

# Malta ICOM Educational Quality Assurance Handbook 2023/24



**ICOM**  
INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE  
of **OSTEOPATHIC** MEDICINE



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## **Introduction.**

This handbook introduces the key procedures and policies which inform, support, and assure the quality of the Higher Education provision at International College of Osteopathic Medicine Educational Ltd (ICOM). This handbook should be used in conjunction with the Quality Calendar which identifies key dates for meetings and business events throughout the academic year.

## **Mission Statement**

At Malta ICOM Educational, our mission is to provide exceptional leadership in health and social care education and research. We are committed to delivering outstanding undergraduate and postgraduate education and training opportunities that equip our students with the knowledge and skills they need to excel in their chosen profession.

We believe in teaching to the highest academic standards, combining the traditions and values of each profession with the latest scientific knowledge. Our students are provided with a supportive and engaging learning environment that fosters intellectual and personal growth, enabling them to develop into skilled and compassionate professionals.

Our goal is to provide our students with the intellectual and personal skills needed to excel in their professional field of practice. We strive to create an educational experience that is both rigorous and rewarding, preparing our graduates to make meaningful contributions to their communities and to the world at large.

At Malta ICOM Educational, we are committed to providing excellence in education and patient care, and to empowering our students to achieve their full potential.

## **Vision**

At Malta ICOM Educational, our vision for 2028 is to be a leading provider of undergraduate and postgraduate education programmes in health and social care, with a focus on person-centred care in the fields of osteopathy, physiotherapy, and psychology. We aspire to create a multidisciplinary centre of excellence that will be the largest teaching centre for musculoskeletal care in Europe, supporting the development of highly skilled and competent professionals who can deliver exceptional care to patients.

To achieve this vision, we will continue to prioritise research by deepening existing partnerships and forming new collaborative relationships that support our education and training programmes and contribute to the evidence in health and social care, particularly in person-centred musculoskeletal care.

We will strive to create an exciting and dynamic learning environment by developing and applying innovative teaching, learning and assessment strategies that respond to the changing needs of our students and the evolving landscape of health and social care education.

Our commitment to enhancing the quality of clinical practice in the fields of health and social care locally, nationally, and internationally remains a top priority. By providing exceptional education and training programmes, we aim to equip our graduates with the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to become leaders in their respective fields, contributing to the improvement of patient care and the advancement of the healthcare sector as a whole.

## **Strategic Plan 2023-2028**

### **1. Expand and Diversify our Programmes:**

Malta ICOM Educational will introduce new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the fields of physiotherapy, psychology, and dental hygiene. We will further develop and consolidate our undergraduate and postgraduate provision in osteopathy, which has been a core strength of our institution. In addition, we will develop new programmes in emerging areas such as digital healthcare and personalised medicine to ensure that our students have access to cutting-edge education and training opportunities. By expanding and diversifying our programmes, we will be able to cater to a wider range of interests and career aspirations among our students while also staying relevant to the evolving landscape of health and social care education.

### **2. Enhance the Quality of our Education and Training:**

We will ensure that our education and training programmes meet the highest academic standards and are delivered using innovative and engaging teaching and learning methods. This will include the use of simulation and virtual learning environments, flipped classrooms, and online resources. We will also provide regular opportunities for staff development to ensure that our teaching staff remain up to date with the latest developments in their fields.

### **3. Build Strategic Collaborative Relationships:**

We will deepen our existing partnerships with health and social care organizations locally, nationally, and internationally. We will also form new collaborative relationships with key stakeholders, such as professional bodies, regulatory agencies, and industry partners, to

support our education and training programmes and contribute to the evidence base in health and social care.

4. Foster a Culture of Research and Innovation:

We will prioritise research by promoting a culture of inquiry and innovation among our staff and students. This will involve providing dedicated research facilities, funding research projects, and promoting research collaborations with external partners. We will also encourage our students to engage in research activities by providing opportunities for research experience and training.

5. Develop a Multidisciplinary Centre of Excellence:

We will establish a multidisciplinary centre of excellence in musculoskeletal care, bringing together staff and students from across our programmes and departments. This centre will focus on person-centred care, providing exceptional education and training opportunities in musculoskeletal care and promoting research and innovation in this area.

6. Enhance our International Reputation:

We will enhance our international reputation by actively promoting our education and training programmes to potential students and partners overseas. We will also participate in international conferences and events and develop international partnerships to promote the exchange of ideas and knowledge across borders.

7. Foster a Supportive and Inclusive Learning Environment:

We will continue to provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment that fosters intellectual and personal growth among our students. This will include promoting diversity and inclusion, providing academic and pastoral support, and ensuring that our students have access to appropriate resources and facilities.

By implementing this strategic plan, Malta ICOM Educational will achieve its vision of becoming a leading provider of undergraduate and postgraduate education programmes in health and social care, with a focus on person-centred care in the fields of osteopathy, physiotherapy, and psychology. We will also establish a multidisciplinary centre of excellence in musculoskeletal care and enhance our international reputation, while maintaining our commitment to enhancing the quality of clinical practice in the fields of health and social care locally, nationally, and internationally.

## Values

This statement of values informs how Malta ICOM Educational relates to its various stakeholders including students, patients, practitioners and collaborative partners.

## Quality and Academic Standards Statement

The Malta International College of Osteopathic Medicine Educational (ICOM) is committed to the establishment and enhancement of high academic standards within its programmes. The College's systems and procedures for quality enhancement aim to operate in a positive, self-critical, and supportive environment to promote high academic standards. It is expected that all members of the College accept ownership of those standards at whatever appropriate level responsibility has been developed to them. It will endeavour to ensure, wherever provision is delivered, that its procedures and practices are informed by the following principles:

- The systems and procedures are fit for purpose. They are transparent and responsive to changing contexts;
- That academic standards are the responsibility of the entire College community;
- That educational provision and procedures are subject to monitoring and evaluation as part of a commitment to continuous improvement;
- That educational provision and procedures should be informed by the views of students and other stakeholders;
- That learning and teaching activities, including quality assurance processes should be supported by relevant staff development;
- That high-quality provision and standards of service are supported by transparent and accessible procedures for the resolution of academic appeals and complaints;
- That full recognition is made of the external quality reference points including the relevant statutory professional body and the regulating agency. Which will be informed by good practice from member states, will inform policies and processes.

The responsibility for interpretation and implementation of the quality strategy is shared between the teaching faculty and the central administrative unit through the formal committee structure.



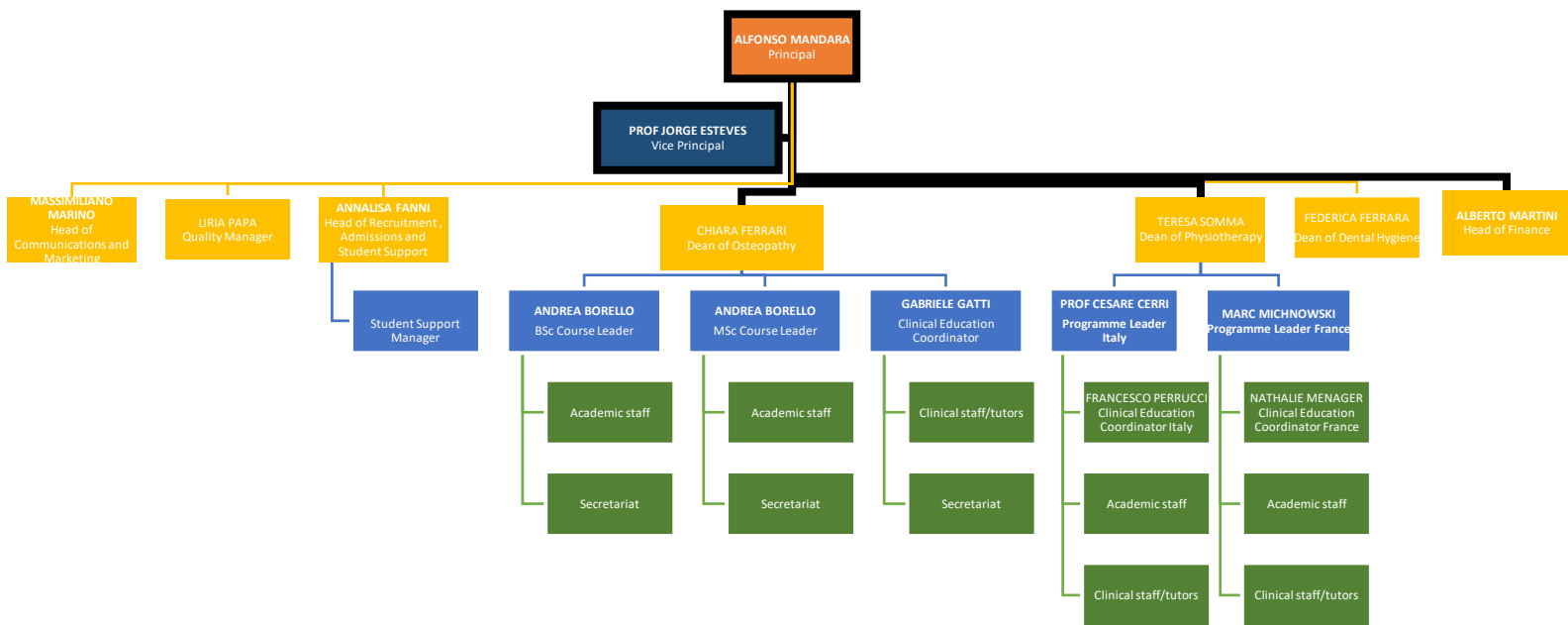
# Section 1

## Organisational Structure

### Management structure

The Malta ICOM Educational Academic Management Board has overriding authority over the Malta ICOM Campus and associated Teaching Centres. Each Centre has its own operational management structure.

**Figure 1 Malta ICOM Educational Academic Management Structure**



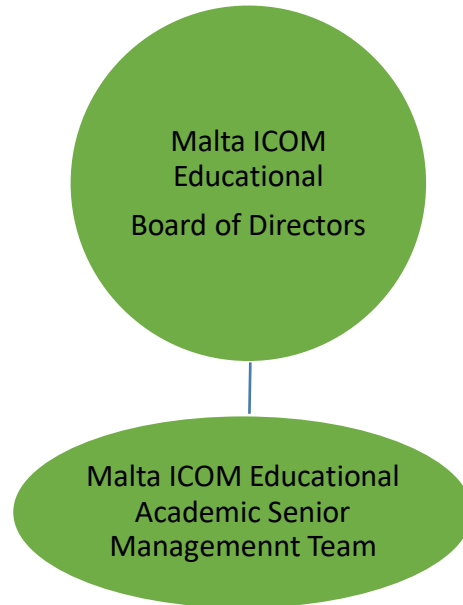
### Roles and responsibilities within Deliberative Structure



28. Board roles and responsibility of deliberative structure

The details of the roles and responsibilities of the individual committees is located in Roles and responsibilities within Malta ICOM Educational Deliberative Structure.

Figure 2 Overriding Malta ICOM Educational Structure



**Malta ICOM Educational Board of Directors (BoD):**

- Alfonso Mandara
- Alberto Martini
- Olivier Missoffe
- Sami Rifai

The Malta ICOM Educational Board of Directors is established to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic direction to ensure the academic excellence and continuous improvement of the educational programmes offered by Malta ICOM.

**Malta ICOM Educational Senior Management Team (SMT):**

- Alfonso Mandara, President and CEO
- Professor Jorge Esteves, Vice Principal
- Luca Cantoni, Chief Financial Officer

**Terms of Reference**

**Purpose**

The Malta ICOM Educational Academic Senior Management Team (SMT) is established to provide leadership, strategic direction, and oversight of academic matters. This team

collaborates closely with the Malta ICOM Board of Directors, which has overall responsibility for the institution's governance and oversees the work of the SMT.

## **Responsibilities**

### Leadership:

- Provide visionary leadership in setting the academic direction of Malta ICOM.
- Foster a culture of academic excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement.

### Strategic Planning:

- Contribute to the development and periodic review of the institution's strategic educational goals.
- Advise the Board of Directors on academic priorities and long-term planning to enhance educational offerings.

### Resource Allocation:

- Collaborate with the Board of Directors in reviewing and approving budgetary allocations related to academic initiatives, ensuring optimal resource utilisation.
- Provide guidance to the Board on faculty and staff recruitment and development to support academic goals.

### Quality Assurance:

- Oversee mechanisms for programme evaluation, including student outcomes assessment and faculty performance.
- Ensure compliance with accreditation and regulatory requirements, reporting to the Board as needed.

### Student Welfare and Success:

- Promote a supportive learning environment conducive to student success and well-being.
- Collaborate with the Board to address matters related to student grievances, appeals, and academic integrity.

### Partnerships and Collaborations:

- Explore opportunities for academic partnerships, research collaborations, and international exchanges.
- Review and approve agreements with external institutions or organizations related to academic matters, with guidance from the Board.

## Reporting

The Academic SMT reports to the Malta ICOM Board of Directors, providing updates on academic initiatives, strategic academic directions, and recommendations as required. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to approve major academic decisions and policies proposed by the SMT.

