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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### a. Managing the information

Our organisation collects and analyses data on the student population, course participation, retention and success rates, satisfaction and employment rates and tracer studies. These are very important to ensure accountability and also to help the organisation to improve and enhance the quality of the education that we provide.

Methods of data collection may include feedback forms, attendance lists, etc. In the case of EMPLOYMENT ORIENTED COURSES (MFQ LEVEL 4+) this will include retaining student profile data, student satisfaction and career paths information and data on student participation, retention and success rates. Student records are stored on a Front-end Database integrated with e-mail marketing software. All information is archived in Malta for up to 40 years, in line with NQAF standards.

Archiving of Data is securely carried out through backup of data over “cloud technology” which is retained at three levels, Local (PC level), the application and data server level and International Service Providers (ISP) level. The System administrator oversees that the process is carried out effectively on an ongoing basis.

This enables our organisation to record all data about current and prospective students from the time they register online through the web-site, which include course selection, payment and electronic acknowledgement of the whole process.

This data is then used for the effective management of programs. Data collected from student feedback surveys after each course is used as feedback during Performance Review meetings with tutors for 2 primary reasons:

- 1. Teaching feedback-** To improve the teaching experience as a whole in terms of delivery methods, tasks and final project outcomes.
- 2. Course improvements:** to improve, change or develop the course in order to be more relevant towards the student learning expectations and aptitudes and to identify new student learning needs for new courses.

The web-site is very versatile and customer friendly and enables each student to explore all programmes and courses being carried out and planned for the immediate and foreseeable future.

The Managing director is responsible for the Marketing and Information Management process of all student data. This data is shared with the Directors and tutors as may be necessary for the purpose of selection, initiation and execution of the programmes and courses.

Changes to the student information as the courses are underway is the responsibility of the Managing Director along with the direct support of the respective Programme Directors and assistant tutors. Hence, any such changes are recorded and updated in the system as may be required.

Amongst the records kept manually and electronically, tutors are to maintain student attendances, performance results and project work and other relevant information on the student. Each Director retains records relating to attendance sheets which are manually maintained (paper based) and later calculated by the tutor for each student at the course end. Other student material such as projects are maintained electronically in the school drive and or drop-box.

The information is retained in an inhouse computerised online system and shared between the course tutors and school management.

## **b. MQF course**

Once MQF courses become possible the sources available for information gathering, namely,

a) the personal detail obtained upon enrolment, which is managed and retained in the learning management system and

(b) thought the data obtained from the students surveys which are sent through online survey forms by the school management at different stages of the student learning experience. It provides the tutor's and school management with relevant information pertaining to the student expectation, aptitudes and overall learning satisfaction levels. This relevant information is collected and digitally maintained and then used to help tutors customize and constantly develop courses which align with the students' levels.

## **c. Action Plan for improvement**

As per our founding mission: "to be constantly led by industry professionals for hands- on learning and skills acquisition", courses are constantly being improved-upon and developed in order to reflect the ever-changing technologies, skill needs and industry expectations.

In order to promote a culture which fosters an organic development and growth of programs all educational staff is subjected to Performance Reviews and eligible for performance bonuses. This is included in our educational staff work contracts.



360° Teaching performance review-meetings are conducted on a periodic basis to analyse the teaching and program performance and discuss ways how the program or course can be changed or improved upon.

Student feedback along with other KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) including:

- students' engagement and retention success rates; quality of final works produced;
- in-class teaching-evaluations- made by the school directors and/or coordinator
- and Research and development made by the tutor in preparation of the course material and lesson content

All of these different program performance data points are used in order to assess the Overall Teaching performance.

## 8. ONGOING MONITORING AND REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES

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### a. Ongoing review process

In our on-going effort to maintain our learning programs up to date, industry-relevant and student-centric, the school's monitoring and review of programmes take different forms and encapsulates a 360 degree approach, including different stakeholders, namely:

Courses are planned after market surveys are carried out from time to time depending on the needs of students and society.

To ensure that the aims and objectives of the programmes are achieved, regular discussions with the tutors are scheduled. Usually these are timed with the surveys in order to analyse the student feedback at each phase of the process.

It is in our planning process to identify the changing needs of students and the market response we receive to consider any improvements that may be required to introduce in our training programme and respective courses for both current and new courses. Planning process is both discussed and implemented by respective managers and Directors.

The evaluation process is carried out by the tutors and the respective Programme Directors on an ongoing basis (re Institutional Probity section above). Both the Head and Program Director, are in the ongoing process of evaluation and progression of courses, communication of new plans and strategies, meetings and interviews.

The implementation process comes into effect once the outcome of the evaluation process is communicated to all members in the organisation verbally, by e-mail or by updates on the web-sites. Current students are also directly informed by the respective tutors.

Once on-line learning becomes available electronic circulation of individual questionnaires for those participating on these types of courses will become necessary to establish if the training and course objectives are equally being met for the student as much as for the organisation itself.