## Accountability

The Academic SMT is accountable for its decisions and actions, ensuring transparency, ethical conduct, and alignment with the mission and values of Malta ICOM. The Board of Directors will oversee and hold the SMT accountable for its academic leadership.

## **Malta ICOM Educational Academic Board (AB)**

President: Alfonso Mandara

Vice Principal: Professor Jorge Esteves

Chief Financial Officer: Luca Cantoni

Quality Manager: Liria Papa

Head of Recruitment, Admissions and Student Support: Annalisa Fanni

Dean of Osteopathy: Chiara Ferrari

Dean of Physiotherapy: Teresa Somma

Dean of Dental Hygiene: Federica Ferrari

Programme Leader BSc and MSc Osteopathy: Andrea Borello

Programme Leader BSc Physiotherapy (Italy): Professor Cesare Cerri

Programme Leader BSc Physiotherapy (France): Marc Michnowski

Clinical Education Coordinators:

Osteopathy: Gabrielle Gatti

Physiotherapy: Francesco Perrucci/ Marc Michnowski

1. Oversee clinical based modules.
2. Oversee the clinical mentoring processes.
3. Responsible for the maintaining of CPCM Standards in the teaching clinical environment.

## Heads of Department

1. Responsibility for phase of study.
2. Oversight of quality assurance of teaching and assessment.
3. Module leadership as required.
4. First line for academic integrity as investigating officer.
5. Operational Management of staff delivering modules writing a phase.

## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The Malta ICOM Educational Academic Board is established as the academic governing body of the institution. It is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the effective operation of various key academic functions and processes, while collaborating closely with the Malta ICOM Academic Senior Management Team.

- Overseeing all academic functions, activities and programmes of its Higher Education Institute and establishing the academic regulations.
- In accordance with the guidance given by the AB it will be responsible for design and oversight of all study programmes developed by Malta ICOM Educational in line with the programme accreditation procedures established by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) .
- Quality will be reviewed by the AB in conjunction with the quality manager and then approved by the MFHEA evaluators appointed to accredit the programme of studies.
- The AB will ensure that all course content is available online before the beginning of the academic year.
- The AB will collect data through Student Staff consultative meetings and regular student feedback questionnaires end of module surveys to improve the content and delivery of the course. This data will be forwarded to the Quality Manager and be made available on the Malta ICOM Educational Website for public appraisal.
- The AB will be responsible for putting all relevant materials regarding the course make up content teaching methods, resources, reading list, module ECTS online for public access in conjunction with the Marketing Director.
- Before the start of each academic year, the AB will review and publish the Institute's policies, contained in this document, annexes and appendices attached to it, on the Malta ICOM Educational website. These include rules for student progression,

recognition of relevant qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, whether formal, non-formal or informal, and procedures for carrying out assessments and exams.

- The Quality Director has the responsibility of providing all academic certificates and transcripts. The final documentation released upon the successful completion of the course will include a transcript containing all the relevant details of the programme, such as MQF level, number of ECTS credits, and learning outcomes achieved, as well as the list of study units taken by the student, as required by the MFHEA regulations.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Effective Operation of Student Experience:**

- Oversee and enhance the student experience to ensure a positive and supportive learning environment.

### **Effective Operation of Student Engagement Strategies:**

- Develop and implement strategies to actively engage students in the educational process.

### **Effective Operation of Admissions Processes:**

- Ensure the efficient and fair operation of admissions processes, promoting diversity and inclusivity.

### **Effective Operation of Quality Assurance Processes:**

- Establish and oversee quality assurance processes to maintain and improve academic standards.

### **Budget Management:**

- Operate within approved budgetary limits for Malta ICOM Educational Centres.

### **Quality Assurance Across Educational Centres:**

- Oversee the development and implementation of quality assurance processes across all Malta ICOM Educational Teaching Centres.

### **Reporting for Academic Standards Oversight:**

- Produce reports for relevant Malta ICOM Educational committees concerned with academic standards oversight.

### **Implementation of Quality Procedures:**

- Implement Malta ICOM Educational quality procedures to enhance educational excellence.

### **Faculty Facility Strategy:**

- Implement the faculty facility strategy to ensure efficient use of resources.

## **Reporting**

The Academic Board shall report to the Malta ICOM Academic Senior Management Team, providing updates on academic initiatives, strategic academic directions, and recommendations as required. The Academic Senior Management Team and ultimately the Board of Directors have the authority to approve major academic decisions and policies proposed by the Academic Board.

## **Accountability**

The Academic Board is accountable for its decisions and actions, ensuring transparency, ethical conduct, and alignment with the mission and values of Malta ICOM. The Academic Senior Management Team oversees and holds the Academic Board accountable for its academic leadership.

Ex Officio: Marketing Manager Massimiliano Marino

1. Develop marketing strategy.
2. Undertake market research activity as directed by Vice Principal.
3. Advise on branding strategies.

Ex Officio: Malta Teaching Centre Administrator

1. Oversees teaching and learning activities in accordance with direction of Faculty Deans.
2. Ensures that staff and student feedback is communicated through the deliberative committee structure.
3. Reports to the Academic Board on the performance and progression of students.

Ex Officio: Teaching Centre Administrators

1. Oversee teaching and learning activities in accordance with direction of Academic Board.
2. Ensures that staff and student feedback is communicated through the deliberative committee structure.
3. Reports to the Academic Board on the performance and progression of students.

Ex Officio: Malta ICOM Educational Project Manager: Ariane Nolan

1. To oversee the strategy for the implementation and development of any new projects in accordance with local regulations.
2. Report to the Academic SMT regarding progression of new projects.

3. Report to marketing Administrator regarding local marketing strategies.
4. Act as first point of contact for development of local programmes.
5. Co-ordinates and oversees progression routes.

Teaching Staff Representatives\*2  
 Student Representatives\*2

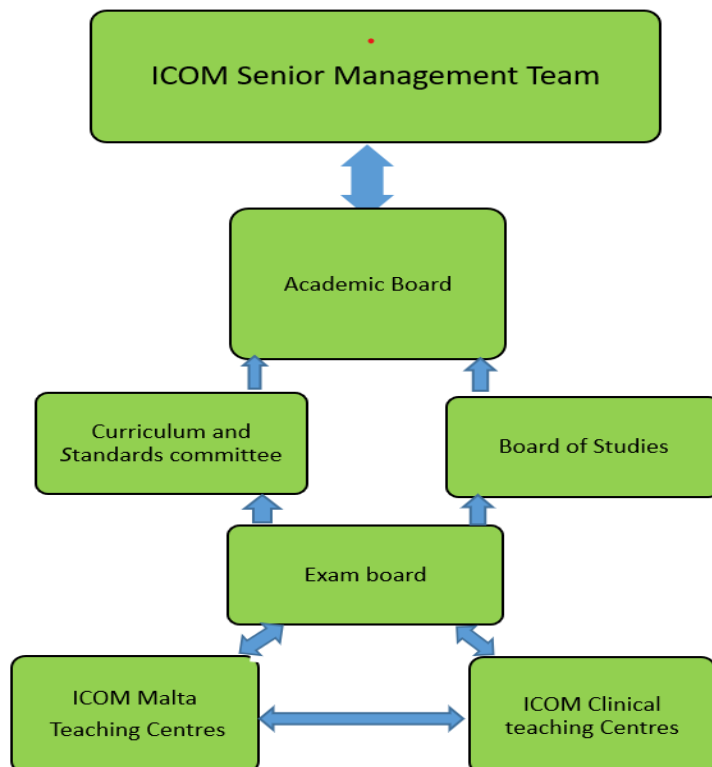
**Malta ICOM Educational Centre Curriculum, Standards and Student Experience Committee (CSSEC):**

Heads of Departments (all)  
 Director of Research  
 Clinic Coordinators

**Malta ICOM Educational Clinical Teaching Centre (CCFO)**

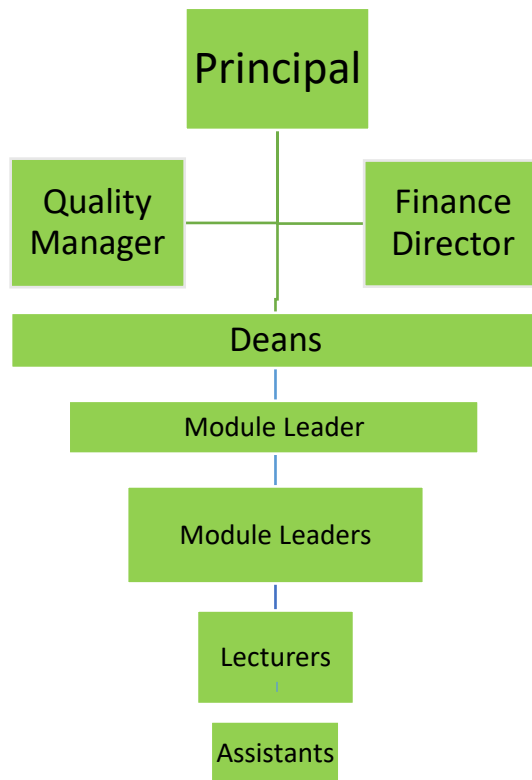
Teaching Centres are managed by the Centre Administrator and Clinical Education Coordinators.

*Figure 3 Overriding Academic Board Structure*





*Figure 4 Teaching Centres Staff Hierarchy*



**Malta ICOM Educational Teaching Centre Administrator responsibilities:**

- Effective operation of student experience.
- Effective operation student engagement strategies.
- Effective operation of admissions processes.
- Effective operation Quality assurance processes.
- Operates Malta ICOM Educational Centre budget within agreed limits.
- Oversees the development and implementation of quality assurance processes across all Malta ICOM Educational Teaching Centres.
- Produces reports for appropriate Malta ICOM Educational committees concerned with academic standards oversight.

## **Selection criteria for Head of Institution**

### **Essential**

- MQF level 7 qualification with at least 5 years in academic healthcare setting or equivalent
- or
- MQF level 6 qualification with a minimum of 10 years or more in a Higher Education, Teaching, or Healthcare leadership role

### **Desirable Criteria**

- MQF level 7 or 8 in a Healthcare profession.
- Fellowship of Higher Education Academy.
- Possess a teacher training qualification.
- Leadership course postgraduate training.
- Possess assessor and verifier awards.

### **Personal Qualities**

- Able to work co-operatively with other academic staff in ensuring that delivery of the learner entitlements is achieved.
- Is committed to continuous quality improvement and maintains high expectations of self and others.
- Has effective written and spoken communication skills in presenting and sharing ideas with others.
- Managing personal administrative tasks related to own work. Planning, prioritising, and progressing own work, to fit the achievement of own priorities around the requirements of others. Ability to work independently with proven ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- The capacity to work under pressure and determine priorities on own initiative.
- Has awareness of equality and diversity which is promoted within teaching and learning.
- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners.
- Commitment to continuing professional development.
- The required health, mental and physical capacity to carry out the relevant management and teaching activities, after the College has made such adjustments as may be required under the Equal Opportunities Act 2000.

## **Roles**

### **1. Leadership and Management**

1.1 be responsible and accountable for setting and advancing the academic strategy of the College in line with strategic plans and direction.

1.2 be an active member of the Malta ICOM Educational Management Board and contribute to the overall leadership and management of Malta ICOM Educational.

1.3 develop and sustain appropriate structures for management, consultation, decision-making and communication with staff and students.

1.4 promote and represent Malta ICOM Educational both internally and externally.

## 2. Responsibility for Teaching and Students

2.1 ensure the best possible student experience through:

- the fulfilment of Malta ICOM Educational responsibilities concerning students in respect of their admission, instruction, progress, and examination.
- the availability of pastoral assistance, and
- adherence to the regulations and procedures of Malta ICOM Educational.

2.2 refresh and develop new programmes to attract new students and markets.

## 3. Responsibility for Research

3.1 ensure the highest levels of quality, integrity and ethics in all research undertaken.

3.2 create a dynamic and forward-looking research environment for both staff and students.

## 4. Knowledge Transfer

4.1 create and exploit new opportunities for knowledge transfer activity to secure additional income streams and new areas of teaching and/or research.

4.2. contribute to Malta ICOM Educational-wide initiatives to improve understanding and communication of this area.

## 5. People Management

5.1 ensure that Malta ICOM Educational HR policies and procedures are implemented.

5.2 ensure that staff performance is managed appropriately and in a way that is consistent with the expectations of Malta ICOM Educational, and that fair workload allocation processes are in place.

5.3 ensure all staff have access to the necessary support to enable them to contribute fully and develop their skills and experience.

5.4 engender a culture of excellence, co-operation, and respect both within and beyond the department.

5.5 make effective use of all staffing resources and seek opportunities for collaboration and joint working with others beyond the department and beyond Malta ICOM Educational.

5.6 ensure students are included as appropriate in the various decision-making form within the college.

5.7 ensure a safe and healthy environment for both staff and students, and full compliance with health and safety requirements.

## 6. Financial Management

6.1 take responsibility for devolved budgets and comply with Malta ICOM Educational financial regulations.

6.2 manage income and expenditure to promote financial sustainability.

6.3 ensure adherence by all Departmental members, with Malta ICOM Educational Financial Regulations and other financial operating procedures and regulations.

6.4 ensure that Malta ICOM Educational equipment/facilities under the College's control are properly maintained and serviced as required.

## 7. Quality Assurance

7.1 ensure all activities are carried out to the highest possible standards and put in place the necessary evaluation and monitoring procedures to ensure both compliance and improvement: such procedures will include teaching, research, and management of all resources.

7.2 comply with auditing, quality assurance and risk management procedures both internal and external.

#### 8. Development of Academic/Research Standing

8.1 continue to develop one's position as a leading academic researcher, including publication, securing of external funding and the pursuit of other relevant indicators of standing in the Malta ICOM Educational.

8.2 give due consideration to ways of retaining connections with teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

8.3 give due consideration to the status of Head as a role model for other members of staff in the pursuit of academic excellence.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Dean**

#### **General**

The Dean is responsible to the Management Board (MB) of Malta ICOM Educational and is expected to participate in its teaching, examining and administrative work - including performance management and appraisal - and to pursue research.

The following schedule of duties and responsibilities applies to the Dean.

The specific duties and responsibilities of Dean include the following:

#### **1. Academic Planning**

1.1 In consultation with staff the Dean will:

(a) formulate and monitor the academic planning, development, and performance of ICOM

#### **2. Equal Opportunity**

2.1 The Dean will be responsible for appointing an Equal Opportunities Liaison Officer and for promoting equality and diversity within ICOM.

#### **3. Finance**

3.1 The Dean will manage the Centre's finances, working closely with the Director of Finance, and handle financial matters.

#### **4. Estates**

4.1 The Dean will consult the facilities coordinator regarding any proposal to undertake alterations or other work.

#### **5. Procurement**

5.1 The Dean will be responsible for approving Centre procurement.

#### **6. Information**

6.1 The Dean is responsible for ensuring that information which is received from the MB is appropriately acted upon and/or disseminated within the Centre.

6.2 The Dean should decide for appropriate filtering of incoming information so that members of staff are not overloaded with information which the Principal judges to be irrelevant to them.

## 7. **Meetings**

7.1 The Dean will ensure that all Staff Meeting are held at least twice in each academic year and will be responsible for the chairing and conduct of such meetings.

## 8. **Quality Management and Enhancement**

8.1 In consultation, where appropriate, the Dean will ensure: that quality management and enhancement processes operate within the Centre in accordance with policies and procedures, etc, laid down in the Malta ICOM Educational Academic Manual; and that staff and, where appropriate, students are informed of such processes.

## 9. **Research Governance**

9.1 The Dean will ensure that staff and, where appropriate, students of the Centre are apprised of ICOM's arrangements for research governance, the main components of which include:

- Procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research.
- Declaration of interest policy.
- ICOM's Research Committee.
- Malta ICOM Educational code of conduct for research.

9.2 The Head of Research is responsible for agreeing all ethical approvals which may be required for research activities carried out by members of the Centre.

## 10. **Security**

10.1 In consultation with the Malta ICOM Educational Finance and General-Purpose Committee, the Dean will implement agreed security measures in the Centre during normal working hours and in respect of all visits to or other special events in the Centre which may have particular security implications.

## 11. **Staffing**

11.1 The Dean will be responsible for the management of staff of the Centre, including:

- (i) training, development, and career management and
- (ii) day-to-day management matters, such as leave of absence, sick leave, etc.

11.2 The Dean will review and report annually on probationers' progress and performance in respect of academic staff and review the probationary service of non-academic staff.

## 12. **Students**

12.1 The Dean will be responsible for the implementation and general overview of processes within the Centre to ensure the educational progress and welfare of students registered with the Centre.

15. **Other**

15.1 The Dean may be asked to carry out such other duties and responsibilities as the Board or Principal may from time to time prescribe.

## Section 2

### Financial Management and Internal Audit

Malta ICOM Educational Limited, registered under MFSA as C78436, was established in November 2016, with major shareholders being MFive Holdings Ltd. (50%) and Novétude Malta Ltd. (50%). This ownership structure is further detailed in the attached documentation titled "Group Charts MIE+."



Group Chart MIE.pdf

- **Responsibility for Financial Strategy:** The Malta ICOM Board of Directors is entrusted with the responsibility to review and approve the institution's 5-year financial strategy and to scrutinize interim financial statements. The Malta ICOM Board holds ultimate authority over budgeting, investments, and other financial matters.
- **Compliance and Reporting:** The Malta ICOM Board of Directors ensures adherence to legal requirements and obligations by engaging accredited accounting firms to review and present financial accounts for submission to certified auditors.
- **External Auditing:** The Auditors are selected from an approved list published by the Maltese Ministry of Finance. They perform a comprehensive audit of the College's financial records for the preceding year in accordance with relevant Maltese legislation. These auditors operate independently and conduct any necessary checks and balances to issue the annual audit certificate.

**Financial Sustainability:** The Malta ICOM Board of Directors is responsible for securing necessary investments and allocating adequate funds to:

- Provide resources essential for Malta ICOM's functioning.
- Ensure uninterrupted academic programme cycles for enrolled students.
- Provide access to requisite academic resources, including hardware, software, and a virtual library.
- Facilitate non-academic resources, such as canteen and recreational facilities, to meet student needs at the main campus and associated learning centres.

### Internal Audit

- **Audit Committee Oversight:** The Audit Committee establishes the parameters that guide the work of internal auditors appointed by the Malta ICOM Board of Directors.



- Action Point Implementation: The Audit Committee receives audit reports and oversees the implementation of action points identified therein.
- Scope of Internal Audit: Internal audit activities may encompass a review of selected processes, including those integral to maintaining the quality assurance of academic standards and the student recruitment process.

These financial management and internal audit practices are integral components of Malta ICOM's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the responsible stewardship of resources to support its academic mission and student success.

## Section 3

### Quality Assurance

The policies and procedures which inform, support, and assure the quality of HE delivered at Malta ICOM Educational are developed with reference to The National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education 2015.

The Internal Quality Audit ( IQA) standards are broken down into 11 sections detailed below:

1. An effective Policy for quality assurance
2. Institutional probity;
3. Appropriate Design and approval of programmes;
4. Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment;
5. Student admission, progression, recognition, and certification;
6. Competence of Teaching staff
7. Appropriate Learning resources and student support;
8. Appropriate Information management
9. Appropriate Public information;
10. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes;
11. Cyclical external quality assurance.

### Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF)



The Malta  
Qualifications Framew

This provides descriptors of the achievements and attributes represented by the holder of qualifications typical of a particular level. For example, Undergraduate Diplomas at level 5, Bachelor's Degrees at level 6 and Master's degree at level 7. These are a reference point for setting and assessing academic standards. This promotes a shared understanding of expectations associated with typical qualifications, assisting providers in ensuring awards and qualifications are of an academic standard consistent with that referred to in the MQF and reviewers/examiners in making judgments. The College will ensure that any staff involved in delivery and assessment will be familiar with the expectations of the relevant levels by staff development based around learning outcomes and appropriate assessment modes appropriate to the taught levels.



32. Staff  
Development Policy a



37. Assessment  
policy. 2023.docx



38. Assessment  
Schedules and the Re

## **Code of Practice- Professions Complementary to Medicine**

This sets out the expectations of the Council for the Professions Complementary to Medicine, (CPCM) for practitioners in Malta These are of assistance in programme design, delivery, and review in that they enable subject specialist to reach a shared understanding of expectations around what students may know about in a typical qualification. Staff involved in design, delivery and review must be familiar with the expectations of the relevant qualifications.

### **3.1 Quality Assurance at Malta ICOM Educational**

Malta ICOM Educational quality assurance, overseen by the Curriculum and Standards Committee (CSC).

Responsibility for implementing the procedures and policies which inform, support, and assure quality rests with all those involved in programmes at ICOM.

Academic Board (AB)and the Senior Management Teams (SMT) have responsibilities to ensure that academic standards are appropriate, the quality of learning opportunities is high and that the information to students is complete and accurate. Heads of Department are supported in their implementation of the procedures and policies which underpin the above through the line management structure of the SMT.

Meetings of the Curriculum, Standards and Student Experience Committee (CSSEC): enable information to be disseminated. These meetings facilitate sharing of good practice and allow all involved to reach a shared understanding about expectations.

### **3.2 Quality reporting structure**

The academic quality of Malta ICOM Educational is monitored and reviewed through various committees with both internal and external input. The structure of the committees within the College is outlined at the beginning of the document. Through the links between the various College committees and sub-committees there is a continuous line of communication encompassing the various co-ordinators and management staff.

Student representatives provide the viewpoint of the student body on the committees to:

1. To facilitate dialogue between students and academic staff by providing a formal channel of communication in relation to academic matters.
2. To discuss and address (where appropriate) comments, queries, suggestions, concerns, and feedback from course representatives in relation to academic matters.
3. To consider student feedback, for example issues raised by course representatives, from Mid-Module Reviews or level based questionnaires.
4. To consider any matters on which the School/Department wishes to seek student views.
5. To ensure that discussions and any resulting actions are documented and fed back to the student body.
6. To nominate those student representatives to attend the Board of Study.
7. To refer matters to the Board of Study as appropriate.

### 3.3 Quality Resources and Review

This is a key meeting for the review of programme performance between Principal and Dean, programme coordinators and Heads of Department. A specific date and time will be allocated together with an agenda and any papers needed for the meeting. If the performance of a programme is giving cause for concern actions to promote improvement will be a feature of this review.



58. Quality Resources  
Review ToR.doc



59. Quality and  
Resources Review Agr

### 3.4 Annual Programme Review (APR)



39. ICOM annual  
programme review p



42. Annual  
Programme Review Fr

The APR document is completed by programme teams throughout the year. Information is drawn together from the following key sources:

- Performance data and programme team comment are collected by the Dean based on summative and formative assessment marks. The data is collated



36. Staff student  
consultative committee  
electronically.

- Module enhancement plans (MEPS) are collated by module leaders based on



43. Module  
Enhancement plan.doc  
staff feedback.

- Student questionnaires are used twice a term to evaluate student satisfaction for teaching and course content, this data is again analysed and acted upon. There are also termly board of.
- External examiner report
- Student feedback collected from the Board of Studies and from student bi-termly questionnaires used to evaluate student satisfaction for teaching and course content, this data is again analysed and acted upon.

Teams review their programmes using the above information and a structure which addresses the key areas of academic standards, quality of learning opportunities and quality of information. Completion assuming a September start is phased throughout the academic year as follows:

1. Initial review (autumn)
  - Analysis of recruitment
  - Views of students, including review of induction survey and action planning
  - Review of completion of areas for improvement arising from previous year
2. Mid-year review (spring)
  - Analysis of retention and progress
  - Views of students from survey and module evaluations questionnaires (MEQ)
  - Review of completion of previously planned actions
3. End of academic year review (autumn)
  - Analysis of achievement, including level of achievement and progression
  - Views of students from module evaluations questionnaires (MEQ)
  - Analysis of external examiner/moderator report and associated action planning

The APR produced by the programme team informs the annual monitoring reports.

## 3.5 Admission Policy



48. Admissions Policy  
updated 14.3.23.doc

Admission to Malta ICOM Educational is entirely on merit and based on ability to achieve. We operate an admissions policy which ensures equality of opportunity to all applicants. Applications are welcomed from students with excellent academic potential. Malta ICOM Educational recognises the importance of admitting applicants to a course suited to their ability and aspirations. The selection process therefore takes account of all aspects of an application and not just an applicant's academic profile.

In seeking to attract applications from students with excellent academic potential, Malta ICOM Educational is committed to widening participation and to promoting wider access to Higher Education. There are no admissions quotas which advantage or disadvantage any group of applicants. Malta ICOM Educational is committed to treating all applicants within the admissions cycle fairly.



46. Equality and  
Diversity Policy..docx



47.Equality  
Objectives..docx

The Student Recruitment and Progression Team considers all the applicants. Admission Tutors are interested in an applicant's academic achievements, but they will also take note of the spread of subjects studied and will check for competence in any specific subjects required. Selectors take an applicant's personal statement and the Referee's Report into account when they make their decision, as well as actual or predicted examination grades. Students may be asked for interview at this stage. Selectors are looking for evidence of knowledge and understanding of a subject, of commitment, motivation and responsibility, and ability to cope with the specific challenges of programmes.

Application for admission is considered without regard to any inappropriate distinction e.g. ethnicity or national origin, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender, religious or political beliefs, marital status, or socio-economic background. Mature students (those who will be 21 or over at the time they start an undergraduate course),

and students who have suffered educational hardship or disruption (including students with disabilities), will receive special consideration.

## Entry Criteria

The entry requirements required by students to be accepted for the course are as per the entry requirements listed in the '*Programme Accreditation Application Form*' as approved by the MFHEA.

Malta ICOM Educational believes a diverse student population is important from an educational and social perspective; enhancing the educational experience for all.