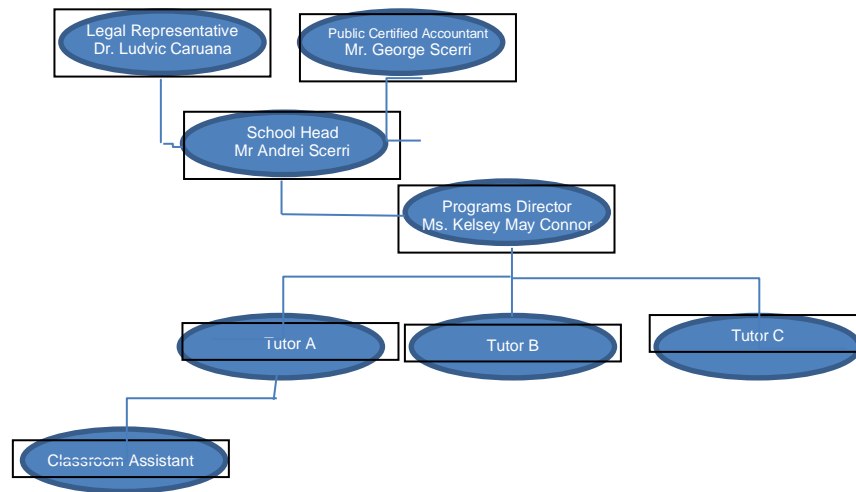
Additionally, the school also carries out student and parent feedback surveys, both formally (through printed/electronic feedback forms) and also during informal and face-to-face school-parent meetings which take place during end of term or course exhibitions and/or project presentations.

As a school we are continually collaborating and partnering with leading organisations in providing training and internship programs for our students.

## 9. POLICY FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

### a. Organigram

The below graphical organigram provides a visual representation of how the learning programmes match the roles and responsibilities of the school's educational staff and the underlying support received from internal or external services.



ORGANIGRAM Members of staff	Programmes	Roles	Responsibilities	Tutors
	Interior Design	Tutor	Ritianne Camilleri	Supplementary contractual services
Elementary Engineering	Tutor	Mireille Attard	Supplementary contractual services	
Art & Design	Tutor	Luana Abela	Supplementary contractual services	
Art & Design	Tutor	Redent Camilleri	Supplementary contractual services	
Game Design & Development	Tutor	Elizabeth Camilleri	Supplementary contractual services	
Mentorship	Class assistant/ Mentor	Elise Vella	Supplementary contractual services	

	<b>Art &amp; Design</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Rebecca Ranieri	Supplementary contractual services
	<b>Science</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Martina Vassallo	Supplementary contractual services
	<b>Elementary Engineering</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Marie Claire Scicluna	Supplementary contractual services
	<b>Game Design</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Alistair Azzopardi	Supplementary contractual services
	<b>Classical Art</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Kelsey May Connor	Full Time
	<b>Managing Directors</b>	<b>School Head Programs Director</b>	Mr. Andrei Scerri Ms. Kelsey May Connor	Full Time
	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Head</b>	Mr. Andrei Scerri	Full Time
	<b>Information Systems</b>	<b>Head</b>	Mr. Andrei Scerri	Full Time
	<b>Finance</b>	<b>Certified Public Accountant</b>	Mr. G. Scerri	Contractual service
	<b>Legal Representative</b>	<b>Legal adviser</b>	Dr. L. Caruana	Contractual Service

Large classes are generally supplemented with a teaching assistant to support the main tutor. Class assistants or mentors as we like to call them, will assist within the classroom, as well as facilitate small group and individual instruction.

Classroom assistants/ mentors are typically responsible for supporting and collaborating with the class teacher and other colleagues in order to ensure a personalized and smooth learning environment during every stage of the student's learning experience. They are essential to ensure that each student obtains the individualized attention they deserve for successful learning outcome. A classroom assistant/mentor may work predominantly with one student in need of one-on-one support or with several students in a classroom.

## b. Internal Quality Assurance

Each tutor is responsible for the Quality Control process to ensure that the appropriate Quality Assurance measures are implemented and maintained. Tutors are responsible of developing the courses in accordance with the established learning criteria for each programme. In addition to this the school management is involved in the reviewing as well as providing feedback in order to ensure consistency in the quality of the programmes both in terms of learning content and outcomes as well as the quality of student works. In addition to this, periodic evaluation visits are also performed by the school directors.

The tutors are responsible to report to the Programs' Director or Head of any quality-related issues or risks arising in the course of delivering their programmes and following discussion with their peers and Managing Directors they are to ensure that the appropriate corrective actions are taken where appropriate.

The Programs Director shall formally communicate in writing such actions.

The Head is responsible to ensure that the Program Director is carrying out their own quality control and assurance. The Head is the overall Quality Controller and accountable to the organization.

The managing director is also responsible for the Marketing, IT Support and Web Development, SEO and Administration.