Students apply for the course directly using an on-line application. They are required to state their existing qualifications, to declare additional support needs and to disclose any convictions. Applicants are invited to submit a personal statement setting out the reasons for their application. Students have access to programme specifications and information about the institution online. Once the application is received, the Admissions Tutor reviews the application to ascertain whether the candidate possess the required qualifications for entry to the programme by comparing with the published criteria. The Admissions Tutor will read the personal statement. If the stated qualifications and the personal statement are sufficient, the candidate will be invited for interview. A record is maintained of the issues discussed and the decision made by the interviewer. The candidate is informed of the outcome in writing. For successful applicants, information about the arrangements for enrolment will be provided by letter and by email. For unsuccessful applicants, the opportunity to receive feedback will be made clear. Applicants will also be directed to the institution's Application Appeal process, to be followed in the event of concerns arising about the process followed by the College.

The Student Recruitment and Progression Team will also oversee the processes for both student admissions and progression, and is responsible for induction activities for new students, including open days and freshers' week, preparing programmes of activities before any student intake. These programmes will include activities, such as informal meetings for students and staff, interviews with the academic advisor, or tutor, leisure activities, course, and module induction. Student Union will contribute directly to these programmes, and all students will have access to an online handbook containing information on their course and other related matters.

The outcome of the student admissions process will be published online, students will be able to access this through a log in and with password protection. Students will also be notified by post within the stated timeframe, respecting any applicable data protection conditions. Appeals and complaints are dealt with by the Deans.



49. Complaints  
procedure.docx



50. Whistle Blowing  
Policy.docx

## 3.6 Assessment policy



37. Assessment  
policy. 2023.docx



51. Examination  
Boards Terms of Refe

The main purpose of the policy is to ensure fit for purpose assessment opportunities for all students. The assessment policy provides guidance about roles and responsibilities associated with assessment practice.

### Final Grading system

The final grade award to a student on a programme at ICOM

#### ***Osteopathy Faculty***

First Class Honours	70 and above
Second Class Honours, First Division	60-69
Second Class Honours, Second Division	50-59
Third Class Honours	40-49
Fail	39 and below

#### ***Physiotherapy and Dental Hygiene Faculties***

First Class Honours	80 and above
Second Class Honours, First Division	70-79
Second Class Honours, Second Division	60-69
Third Class Honours	50-59
Fail	49 and below

#### ***Rules for calculating the final programme mark and degree classification***



First year (undergraduate) marks will contribute to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or degree classification. Additionally, units in any year of study that are pass/fail only will be disregarded in this calculation.

All units taken in the years of study that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification will count towards the weighted average final mark.

Credits awarded via the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) from any institution other than Malta ICOM Educational must be counted as part of the qualification requirements but must be excluded from the calculation of the classification.

Credits accrued at Malta ICOM Educational and awarded via the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) must be counted as part of the qualification requirements and included in the calculation of the Classification.

The final programme mark is calculated as a weighted average of the year marks for those years of study that contribute to classification. The result of the calculation should then be rounded to the nearest integer. This must be done PRIOR to determining whether the final programme mark is within the classification boundary range.

The classification boundary ranges for bachelors' honours programmes are based on marks out of 100 and are:

### ***Osteopathy Faculty***

- First / 2.1 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70
- 2.1 / 2.2 equal to or more than 58 but less than 60
- 2.2 / Third equal to or more than 48 but less than 50

### ***Physiotherapy and Dental Hygiene Faculties***

- First / 2.1 equal to or more than 78 but less than 80
- 2.1 / 2.2 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70
- 2.2 / Third equal to or more than 58 but less than 60

### **Assessment schedules and return of assessed work.**

The purpose of this is to provide clarity about scheduling of assessment and thus support the effective management of assessment at programme and institutional level. Assessments are planned and delivered according to a published schedule which is found both in the student year handbook and on line, under the year summary

documents Students should receive timely assessment feedback which is again found in the handbook under “Assessment Schedule” and online.



38. Assessment Schedules and the Re

The two specific aspects are:

- Assessment scheduling

Coordination of assessment deadlines and reaching effective decisions about the amount and timing of assessment is an essential part of ensuring assessment is fit for purpose. Well planned assessment scheduling enables both staff and students to plan and undertake their workload more effectively. Students need clear information about the timing of individual assessments, how individual assessments relate to each other and their timing in the overall programme of learning. This information is available online and discussed at the beginning of every semester during induction, students are directed to Turnitin pages containing the pertinent information.

- Return of assessed work

Students need constructive feedback about their work during the learning process to enable them to improve. Students are more likely to value feedback when it is of use to them, for example, during the module/unit and before their next assessment than at the end of the module. Students get work back within three weeks of submission, allowing time for moderation and internal verification of work.

### 3.7 Assessment moderation/internal verification and double marking



56. Assessment Moderation Policy ..d



52. Assessment Verification Moderatic



53. Moderation Log.docx

All assessment is subject to moderation or verification or double marking. All assessments/assignment briefs must be internally verified prior to distribution to students. A sample of assessed work as described in the Assessment policy must be moderated or verified and or double marked prior to return to students.

Each programme will have a lead moderator/verifier, in many cases this will be the programme coordinator. The lead moderator/verifier will be responsible for planning

the sample of work to be moderated across the programme to ensure that the work of all assessors and a sample the work is verified or moderated during the period of study. A sample of assessment decisions will be moderated/verified or double marked.

## 3.8 Academic integrity and academic misconduct



66. Code of Conduct  
for Students.docx

It is important that learners are made aware of the seriousness of academic misconduct and the procedures in place for any case of suspected academic misconduct. The Malta ICOM Educational policy provides definitions of academic misconduct and identifies the procedure for management of cases of suspected misconduct.

Academic misconduct is any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the college. This includes a wide variety of behaviours such as cheating, plagiarism, altering academic documents or transcripts, gaining access to materials before they are intended to be available, and helping a friend to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Below are types of academic misconduct with examples of each. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

### Cheating

Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question, such as:

- Copying or attempting to copy from others during an exam or on an assignment.
- Communicating answers with another person during an exam.
- Using unauthorized materials, prepared answers, written notes, or concealed information during an exam.
- Allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment for you, including the use of a commercial term-paper service.
- Submission of the same assignment for more than one course without prior approval of all the lecturers involved.

- Collaborating on an exam or assignment with any other person without prior approval from the instructor.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined as use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source, for example:

- Extensive copying of passages from works of others, essay, presentations, or projects without acknowledgment.
- Use of the views, opinions, or insights of another without acknowledgment.
- Paraphrasing of another person's characteristic or original phraseology, metaphor, or other literary device without acknowledgment.

### **Theft or Damage of Intellectual Property**

- Damaging or stealing another person's assignment, book, paper, notes, experiment, project, electronic hardware, or software.
- Improper access to, or electronically interfering with, the property of another person or the College's via computer or other means.
- Obtaining a copy of an exam or assignment prior to its approved release by the instructor.

## **Disturbances in the Teaching Space**

Disturbances can also serve to create an unfair academic advantage for oneself or disadvantage for another member of the academic community. Below are some examples of events that may violate the Code of Student Conduct:

- Interference with the course of instruction to the detriment of other students.
- Disruption of classes or other academic activities in an attempt to stifle academic freedom of speech.
- Failure to comply with the instructions or directives of the lecturer or tutor.
- Unnecessarily activating fire alarms.

## **3.9 Procedures for Dealing with Academic Misconduct**

### **Academic Integrity Officer**

This is a nominated member of academic staff who is responsible for ensuring consistency in relation to the implementation of plagiarism procedures and practice. They will be charged with investigating of suspected cases of plagiarism, in order to ensure equity of treatment of students.

### **Academic Induction Period**

The College recognises that students who are new to higher education may need some time to learn how to acknowledge sources properly. Therefore, it operates an 'academic induction period' during which the focus of the ICOM's response to signs of academic misconduct is to educate students regarding appropriate academic practice and academic integrity rather than to penalise unacceptable academic practice. This applies to plagiarism and collusion. It does not apply to other forms of academic misconduct where penalties will immediately apply.

The academic induction period applies to all full-time and part-time students and is defined as: the first academic year of a student's registration with the College at Level 5 only.

### **Informal meeting**

In suspected cases of plagiarism and/or collusion the Academic Integrity Officer will invite the student(s) to an informal meeting to discuss the identified work. The aim of an informal meeting is to allow the Academic Integrity Officer to fully understand how the student has approached the assessment and to allow the student to reflect on their practices. This meeting should not include notetaking other than to record one of three possible outcomes:

1. there is no evidence of academic misconduct
2. the process moves onto the formal steps of the academic misconduct procedure
3. the student admits the presence of academic misconduct in the work.

The informal meeting should not be used to discuss regulatory issues, such as potential penalties. However, a copy of these procedures should be available to advise students should the meeting lead to the second of these three outcomes.

## **Step 1 – Actions by the Academic Integrity Officer (AIO)**

*Actions regarding academic misconduct during the academic induction period:*

If summative assessment completed within the academic induction period suggest possible plagiarism and/or collusion, it may be returned to the student(s) with feedback provided on the unacceptable material for correction and resubmission. The re-submitted work will be capped at the minimum pass mark. This applies to first and concurrent offences only within the academic induction period.

*Actions in regard to academic misconduct after the academic induction*

*period:* If the AIO considers that academic misconduct may have occurred after the academic induction period they will make a written report and submit the relevant evidence to the Programme Leader. The Programme Leader can then escalate this to the Vice Principal and notify the Exams Board<sup>1</sup>.

When the allegation arises from an incident in an examination room, the evidence will include the script, any materials collected in the room and report from the Examination Office.

In suspected cases of plagiarism and/or collusion, the AIO will hold an informal meeting with the student(s). The objective of this meeting is to discuss the assessment and the student's approach to determine whether the Academic Misconduct Procedures should be invoked.

## **Step 2 – Actions by the Academic Integrity Officer**

The AIO will determine either:

- (a) there is insufficient evidence to proceed. They will then notify the person making the allegation and the Dean of the reasons for not holding a hearing.
- (b) there is sufficient evidence to proceed to a formal hearing.

If the Head of Department judges that a formal hearing is justified the student will be provided with:

(a) a copy of these procedures.

written details of the allegation and a copy of all written evidence provided for the hearing by the academic who had made the allegation. This will include specific reference to the assessment in question and the nature of the suspected misconduct. For example:

(i) in a case of suspected plagiarism, the student should be provided with a copy of their work with the sections where plagiarism is suspected indicated and a copy of the Turnitin report detailing the identified sources;

(ii) in a case of suspected cheating in an examination the student should be provided with a copy of the examination's office report and copies of any materials removed from the student in the exam venue (if applicable);

(iii) the date, time, and place of the hearing. Malta ICOM Educational will try to arrange the hearing at a time that is suitable for the student. Normally the hearing will take place within two weeks of the date that the student is formally notified in writing that an allegation has been made.

Where a student has been permitted a reassessment attempt after having been found guilty of academic misconduct and it is suspected that he or she has committed academic misconduct on the reassessment by the AIO, this must be treated as a new offence and all relevant stages of this procedure must be followed.

### **Step 3 – Actions by the student**

At this stage, the student may decide to admit that the allegation of academic misconduct is justified by providing a written statement. In this case no formal hearing will take place. The Dean will be informed of the academic misconduct and the student's admission and determine the relevant penalty to be imposed. This will be recommended to the examination board to ratify the decision. A copy of the statement provided by the student will be kept on her/his file.

If the student wishes to proceed to a formal hearing, s/he will be asked to confirm attendance to the Head of Department and to provide the name of any

friend. The friend would not normally contribute to the hearing chosen to accompany the student. If the friend is a member of the legal profession the meeting will be postponed allowing the college to get legal representation

If the student fails to attend the hearing without a reason that is deemed acceptable by the ICOM, the hearing will proceed based on the evidence available to the panel. This will include any written submission that the student may have made.

#### **Step 4 – Formal hearing – actions of the hearing panel**

The panel established to consider the evidence will comprise a minimum of two members of academic staff who are not directly involved with the student. The Dean is designated as Chair of the panel.

While Malta ICOM Educational allows audio recordings of lectures for study purposes, hearings may not be digitally recorded, and the written notes taken by the Malta ICOM Educational will constitute the official record of the hearing. The Chair of the panel will make this clear to the student at the beginning of the meeting.

The panel will normally interview:

- i. the student, who may present documentation and/or supporting evidence.
- ii. any relevant members of staff (e.g., module leader, or Head of Department who will present the evidence and the AOI).

The student, their friend (where present) and the staff member(s) presenting the evidence will then be asked to leave the hearing whilst the panel considers its decision.

The panel will decide if:

- a) there is insufficient evidence of academic misconduct. or
- b) it is more likely than not that academic misconduct took place.

Where it is found that there is evidence of academic misconduct, the panel shall then be advised of any prior instances of academic misconduct committed by the



student to be able to determine a recommendation for the level of penalty to be imposed.

Adjournment may be required.

Once a decision has been determined, the student, their friend (where present) and the staff member(s) presenting the evidence will be invited back into the hearing to be verbally advised of the outcome.

Following the conclusion of the hearing, a summary report will be presented to the Exam Board, setting out the nature of the allegations and the recommendation of the panel concerning the level of penalty to be imposed. The student(s) will be provided with a copy of this report and a copy will be placed on the student's file.

If the outcome of the academic misconduct procedures indicates that a fitness to practice issue additionally arises, the separate Fitness to Practice procedures will be invoked.

However, in these instances, it may not be necessary to carry out the initial investigation stage of the Fitness to Practice procedures.

### **Step 5 – Actions by the Exam Board**

The student's results together with the report of the formal hearing will be considered by the Exam Board. The Board will be asked to ratify the recommendations of the formal hearing panel for the penalty to be imposed.

### **Penalties appendix to assessment policy**

Penalties have been determined based on the following principles:

- no student should gain any advantage over another as a result of academic misconduct.
  
- for students found guilty of collusion, all students implicated in the case should normally receive the same penalty.
- for students found guilty of plagiarism or copying group work, all those involved will normally receive the same penalty.
- mitigating circumstances cannot excuse academic misconduct.

Students will not be permitted further reassessment where an offence of academic misconduct is committed at the final assessment opportunity allowed under the Regulations.

### **Concurrent offences not in Level 5**

*Within the Academic Induction Period*

Concurrent offences of academic misconduct will not be repeat offences.

*After the Academic Induction Period*

Concurrent offences of academic misconduct will be repeat offences.

Failure due to academic misconduct cannot be compensated.

## **3.9 Academic appeals**

The purpose of the academic appeals policy is to provide clarity for all those involved to ensure the process for handling academic appeals is transparent and timely, and that decisions are impartial and consistent. If a student wishes to appeal it is helpful to them to initially seek advice from their programme coordinator. There is no appeal against individual assessment decisions. Students may request a remark. Requests for a remark must be made in writing to the Head of Department.



54. Academic Appeals Procedure..d



60. Academic appeal Form AA1.doc

### **Academic appeals procedure**

#### **Stage 1**

- 1.1 The appellant completes Academic Appeal Form (AA1) clearly recording the nature of the academic decision to be appealed and the grounds for the appeal and submits the form to the Dean within 10 working days of receiving the assessment decision.
- 1.2 The Dean will acknowledge, in writing, receipt of Academic Appeal Form AA1 and issue the appellant with a copy of this policy.
- 1.3 The Dean will log the appeal and forward form AA1 to the Head of Department.

1.4 The Head of Department must consider the appeal with the appropriate staff by reevaluating the evidence and will provide a written response to the Dean within 10 working days.

1.5 The Principal will, within five days of receipt of the response of the Head of Department, evaluate the documentation and make a recommendation about whether the appeal is permitted e.g. relates to one of the three identified academic decisions, and that there may be grounds for an appeal. If the appeal is permitted and grounds are very clearly established, for example in exceptional circumstances where the Head of Department confirms a procedural or mathematical error was made in recording or calculating marks, the appeal may be considered upheld without being subject to an Academic Appeals Board.

1.6 If the Principal considers the appeal is not permitted, or there are no grounds for appeal, the Dean will notify the student of the decision in writing within five working days.

1.7 If there is no further evidence from the appellant the appeal will be considered withdrawn and will be logged as such by the Dean.

1.8 If, following communication of the decision above, the appellant is unsatisfied with the decision and wishes to submit further evidence in support of their appeal, they must write to the Dean within 5 working days of the date of receipt of the above notification. The appellant must explain how the new evidence may support their case.

1.9 If further evidence is submitted by the appellant and the Principal considers the appeal is not permitted, or there are no grounds for appeal, the Dean will notify the student in writing within five working days. This decision will be final. If, after consideration of further evidence, the appeal is permitted and there are grounds the appeal will move to stage 2.

## **Stage 2**

2.1 If, at stage 1 or from new evidence provided, the Principal considers the appeal is permitted e.g. relates to one of the three identified academic decisions, and that there may be grounds for an appeal, the Principal will, within 10 days, convene an Appeals Board which will consist of;

- Director of Research (chair)
- Principal (advisory capacity)

- Director of Clinic
- Head of Department x 2
- Malta ICOM Educational student representative

Members of the Board shall not previously have been involved in the appeal to be heard. There must be a minimum of four members of the Academic Appeal Board for the Board to be legitimate. The Dean will notify the student, in writing within five working days of the decision to undertake further investigation and be given at least 5 working days' notice of the date of the Academic Appeals Board.

2.2 The appellant is entitled to appear before the Board accompanied by a fellow Malta ICOM Educational student or parent/carer, only the appellant will have the right to address the Board.

2.3 The programme coordinator and/or chair of the examination board, and/or another assessor as appropriate may be required to appear if required by the Board

2.4 The Academic Appeals Board, following representation by others as above, will reach, in private discussion a decision about whether a case is established. The Academic Appeals Board may decide that a case is established only on one of the grounds identified above. These are reiterated here as follows:

- a. a procedural or mathematical error was made in recording or calculating marks.
- b. irregularities or administrative errors were made in the conduct of an assessment which may have impacted on the examiners' decision.
- c. there is a belief that there has been prejudice or bias from one or more of the assessors or examiners.
- d. the College was not aware of factors affecting performance which the student could not make known earlier.

2.5 If the Academic Appeals Board, consider there is no case established the Dean will notify the student of the decision in writing within five working days. This decision will be final.

- 2.6 If the Academic Appeals Board consider a case is established, and having regard to the substance of the appeal, the Academic Appeals Board may require the Examination Board to reconsider its original decision.
- 2.7 A meeting of the Examination Board will be convened as soon as practicable. On reconsideration, the Examination Board or Assessment Board may, or may not, decide to modify its original decision. The Chair of the Examination Board or Assessment Board will provide a written explanation of the decision made to the Dean within 3 days of meeting.
- 2.8 On receipt of the explanation from the Examination Board or Assessment Board the chair of the Academic Appeals Board will judge whether the appeal is considered upheld.
- 2.9 If the appeal is considered upheld the Principal, in consultation with the Chair of the Academic Appeals Board.
- 2.10 If the appeal is considered upheld and the Academic Appeals Board considers that the irregularity affected more than one candidate the Academic Appeals Board may recommend that the decision for the cohort, or part of the cohort should be annulled.
- 2.11 The Examination Board or Assessment Board will determine what further arrangements should then be made.
- 2.12 If the Academic Appeals Board consider a case is established, and having regard to the substance of the appeal, the Academic Appeals Board may require a separate investigation to be undertaken using the Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.13 If the Examination Board or Assessment Board decides not to modify its original decision, the chair of the Academic Appeals Board will judge the appeal is not upheld. The Dean will notify the appellant of the decision in writing within 5 working days.
- 2.14 In cases where annulment of a previous Examination Board or Assessment Board decision is recommended the Academic Board may adopt or not adopt the Academic Appeals Board recommendation for annulment. If Academic Board does not adopt the recommendation for annulment the appeal is not upheld. If Academic Board does adopt the recommendation

for annulment the appeal is considered upheld. The Dean will notify the appellant, and cohort or part of cohort as appropriate, of the decision in writing within 5 working days of the Academic Board meeting.

2.15 If the Academic Appeals Board is satisfied that a case has been established, and it is not possible to reconvene the Examination Board, then the Academic Appeals Board may, without making a prior request for reconsideration, make a recommendation to Academic Board that the Examination Board original decision should be annulled. The Dean will notify the appellant, and cohort or part of cohort as appropriate, of the decision in writing within 5 working days.

2.16 All Academic Appeals will be reported and recorded in the minutes of Academic Board.

### **Appeals arising from concerns expressed by a member of staff**

- The member of staff will notify the Dean in writing of their concerns about a decision, or the conduct of an Assessment Board or Examination Board, within 3 working days of their attendance at that Board.
- The Principal will investigate the circumstances and assess what action should be taken and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Head of Department.
- The Head of Department will consider whether the Examination Board or Assessment Board should reconsider its decision, whether the disciplinary procedure should be implemented, or whether there are no grounds for further action. If the Examination Board or Assessment Board is required to reconsider its decision the process will be followed according to that described in the above Appeals Procedure. The Dean will notify the member staff of the decision in writing within five working days.

### **Appeals against the decisions of the Extenuating Circumstances Board**

- Appeal because there has been an administrative error will be considered within the appeals policy as outlined above.

## 3.10 Extenuating circumstances, and agreed extensions



61.Extenuating  
Circumstances Policy.circumstances claim fc



62. Extenuating

Students must sign a declaration to confirm they are fit to sit at the time of any assessment. Where a student is aware prior to an assessment event that, due to circumstances beyond their control, they will be unable to participate they must formally request, to the Dean, that an extension be agreed prior to the assessment using the agreed extensions policy. If a student participates in an assessment and, due to circumstances beyond their control, their performance is affected they are required to complete the extenuating circumstance claim following the assessment. Students must submit their claim forms directly to the Dean, all claims must be supported by evidence e.g., doctors certificate.

### Authorised extension



55. Authorised  
Extensions Policy ..doc

A student may claim an authorised extension to an assessment deadline if they are aware in advance of the assessment deadline that they are temporarily unable to participate in their programme, submit assessments, or attend examinations. In this context assessment is taken to mean any work for assessment, for example coursework, assignments, projects, and practical assessments. The following are examples of circumstances under which an authorised extension may be claimed:

- Bereavement in the family e.g., close relative, spouse, or partner.
- Serious sudden illness, sudden worsening of a chronic illness or accident.
- Employer demands (part time students only) e.g., short-term increase or change in work pattern.
- Other exceptional circumstances which inhibit attendance or submission e.g., military service, civil unrest

### Procedure

Request for the consideration of authorised extensions to assessment deadlines in advance of an assessment deadline or an examination:

When a student becomes aware, in advance of an assessment deadline, of circumstances which may inhibit their fitness to sit an examination or submit an assessment, they may wish to claim for an authorised extension to their assessment deadline. In this context assessment should be taken to mean any work for assessment, for example coursework, assignments, projects, and practical assessments.

Students should return their completed claim for an authorised extension to their assessment deadline form together with the supporting evidence to the programme coordinator no less than five working days before the date of the assessment, attendance, or submission.

Where, due to serious circumstances, a student may wish to make repeated claims these claims should be referred to the Dean for further consideration of appropriate adjustments. Heads of years are normally permitted to authorise no more than one extension to assessment deadlines in any semester for any student.

In exceptional circumstances a third party may make a claim on behalf of a student, for example if illness precludes the student from participation in the process. In such a case the third party must provide contact details, information about their connection to the student, state the reasons the student is unable to make the claim and provide supporting evidence.

**Examples of supporting evidence are as follows:**

Bereavement; a death certificate or a signed and dated letter from a letterheaded medical practitioner

Illness - medical certificate or a signed and dated letterheaded letter from a medical practitioner giving the dates the student was affected and how this may impact upon the ability of the student to submit, attend, or prepare for an assessment. This may include attendance for treatment and/or tests.

Accident or injury; a copy of an accident report provided by a police officer, or a signed and dated letter from a medical practitioner giving dates during which the student was affected.

Personal or family circumstances; a signed and dated letter giving dates during which the student was affected and information about whether the circumstances are continuing, from either a medical practitioner, or social worker, or registered psychological therapist, or professional in psychiatric practice, or police officer, giving their relationship with the student, position and qualifications contact details.



Employer demands part time students in full-time employment only; signed and letterheaded dated letter from their employer confirming the student has short term work pattern unpredictable increase or change which conflicts with previously agreed time for study, attendance at or preparation for an assessment.

Other exceptional circumstances: e.g., call-up papers for military service and evidence to show that the service cannot be deferred.

No claim may be made within the scope of this policy if the student has declared themselves 'fit to sit.' Malta ICOM Educational requires students to sign a declaration that they are fit to take the relevant assessment when submitting work for assessment and sitting examinations. Each examination or assessment submission form must contain a declaration to this effect. If a student is taken ill or is affected by unforeseen circumstances during or immediately prior to an assessment or examination but chooses to continue, they must advise the invigilator/assessor of their circumstances, the invigilator/assessor will endorse the fit to sit declaration and advise the Dean.

### **Consideration of the claim**

On receipt of the authorised extension to their assessment deadline claim the programme coordinator will consider the claim only if the student has provided appropriate evidence to support their request. Unsubstantiated claims will not be considered.

Module Leaders are permitted to authorise no more than one extension to assessment deadlines in any semester for any student. Only the Dean has the authority to make an adjustment to an individual deadline for a student.

The Head of Department will consider claims for authorised extensions to assessment deadlines in confidence. All papers connected with the claim will be kept securely. Any evidence supplied by the student in support of the claim will be returned to the student as soon as practically possible.

Authorised extensions to assessment deadlines will be made formally. They will be for a clearly specified number of days and be specific to individual assessments. Based on the information in the claim the Dean may confirm:

- The claim is valid and supported by evidence.

- The circumstances will, as claimed, impact adversely upon the capacity of the student to participate ix. the claim is invalid and/or unsupported appropriately by evidence.