### **c. ETHICS**

#### **i. Guiding Principles and Intended Behaviours (for both students and teachers):**

All teaching staff are to abide by the 'Shared Vision and Grievance procedure' (refer to document attachment Shared Vision and Grievance Procedure) which lays out all the school vision, code of conduct and grievance procedure in case of misconduct. Copies of the document are made available to new teaching staff upon contract signing.

As an educational organisation which celebrates and advances excellence in artistic and creative education every member of the teaching community is required to understand and adhere the with following Guiding Principles and Intended Behaviours:

- i. Reciprocity - We conduct ourselves in the spirit of achieving mutual benefit and understanding. We recognise that this requires ongoing give and take. We each will bring unique strengths and resources that will enable us to overcome our challenges and celebrate our successes.
- ii. Autonomy with responsibility We give each other the freedom to manage and make decisions within the framework of our unique skills, training, and professional responsibilities. We individually commit to make decisions and take actions that respect and strengthen the collective interest to achieve our shared Vision.
- iii. Honesty and Full Transparency- We will be truthful and authentic even when that makes us vulnerable or uncomfortable. This includes honesty about performance, unknowns, feelings, intentions, perceptions, critique and preferred outcomes. We acknowledge that in order to constantly improve and overcome such challenges - at both organisational and individual level - we must communicate these issues when they arise through meaningful and open dialogue.
- iv. Loyalty We are committed to our relationships. We will value each other's interests as we value our own. We will strive towards cumulative benefit and not be absorbed by ego-centric personal gain at the expense of others'. Standing together through adversity, we will achieve our Shared Vision.

v. **Equity** We are committed to fairness, which does not always mean equality. We will make decisions based on a balanced assessment of needs, risks and resources.

vi. **Integrity**- Our actions will be intentionally consistent with our words and agreements. Decisions will not be made arbitrarily but will align with our Shared Vision and Guiding Principles. Our collective words and actions will be for the greater good of the relationship and the provision of student-centric tuition and personalised learning.

Directors are directly responsible to ensure that the appropriate ethics are followed in delivering quality services to the students and maintaining proper oversight of what the students are producing and delivering as their own product.

All supporting tutors are equally responsible to ensure that students are led and thought in line with the course curriculum and content and that students are assessed and reviewed indiscriminately and objectively throughout the delivery and completion of the course.

Directors are equally responsible to ensure that their supporting teaching staff maintains the level of training, evaluation and review of the student performance.

If Directors observe any non-ethical behaviour arising from either the supporting staff or the students, they are to verbally inform the person of such unethical behaviour and if the matter repeats itself or any related corrective measures fail to take ground, a formal written warning is to be communicated to the person accordingly.

The Managing Director is to be informed at all times of such non-ethical behaviour to ensure that if matters persist on a long term which may have a negative impact on the effective delivery of the programme or the respective course, he has the right to take corrective action by any legitimate means possible depending on the gravity of the situation.

More information about school behaviour and grievance procedure refer to document: ***Shared Vision and Grievance Policy & Procedure (for Teaching staff)***

## ii. Student behaviour and Ethics

Most student behavioural issues may arise in the form of misconduct or unbecoming behaviour in the direction of school staff or other students, theft or plagiarism (for more information visit the ***School Plagiarism and Cheating Policy and procedure document***) of intellectual work. which relate to a misrepresentation of own work through plagiarism or other similar action, the student is requested to explain his conduct to the Director, and if such explanation is not considered satisfactory, the Director may consider giving a “failed” assessment, in particular, if the course contained an examinable module.

In any of the cases resulting from wrongful student behaviour the first line of action will be from the tutor who requests that the student explains his/her behaviour and provides opportunity for the student to learn and rectify his/her actions. If behavioural problems persist and actions remain unchanged the school management may issue a 1st warning to the respective student or parent (in case of minors). If the situation persists a 2nd and last warning is provided to the student with a time-period to resolve one's actions. IF even after the 2nd warning the issue does not clear out the school may decide on the appropriate disciplinary action. In unique circumstances the school does reserve the right without compensation to terminate the student's participation from the school. The suspension may be definite or indefinite subject to the gravity of the situation.

More information about student behaviour and grievance procedure refer to document: ***Shared Vision and Grievance Policy & Procedure (for Students)***

#### **d. Other key principles**

Although key objectives of the organization are discipline and maintaining personal confidentiality, yet at the same time the school wants to instil a sense of clear and effective communication across every member of the staff and students alike by adopting a policy of “open-door” and “zero-bureaucracy” for everyone who should feel free to come forward without any fear of repression from anyone.

## **10. CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**

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Every so often, an audit report is made by planning meetings between programme directors and tutors. This includes planning and updating of courses, review of system improvement, and discussion on surveys and feedback from tutors, peers and students which are collected and analysed. Evaluation and implementation process is also valued between the members of the entity. A thorough report on external and internal quality assurance can be found in section 09. ONGOING MONITORING AND REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES.

In addition, the school shall provide all the necessary support and co-operation to any external quality audit which the MFHEA may decide to undertake from time to time in line with the respective legislation