The Module Leader has the authority to authorise:

- an extension of not more than 10 working days If the claim for authorized extension to assessment deadlines is considered by the Module Leader to require an adjustment which is different to that described above, or the circumstances for a student are such that more than one claim is made during a semester, the case should be forwarded to the Dean to enable further consideration to be given to appropriate adjustments.

### ***Communication of the decision of the outcome***

Where a claim is upheld, the Dean will advise the student formally of the outcome, normally within 2 working days, using the agreed extensions claim form. A copy of the form will also be sent to the Dean within 2 working days.

Where a claim is not upheld, and/or does not meet the identified criteria, the Module Leader will advise the student formally of the outcome, normally within 2 working days, using the agreed extensions claim form to give a brief written explanation of the rationale for this decision. A copy of the form will also be sent to the Dean.

### ***Appeals against the decision not to authorise an extension to an assessment deadline.***

Where a student considers their claim for an authorised extension to an assessment deadline has not been fairly or reasonably judged they may appeal against the decision using the Academic Appeals procedure.

Extenuating circumstances after assessment/examination deadline passed have to be explained in their application.

## **3.11 External Examiners**



63. External Examiners' Role and



64. External Examiner Eligibility Form.docx

Normally two external examiners will be appointed: one for the practical modules and one for theory modules.

The external examiners shall approve draft papers prepared by the internal examiners. External examiners may require alterations to be made to the. External examiners will sample second marked assessment decisions and review the assessment practice. They can view any module and any assessed work.

External examiners shall sample an agreed proportion of the written work of candidates. Any agreed proportion shall normally include a sample of work from all levels of performance and an external examiner should see a sufficient volume of written work to enable him to determine that internal marking and classifications are of appropriate standard and are consistent.

An external examiner is formally required by Malta ICOM Educational to be present at the meeting of the Examining Board at which the examination results in the subject(s)<sup>31</sup> in which he has been involved are determined. If an external examiner cannot attend a meeting where his presence is formally required, he should be available for consultation by telephone. In case of illness, or accident, the external examiner shall promptly communicate with the Chair and shall dispatch to him, in accordance with his directions, all documents necessary for the due performance of the business of the meeting.

External examiners shall normally be appointed for a period of three years, with the possibility of re-appointment for a fourth year. External examiners are appointed by the principal External examiners are required to submit written reports both annually and at the end of their period of office. These would be distributed to the AB and external stakeholders e.g., MFHEA

### 3.12 Boards of study



69. Board of Studies.doc



44. Board of study template.docx

The main remit of the Board of Study is to evaluate the quality of provision, agree on actions to be taken where there are areas for improvement to be addressed, monitor progress with agreed actions and discuss programme development and enhancement. There is student representation on this board, and it is not used for course tracking at an individual level.

### **3.13 Student Representation**

The views of students are gathered using the following methods:

- College wide surveys: Administered centrally, one in the autumn and one in the spring.
- Module evaluation questionnaires (MEQ): Administered by module leaders at the end of each module.
- Boards of Study: Student representatives selected by and representing the views of their peers on their programme.
- Ad Hoc Focus groups: May also be used for specific matters or where areas of concern have been raised.

Actions are formally communicated to students on the College Website and via centrally produced 'you said we did' poster.

The Dean is responsible for advising students of the role of the student representative and the importance of their role in communicating the views of their peers. Programme coordinators are also responsible for advising students of any actions in response the matters they have raised at Boards of Study or during group meetings.

- Students are represented on Academic Board, Student Experience Committee, Management.
- Board formal training for representative roles is organised by the Dean.

### **3.14 Programme handbook**

All programme coordinators, in liaison with their team, will provide a programme handbook for their students. This will include key information about the programme, including the programme specification, assessment schedule, and intended learning outcomes for each module to be studied.

## Section 4

### 4.1 Teaching and Learning Strategy

**This strategy aims to provide:**

1. Study programmes for students that reflect best practice in relation to ensuring that programme design / selection and pedagogy are appropriate to the level and nature of the award and provide for effective progression through the stages of the award
2. Tutors who are knowledgeable in their subject(s), passionate about their teaching, who make use of appropriate professional development to maintain the currency of their subject knowledge and pedagogy, and who act as co-scholars with students.
3. High teaching quality as acknowledged by our students, external examiners and verifiers, professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies;
4. A stimulating learning environment that meets the needs of students and prepares them for progression in education and/or in employment.
5. The embedding of technology that supports students' experiences, develops digital literacy skills in both staff and students, and enables effective, flexible learning and working in a digital society.
6. Learning and teaching that reflects students' approaches to learning;
7. Strong and effective assessment practices that include a range of assessment methods, enable students to learn and develop, and that effectively measure learner achievement and inform their further learning;
8. The development of independent and resilient students with high aspirations for their achievements.
9. The monitoring of standards by the use of retention and student satisfaction data;
10. An educational process that integrates the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development.

It is underpinned by the following themes:

1. Diverse students learn in different ways throughout their programme of study and within individual teaching sessions. There is no such thing as a homogenous learner group. Our students are individuals with varied personal abilities and needs. They have varied educational and cultural backgrounds. Our learning teaching practice should acknowledge this heterogeneity through the provision of a variety of learning experiences. Engaging our students in learning both in timetabled sessions and online is an essential part of facilitating their success. In addition to a stimulating classroom environment, we need to enable students to continue learning outside of the classroom through directed activity, continued support, learning packages and through

technology-enhanced learning, in the workplace, on campus and using our virtual learning environment.

2. Assessments must be robust, appropriate to the subject, and to the academic level of the year group. They must test understanding and create opportunities for learning. Assessment is the primary means of measuring learner achievement. Assessment practice should test and acknowledge students' achievement of stated learning outcomes. At the same time, it should also provide feedback to students that will inform and assist their future learning.
3. Curriculum design and delivery addresses key employability and transferrable skills. The acquisition of transferrable and employability skills is fundamental to our students' success. We will endeavour to equip students to succeed in their chosen area of expertise.
4. Teaching, learning, and assessment methods are appropriate, balanced, effective, and engaging.
  - Effective curriculum selection and/or design takes account of the whole programme a learner is studying. To the extent to which it is within our control, we will ensure that the teaching and assessment across the whole of each programme utilise an appropriate mixture of methods that will enable students to achieve their learning outcomes and demonstrate their achievement effectively.
  - Teaching, learning, and assessment methods used within all settings, whether in the work place, in classroom delivery, support tutorials and workshops, will be engaging and suit the need of all students. An educational environment will be provided in which students feel empowered to lead in their own learning and, as a consequence, develop wider skills such as resilience and independence.
  - Robust initial assessments will be used where appropriate to inform staff of students' starting points and individual needs and facilitate the planning and delivery of sessions that provide appropriate levels of stretch and challenge.
5. The learning needs of students with disabilities or other protected characteristics will be accommodated appropriately within teaching, learning and assessment.
6. We will provide an outstanding teaching and learning infrastructure, including support for students from staff and online. Students' prior experience and preparation for study environment will vary. For some, study will be a recent experience, for others their most recent study may be in the distant past or have been undertaken in a different cultural

environment. We need to help all our students understand and prepare for the rigours and expectations of their chosen subject and level of study. We can achieve this by:

- Embedding an understanding of academic, information and digital literacies within and alongside a learner's programme of study.
- Embedding an appreciation of experience gained from previous study and new study expectations.
- Embedding and supporting employability and the capacity evaluate career opportunities.
- Providing opportunities for students to learn, revise and revisit key learning through online means.
- Providing high quality library resources and spaces.
- Providing high specification audio-visual and media classroom equipment for campus-based delivery that underpins a wide range of teaching approaches.

7. What students do outside, or alongside formal study is recognised and valued as making a key contribution to their learning. Students bring much to their study, including experience gained prior to entry or learning through concurrent activities. Prior learning and workplace experience can be acknowledged and, where this is permitted by the awarding body, credit can be granted through approved recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes. Alongside this, students' extra-curricular activity, including volunteering and other paid employment, are part of the broader curriculum and can contribute to academic success, enhance the learning experience, and help achieve the employability skills required for employment.

8. We share and respond to best practice in learning, teaching and assessment that is appropriate to the subject discipline, academic level, and nature of our programmes.

We will foster an ICOM-wide culture that supports and challenges staff and students to engage with innovative ideas and practices, to evaluate their effectiveness and to share best-practice to colleagues across ICOM.

9. Students and staff engage with education for sustainable development.

We will help students 'develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions.' (UNESCO, 2010) This is a key preparation of our students for a global outlook, including their employability and ability to cope with the challenges of the future.

10. We will provide reflective mechanisms to improve the quality of our provision. Malta ICOM Educational is committed to continuous enhancement of the learner learning experience so that it remains of the highest quality. We will take active steps to ensure that staff, students, employers, and other stakeholders reflect on the quality and standards of our programmes. We will provide formal deliberative processes by which these reflections can influence the quality of our provision.

## **Strategies**

We have developed strategies to help us to deliver our ambitions. These are set out below under seven headings, each of which has an aim and several strategies that support the aim.

### **Developing Teaching and Facilitating Learning**

Aim: To develop the highest standards of teaching and learning in all our teaching staff across our provision.

#### **Strategies**

1. Flexibly deploy teaching staff with appropriate experience and academic and/or professional qualifications where the average level of formal qualifications held by staff teaching on programmes is normally at least one level higher in the National Qualifications Framework than that of the module(s) being taught.
2. Ensure that our staff induction, mentoring and support processes within the probation period provide comprehensive support, training and evaluation for our teaching and learning infrastructure. New staff will be supported to gain an appropriate teaching qualification if they do not have one on appointment.
3. Enable all members of teaching staff, including hourly paid lecturers, to develop and enhance their own classroom and online teaching practice through appropriate staff development programmes.
4. Ensure that lecturers undertake staff development activities that will include enhancements to their own teaching and assessment practice. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) actions will be set and monitored through the annual appraisal process.
5. Ensure that our staff understand their key role in promoting the learner experience and have access to professional development opportunities to develop and enhance their roles.
6. Embed best practice in curriculum selection, design, and delivery.
7. Identify and disseminate best practice in teaching and learning that is appropriate to the subject, level, and nature of our programmes.



8. Enable staff to share their best practice through teaching observation, coaching, mentoring and peer review of their academic practice, including curriculum delivery and assessment across the full range of delivery modes.
9. Celebrate and disseminate good teaching practice.
10. Seek recognition for our teaching staff through appropriate professional bodies.
11. Encourage a flexible approach to teaching and learning that adapts to the needs of particular cohorts of students and their learning styles, wherever possible including students in decisions about their learning experiences.
12. Identify, address, and seek to mitigate the impact of poor prior learning on students' present progress.
13. Establish formal communities of best practice to support tutors to share good practice and create a culture of continuous development.
14. Develop effective staff guidance to support the planning and the implementation of highly engaging lessons.
15. Use information and learning technologies effectively to personalise approaches to learning.

### **Improving Assessment and Feedback Practice**

**Aim:** To develop the highest standards of assessment and feedback practice that supports all delivery modes, including taught courses, distance learning, work-based learning, and off campus delivery.

**Strategies:**

1. Ensure that students are briefed on assessment methods and criteria before embarking on their programme of study.
2. Ensure that programme design includes opportunities for self-assessment and receiving formative feedback to assist students with preparation for their summative assessments. We will also review feedback processes to provide students with timely and consistent feedback.
3. Ensure that assessment moderation processes provide clear, consistent, and transparent procedures to students, external examiners and verifiers, and other stakeholders.
4. Encourage students to take on an active role in relation to assessing their own achievements so that they have a clear understanding of their current performance.
5. Set, record, and monitor relevant targets for students and specify actions needed to achieve those targets.

## **Supporting and Engaging Students**

Aim: To support and engage our diverse learner population in preparation for and throughout their programme of study and actively assist them into employment or further study.

### **Strategies:**

1. Provide effective induction programmes that assist students to make the most of their academic life and learning opportunities. These will acknowledge the mode and length of study, location, and the learner's academic background, and focus particularly on the early part of students' study and how to make the most of learning opportunities.
2. Ensure that inclusion of academic skills (including literacy, numeracy, and other study skills) occurs throughout the lifetime of a learner's programme of study.
3. Design the early part of a programme of study to include processes that diagnose learner learning support needs, integrate appropriate study and academic skills and provide early formative feedback.
4. Where possible, provide students with appropriate credit for prior learning experiences.
5. Provide online and/or face-to-face tutorial support, including coverage of academic matters, numeracy, and digital literacies, that are fit for purpose and visible to students and tutors.
6. Provide effective language skills support to enable international students to make the most of their academic life and learning opportunities.
7. Embed an ethos of education for sustainability, which will feature throughout a student's study and support processes.
8. Continue to work in partnership with our students to improve communication and feedback locally and across ICOM.

## **Using Technology-Enhanced Learning**

Aim: We will invest in, develop, and fully utilise learning technologies and infrastructure to support and enhance learning and teaching within and beyond the classroom. These digital technologies will enhance innovation in the learner experience support and our sustainability agenda.

### **Strategies:**

1. Actively encourage contemporary methods of delivery specifically focused on technology.

2. Ensure that we have the necessary base level of IT capability to use all our online systems and to ensure that the users of specific online systems are adequately trained to make the best use of them. We will ensure that we provide comprehensive training and support to show staff how to exploit digital resources and content and embed this into their teaching practice.
3. Regularly upgrade and update our learner and staff computing facilities to provide access to appropriate hardware and software.
4. Invest in creating technology-rich teaching rooms and learning spaces that enhance learner learning and integrate with materials in the VLE.
5. Use technology to support and enhance the learner learning experience and make it integral to the course design and delivery.
6. Make teaching-generated media available to all students through our VLE, our website and/or on their mobile devices and using a range of delivery methods.
7. Implement minimum standards for VLE content.
8. All support delivery will be reviewed regularly to identify where the use of assistive technology can be a longer-term addition to “individual support” and where support can be tapered to promote students’ independence, wherever applicable.

### **Blended Learning Policy Quality Assurance of Blended Provision (BP)**



67.ICOM E -Learning  
Policy.docx

Guiding the quality assurance and enhancement requirements of BP programmes is the general principle that students studying part, or all, of their programme by BP have an experience which is, wherever practicable and possible, comparable with other campus-based students, supported by a shared understanding of the expectations and responsibilities of all parties involved.

The following key questions shall need consideration by the programme team and supported by adequate documentation:

- Relevance, life expectancy, security and reliability of the learning platform and software applications
- Staff skills and training
- Student support arrangements
- Contingency plans in case of technological failure or inability to access the online platforms.

Student engagement and Annual Monitoring

Where BP occurs as part of a programme that is credit bearing it shall be subject to the Malta ICOM Educational 's Annual Monitoring and Module and/or Programmatic Evaluation processes. Where this applies, Programmatic/Module evaluations shall use the standard Module Evaluation questionnaires but may adapt the wording of questions where this enhances their relevance and should pose an additional question about the experiences of studying remotely. BP programmes can conduct Programme Committee Meetings electronically and seek ways to ensure meaningful student representation and participation. Where an issue arises relating to the BP arrangements, this should be brought to the attention of staff and students concerned immediately and attempts to resolve the problem should be put in place at the earliest opportunity. If the issue cannot be resolved and Malta ICOM Educational deems that the student is unable to proceed with their studies because of this, the student(s) may be required to withdraw or transfer to another mode of delivery and/or programme.

#### Expectations on ICOM, its staff, and its students

Learning is a partnership between staff across Malta ICOM Educational and individual students. Expectations between staff and students, in relation to BP:

Malta ICOM Educational shall ensure that students are provided with:

- a) a delivery system of the programme or module that is secure, reliable, fit for its purpose, and has an appropriate availability and life expectancy.
- b) study materials that meet the expectations of Malta ICOM Educational in respect of the quality of teaching and learning-support material for a programme or module leading to one of its awards.
- c) an appropriate contingency plan, which would come into operation in the event of failure of the designed mode of delivery.
- d) from the outset of the student's study, at least one identified contact, either local or remote through email, telephone, and post, who can give constructive feedback on academic performance.
- e) information about when and how they may contact staff, a clear schedule for the delivery of their study materials and for assessment of their work.
- f) a clear and realistic explanation of the expectations placed upon them for study of the programme or module, and for the nature and extent of autonomous, collaborative, and supported aspects of learning plus details of the minimum technical requirements for the computer facilities required to access the online facilities.
- g) information about the Library Services, detailed on the Malta ICOM Educational 's Intranet.
- h) where appropriate, regular opportunities for inter-learner discussions about the programme, both to facilitate collaborative learning and to provide a basis for facilitating their participation in the quality assurance and enhancement of the programme.

- i) appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experience of the programme.
- j) access to all academic regulations and policies.

Malta ICOM Educational shall ensure that:

- a) staff who provide support to learners on their programmes have appropriate skills, and opportunities to receive appropriate training and development.
- b) the Programme Handbook (for taught programmes) details how the learner support that would normally be provided on site shall be delivered off-site (e.g. Student Services, personal tutor, and library resources);
- c) support for learners, when normally provided by Student Services, is made available remotely wherever possible and practicable.
- d) the identity of applicants for distance learning courses are verified robustly and that staff receive the guidance, training and tools that promote reliable approaches to assessment and assist in the identification of contract cheating, plagiarism, and related forms of academic misconduct.

Information Technology Services, who have responsibility for software for which it holds the licenses, shall ensure that:

- a) the reliability of the delivery system within its remit is tested, and that contingency plans would come into operation in the event of the system/network failing.
- b) they provide support as a minimum within normal working hours (currently Monday-Friday, 9- 5).

Students shall ensure that:

- a) they have regular and reliable access to the internet with appropriate firewall protection and a computer that meets the minimum technical requirements set by the programme.
- b) they make their own arrangements for IT support to resolve technical failures relating to their Internet Service Provider, firewall protection and their computer hardware and software as Malta ICOM Educational can only answer queries or provide support for Malta ICOM Educational -owned equipment.
- c) they ensure that they understand the basic terms and descriptions used in computing so that they can follow instructions about how to use their computer to study and communicate.
- d) they engage with the learning materials and mode of delivery.
- e) they conform to the schedule for the programme delivery and assessment, monitor the receipt of materials and alert Malta ICOM Educational if materials are corrupted or fail to arrive.
- f) they take responsibility for developing their IT skills, where appropriate.

g) they regularly check their ICOM@ accounts to which essential information may be sent by ICOM.

Failure to attend specific learning and/or assessments deemed as mandatory may result in failure and students may be required to withdraw from the programme.

## **Scholarship and Applied Research**

Aim: To cultivate an appropriately scholarly, practice-led, and research-informed environment for our staff and students.

### **Strategies:**

1. Maintain an active Research and Scholarship Committee with access to dedicated funding to deploy in support of staff and student research and scholarly activity.
2. Develop learning communities of staff that bring together their subject and pedagogic interests and expertise so as to share and disseminate knowledge and share best practice.
3. Continue to inform our curricula through research, professional and scholarly activity in a deliberate and systematic manner.
4. Enable students to have the opportunity to undertake enquiry-based and research-orientated activity appropriate to their programmes of study.
5. Celebrate students' success through the creation of opportunities for students to disseminate and publish research-orientated and other scholarly outputs arising from their study.
6. Celebrate research students' successes through the creation of opportunities to disseminate and publish research.

## **Curriculum Selection, Design and Development**

Aim: To provide and maintain curricula that aid learner retention and progression, embrace our employability and sustainability ambitions, and ultimately lead to learner success. The quality of our curricula and hence, the learner learning experience, is informed by use of qualitative and quantitative data.

### **Strategies:**

1. Use quantitative and qualitative data to review and monitor standards in learning, teaching, and assessment in programme monitoring. Retention, satisfaction, and achievement data will be used to set standards.

2. Give close scrutiny, via approval events for: the appropriateness of programme; The provision made for students' development throughout the programme; and The appropriateness of stated learning, teaching, and assessment methods,
3. Identify and share best practice in learning and teaching as it relates to distance learning and online facilitation. We will provide coaching and mentoring for staff undertaking this practice for the first time.
4. Ensure the provision of appropriate support and learning materials.
5. Embed, communicate, and monitor Recognition of Prior Learning processes within course design and delivery.
6. Ensure that we are producing students equipped with skills for the employment marketplace.
7. Ensure that our assessment practices address the issues of sustainable development.
8. Use ILT effectively to deliver the curriculum as part of a blended learning approach.

## **Deliberative Processes**

**Aim:** To ensure that our formal deliberative structures and processes reflect on the quality and standards of our programmes and provide mechanisms by which this reflection informs and enhances future provision.

### **Strategies:**

1. Embed the use of use of internal and external reference points<sup>2</sup>, in all relevant deliberative processes.
2. Establish, maintain, monitor, and review the academic standards of Malta ICOM Educational awards,
3. Ensure that programme reviews and action plans are informed by the views of students, external examiners, or verifiers, and of other stakeholders where relevant.
4. Ensure that Malta ICOM Educational maintains fit-for-purpose structure of formal deliberative committees from programme to institutional level. Ensure that all these committees have learner representation and that there is external academic involvement in.
5. Engage with key stakeholders (including employers) regarding programme design and/or ongoing development.
6. Seek learner feedback through the use of timely and appropriate mechanisms in all programmes, with transparent and accountable responses.
7. Ensure that a systematic awareness of learner feedback, learner performance, academic standards and external reference points informs the process of reflection, planning, implementation, enhancement, and evaluation.

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<sup>2</sup> Referencing the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA)

8. Identify actions necessary to bring about continual improvement to teaching, learning opportunities, assessment, learner support, engagement, and enhancement.
9. Encourage staff participation in work with colleagues in other institutions, in external examining, and in membership of participation in and engagement with relevant professional, statutory and/or regulatory bodies.
10. Encourage staff and learner engagement with discipline-specific and pedagogical research communities and activities.
11. Encourage change and innovation.

## 4.2 Staff development

Details of the staff development policies can be found in:



32. Staff

Development Policy



33. Department CPD

Needs Identification



40. Teaching

Observation Protocol.

All staff in the faculties are also practicing professionals; many of them also have teaching and examining experience in other part-time and full-time programmes. In addition to this, the remainder of the faculty is composed by academics and medical specialists, who are from various backgrounds, many of whom work in teaching hospitals. These faculty members play an important role in ICOM's academic structure in promoting identification and awareness of good practice elsewhere.

Continual professional development (CPD) to ensure staff are up to date with the methods and systems of teaching and maintain currency in their subject is important to the maintenance of appropriate academic standards. CPD may include conference attendance, courses leading to a recognised qualification and workshops both on and off site.

New staff are allocated a mentor, some staff may also can be involved in coaching and some will be involved in their own professional practice or subject specific research. Networking provides an opportunity to share good practice and enhance knowledge and skills as do memberships of professional associations. Some staff development is mandatory, other opportunities will be discussed and direction will be given through the line management structure.



## 4.3 Teaching observation

Lesson observation has a central role in the development of teaching practice. The quality of teaching and learning can be raised through sharing good practice, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing appropriate staff development and support.

## Section 5 Resources



92.learning resources  
policy (1).docx

### 5.1 Learning Resources Policy

#### Summary

This Learning Resources policy incorporates the college vision for Learning Resources, the entitlement of learners and staff to Learning Resources, an implementation strategy to indicate how the vision and entitlement will be achieved and details of how Learning Resources will be managed.

The policy is for all organisations and individuals utilising college Learning Resources facilities.

- Providing appropriately trained and qualified staff to cover the service points and relevant updating.
  - Providing advice and guidance on the selection, use and evaluation of learning resources, methods of locating information and of effective study.
  - Providing access to appropriate technical expertise.
  - Providing staff that can answer enquiries and requests for information.
  - Contributing to the induction programme.
  - Promoting awareness of the range of resources and services available.
  - Fostering the acquisition of skills for independent learning.
  - Organising the processing, storage, and arrangement of resources appropriately.
  - Involvement in the curriculum development and new course submissions processes.
  - Identifying resources appropriate to the College's activities.
  - Liaising with staff and learners to maintain an understanding of their needs.
- 
- Purchasing materials in accordance with expressed needs and other appropriate learning materials, from a centrally held budget.
  - Monitoring usage and editing stock regularly.

## **Overview**

- To improve the quality of the service by consultation with users, surveys, providing opportunities for constructive comment and suggestions for improvement, and by developing procedures to monitor and improve performance.
- To monitor and evaluate advances in information and learning technology and in educational library and learning resources practice and to develop the service accordingly as appropriate to the mission of the College.
- To assist and provide facilities for the review, adaptation and in-house design and production of learning materials.
- To investigate, develop and support opportunities for independent resource-based learning, i.e., to identify specific aspects of the curriculum for which resource-based learning methods represent effective and efficient approaches and/or increase accessibility and flexibility, and to provide support to enable learners to complete parts of their programmes in a learning areas environment.

## **Review**

The Quality Manager will review this policy annually in consultation with:

- Deans
- Module Leaders
- Lecturers
- Students

## **Statement**

The College aims to support teaching and learning throughout the organisation and to enhance their quality, effectiveness, flexibility, and breadth, through delivery of the Learning Resources service.

The service will be responsible for: -

- the effective provision, development, and organisation of an appropriate range of facilities, technologies, equipment, materials and services for resource-based learning and the use of information
- supporting and encouraging all learners and staff of the College, reflecting users' needs and requirements, and will integrate library, information and learning technology and related learning services in a centrally managed unit
- contributing to the development and delivery of resource-based learning activities in the Curriculum Areas and provide access to information in support of the College's mission statement.
- To create suitable high-quality learning environments appropriate to the needs of learners in the College's various client groups, for the purposes of:
  - Individual quiet study and general reading.
  - Working individually or in small groups with learning materials.
  - Use of IT-based learning materials and facilities.

- Use of audio-visual and reprographic facilities, in support of learning outside formal classrooms.
- Accessing information and advice.

The purpose of the Learning Resources Service is to support and enhance learning and teaching throughout the College. It provides open access IT and study facilities and access to information, equipment, books, and other materials relevant to all aspects of the College's activities. The college actively encourages staff and learners to use the Learning Resources Areas. A high priority is given to guiding and assisting learners.

#### Learners Responsibilities



66. Code of Conduct  
for Students.docx

The Libraries and Open Access Areas are study facilities. All users are expected to behave responsibly, showing consideration for others who wish to work.

#### Rules

- Eating and smoking are not permitted.
- Mobile phones may be used; however, mobiles must be switched to silent and no calls to be made/answered within the Library Block.
- Noise must be kept to a minimum so that everyone can work without disturbance. The quiet study room in the HE Library is for individual private study only.
- The equipment and software provided is for approved educational purposes only and must not be interfered with in any way.
- Learners and staff are responsible for all books or other materials, and they must return them in good condition when requested to do so.

#### Acceptable Use Policy

College IT facilities are to be used for coursework and research. When using these facilities, it is not acceptable to:

- o Play games
- o Mistreat or tamper with equipment
- o Remove, deface, or tamper with equipment markings or labels
- o Create or transmit any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data, or other material
- o Create or transmit material which is designed or likely to cause annoyance, inconvenience, or needless anxiety
- o Create or transmit defamatory material
- o Infringe copyright
- o Transmit unsolicited commercial or advertising material
- o Access facilities or services without authorisation

- o Waste staff effort or IT resources
- o Corrupt or destroy other users' data
- o Violate the privacy of other users
- o Disrupt the work of other users
- o Use the network in a way that denies service or access to other users (for example deliberate or reckless overloading of the system)
- o Continue to use a piece of equipment or software after a member of staff has requested you to stop using it
- o Introduce "viruses" into the system

And, unless as part of your coursework it is not acceptable to:

- o Load software or files
- o Alter software or files
- o Remove files
- o Alter hardware or software settings
- o Unplug or move equipment

Failure to comply with the above will result in withdrawal of access to IT facilities and disciplinary action being taken against you.

### **Staff Responsibilities**

The Dean has overall responsibility for the management, control, and development of the Learning Resources service.

Additional responsibilities include developing the curriculum, developing delivery aspects of the curriculum through Learning Resources, and monitoring the Learning Resources response to curriculum needs.

The Dean has operational responsibilities for Learning Resources including IT, Open Access areas, Libraries, and study facilities.

Teaching staff have a responsibility to advise the Dean of specific resource requirements.

Users of Learning Resources have a responsibility to adhere to published procedures and codes of responsible behaviour when using the service.

## **5.2 Teaching Centre Resources**

Students have access to ScienceDirect which gives access to over 1,100 journals . All students have access to the 3-dimensional virtual reality anatomy resources from the complete Anatomy software delivered by <https://3d4medical.com/> .

Dental students start developing clinical skills on both the phantom heads and the dental haptic simulators in the clinical skills classrooms. Haptics technologies in dental simulation allow students to experience touch in a computer environment by interacting with 3-dimensional virtual reality dental models through associated touch tools. ICOM are working with GF Dental who have over 20 years' experience in Dental simulation technology  
<https://www.gfdental.it/it/chi-siamo.html>

All students also have access to the Regional Biomedical Library System (Sistema Bibliotheca Biomedico della Lombardia), a free internet network that gives hospitals and medical centres free access to a very large (more than 10000) range of biomedical peer reviewed publications.

There is internet access throughout the centres individual computers are available in the library, and in study rooms for students. .

All teaching sites have refectory halls with microwaves and refrigerators, and recreational areas. There are vending machines and water fountains available at all sites.

## **General Resources**

1. Hydraulic Treatment tables in Italy 300 and Malta 174
2. High speed internet access
3. Portable tables in Malta 50
4. Library with approximately 1000 books
5. 65 laptops in Italy Malta 15 laptop
6. Sofas, microwaves, fridges.
7. Gyms fully equipped
8. Auditoriums
9. White boards, audio systems, projectors screens

## **Malta teaching Centres**

Gzira Is the registered offices for Malta ICOM Educational at 16 Triq Sir Frederick C. ,Ponsonby, Il-Gzira, GZR 1075, Malta. This is a newly fully refurbished teaching site. The centre has 7 practical/theoretical rooms all rooms are equipped with hydraulic couches, interactive whiteboard and Tv screens. The auditorium has a capacity for 120 students it has a main screen, audio system and tv screens.

For the use of the students there is a fully equip gym, common rooms and 2 kitchenettes

The Clinic has a reception and 5 fully equipped clinic rooms , to be used by Osteopathy and Physiotherapy students.

Santa Venera Triq Misrah il-Barrieri – 122, Santa Venera, SVR 1755 , Malta. This is also a fully refurbished building. This Centre is dedicated to physiotherapy training with 6 large classrooms over 4 floors each with a capacity of up to 120 students . Each floor has common areas and study spaces. There is a large roof top terrace where students can relax in the shade. There are administrative areas and clinical spaces.

## **CCFOs ( Clinical Centre for Physiotherapy and Osteopathy)**

Malta ICOM CCFO are equipped with clinical areas, classrooms, libraries, highspeed internet and wi-fi connections .There are designated spaces for independent and group study .The clinics provide training sites for students carry out their clinical internship depending on which programme they are enrolled onto.

### **CCFO Milan Teaching Centre**

Cinisello Balsamo (Milan) Italy, via G. Matteotti 62. The ICOM Cinisello campus ( 7000 m<sup>2</sup>) over three floors, clinical space, some specialised medical rooms, lectures halls, Research Centre, study, and relaxation areas as well as the student housing. The Centre has excellent high speed internet access.

There is a large catered Canteen, gym, and games areas. Students have access to wide area or outdoor space, with tables chairs, lawns and shaded areas.

### **The clinic**

The clinic is situated on the whole of the first floor and is organized into:

Specialist Medicine Consultancy rooms such as Orthopaedics, ENT, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, and Paediatrics. This consists of seven rooms with their own waiting area , all of them fitted with professional instruments.

The Italian Osteopathic Children Centre (IOCC). IOCC aims to integrate traditional medicine with osteopathic approach and treatment for the Mother and Child (pre-partum and postpartum) problems. IOCC includes nutritionist, podiatrist, otolaryngology, neurologist, homeopath, physiotherapist, paediatrician, INPP, Pilates centre.

The Osteopathy department has a large reception room and 26 dedicated treatment rooms . Physiotherapy has a large designated reception area, 6 large treatment room equipped with equipment such as ultrasound, shortwave, laser, interferential, Electromyostimulation, TECAR, and tens machines. Each room is equipped with an electric hydraulic couch, X ray light box and operator desk. The rooms differ in size allowing for the different clinical activities: General Clinic and Specialised Paediatric, Geriatric, Obstetrics and Gynaecology Clinic.

Pilates/sports physiotherapy rooms equipped with specialized machines and a private changing room.

All treatment rooms are large enough to comfortably accommodate the patient, the tutor and 3/4 students. There also large teaching clinical room available for group teaching.

At present, in the clinic there are more than 1500 student treatments each month.

### **CCFO Torino Teaching centre**

Located in Torino, Italy, Via Nizza 262. ICOM Torino Institute (1400 m<sup>2</sup>) including the osteopathic clinic and large waiting room, lectures halls, library, canteen. The Centre has excellent high speed internet access.

ICOM Torino has three practical classrooms with a capacity of 30 students each and one theoretical classroom. Each classroom has interactive audio-visual system that consists of a computer location connected to a multimedia board and two projectors installed to allow the view from each student's position in the room.

The library area has study areas and computers that can accommodate from 8 up to 10 students. The VLE catalogue is available online. Links to all e-resources, including the LRC catalogue.

The clinic has 11 treatment rooms and a large and comfortable waiting room .Each room is equipped with couch, x ray light box and operator desk. There are 2 large tutorial rooms for students to use during clinical training.

There are administrative areas for the staff.

### **Catania Teaching Centre**

Located in Catania , Sicily , Via Pola 39, 95127 Catania. This centrally located teaching centre comprises of 5 large teaching rooms , 3 of which are equipped with hydraulic couches with a capacity of 24 students. Each classroom has an interactive audio-visual system . The Centre has excellent high speed internet access.

There is a clinical area with 6 treatment rooms and a waiting area. Each room is equipped with couch, x ray light box and operator desk.

The centre also has a library study area with computers, internet access and printers. There are 2 administrative offices and a large common room for students with

microwave and vending machines. On the top floor there is a large shaded terrace for students to use during their breaks.

## Section 6 Information management



81.ICOM Public  
Information Policy.doc

The Public Information Policy supports ICOM's procedure for oversight, control, quality, and review over public domain information about the College, which is produced and distributed by the College. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all published public information is complete, accurate and up to date, whatever its format and audience.

### Aim

To ensure that Malta ICOM Educational has appropriate arrangements and monitoring procedures to ensure that the information it publishes is:

- accurate
- fit for purpose
- trustworthy
- transparent and open
- timely and up to date
- accessible
- legally compliant

To ensure published information enables audiences to form an accurate impression of ICOM, make informed decisions, allows for a clear and effective communication about and within the college and meet any applicable legal obligations e.g. Consumer Affairs Act (Chapter 378 of the Laws of Malta), Data Protection Act 2018 (Chapter 586 of the Laws of Malta). Malta ICOM Educational commit to have the following true and correct information publicly available:

1. the selection criteria for the course.
2. the intended learning outcomes.
3. the qualifications awarded, including information on the MQF level and ECTS learning credits.
4. the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used.
5. the pass rates.
6. the further learning opportunities available for students.
7. information on possible career pathways available because of taking the course.



It is expected by the MFHEA that the college will collect the following information:

- Profile of the student population, including prevalence of vulnerable groups.
- Course participation, retention, and success rates.
- Students' satisfaction with their course.
- Employment rates and career paths.

Data on student progression and achievement by cohort is held securely at Malta ICOM Educational premises in Malta. The programme team, led by the Faculty Dean, collate data prior to assessment and award boards. This is reviewed and verified by the Academic Registrar prior to the meeting of the Board. The minutes of the Board are held securely in the Malta ICOM Educational offices in Malta. The Faculty Dean, in consultation with phase leaders and module tutors, undertake an annual self-assessment process.

Anonymised data on recruitment, achievement, progression, and retention is analysed and compared with previous cohort performance. Where appropriate, the performance of students with protected characteristics is compared with the performance of cohorts. Where appropriate, action points are identified and incorporated in the development plan. The self-assessment and development plan are reviewed by Academic Board and the Management Board. The development plan is monitored at subsequent meetings of Academic Board and the Management Board.

Malta ICOM Educational have developed a Core Document Policy



82. CORE  
DOCUMENTATION M

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that there is a document control system so that current versions can be identified and located, and obsolete documents are removed from use.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- 1.1 The Quality Manager has overall responsibility for the Core Documentation Management Policy and Procedure.
- 1.2 The Quality Manager is responsible for storing and publishing all master versions. They are also responsible for the management of the Policy, Procedure and Regulation Development and Review Schedule and hold all records of review

documentation on behalf of the Quality Team,

- 1.3 Policy, Procedure and Regulation Development and Review Schedule details all the ICOM's policies, procedures and regulations including details of their development and review schedules. It is implemented by the Quality Manager.
- 1.4 Document owners are responsible for making amendments to core documents in-line with the review cycle. Once the document is approved the owner must send it to the Quality Manager so that it can be stored, recorded, and published.
- 1.5 All staff and students can access the published versions of core documentation from the ICOM's website, intranet and VLE.
- 1.6 Staff are reminded not to rely on printed copies as being the most up to date versions. Printed copies are not considered to be definitive. Staff are discouraged from printing documentation.
- 1.7 Members of the Quality Team only have access to the master copies of core documentation and records of documentation revision.
- 1.8 Location of master versions of core documentation, the review register, and records of documentation revision: Academic Registry secure drive.

## **Documentation storage and publication locations**

### **Master versions and records of documentation**

- 1.9 Master versions of core documentation, the Policy, Procedure and Regulation Development and Review Schedule and records of documentation revisions are stored by the Quality Team. These are not accessible by other staff or students.

### **Published versions.**

- 1.10 A final, approved version of a Core Document is published as an un-editable document on the College website, intranet and VLE as detailed in Table 1. A record of each document is listed in the Core Documentation register, which includes information about its date for review and documentation history (Appendices A).
- 1.11 The Quality Manager oversees the processes for documentation storage and the Quality Manager is responsible for initiating reviews; this includes maintaining the register and triggering document

owners to update documentation following the review cycle.

### **Additional documentation locations**

- 1.12 The master version of a course specific core document may be made available by a member of staff in other locations. The master version is an un-editable document, so it cannot be amended when it is copied to another location.
- 1.13 Staff are encouraged not to print off copies of documents but to refer to the Core Documents on the Intranet for all policies, procedures, and regulations and to Course Leader for all core documents regarding course information.
- 1.14 All documents on the intranet are the up-to-date versions and should be used by all staff and students.