



Malta  
Further & Higher  
Education Authority

# **External Quality Assurance**

## Audit Report

### **STC TRAINING**

Carried out between

20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

[mfhea.mt](http://mfhea.mt)

Quality education for  
confident futures .

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## Abbreviations List

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ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EQA/QA audit	External Quality Assurance Audit
Hol	Head of Institution
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
MBR	Malta Business Registry
MFHEA	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority
MQF	Malta Qualifications Framework
NCC	National Computing Centre
NCFHE	National Commission for Further and Higher Education
NQAF	National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education
Ofqual	UK's Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation
RQF	UK's Regulated Qualifications Framework
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
STC	STC Training
UoW	University of Wolverhampton

## Executive Summary

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### Institutional Background

STC Training (STC) was established in 1997, and originally operated under the name Government Computer Centre. In collaboration with the Government of Malta, fourteen IT firms formed a joint venture to create a training centre for IT skills development, emphasising the concept of lifelong learning. Soon after, a partnership was forged with NCC Education, a global provider of British Education, offering cost-effective degree programmes in Business and IT. The first group of students were enrolled in 1997.

In 2009, a partnership with Middlesex University was established, enabling local students to attain internationally recognised qualifications. More recently, since 2021, STC has a new partner, the University of Wolverhampton, a distinguished UK institution. This collaboration presents various opportunities for students interested in pursuing degrees in Business or Computing. Business Management students can specialise in Marketing or Human Resources, while Computing students can choose between Cybersecurity or Computer Science, with the option to specialise further in Games Development.

In 2013, the then National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) gave STC its license to operate as a Further and Higher Education Institution (license number 2007-TC-07) delivering programmes of studies classified up to MQF Level 7. The licence of STC was renewed following the EQA conducted in 2017. This was held between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017. STC delivers in-person education from its premises in Pembroke.

The mission statement of STC illustrates the institution's commitment to provide '*quality and internationally recognised higher education qualifications*' centred on a student-centric approach applied throughout the entirety of the student journey. STC's motto is ***Learn-Achieve-Inspire***.

### Overview of the Audit Process

This report is a result of the External Quality Assurance process undertaken by an independent peer review panel. The panel evaluated the documentation submitted by the educational institution and conducted an onsite audit visit. The panel is responsible for reaching conclusions on all Standards. As outlined in the External Quality Audit Manual of Procedures, the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) sought external expert advice to evaluate the financial capacity of the provider.

Through this report, the panel also highlighted areas of good practice which, in its view, make a positive contribution to academic standards and quality of education that are worthy of being emulated and disseminated more widely.

#### Timeline

<b>Date</b>	<b>Milestone</b>
16 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	Panel induction meeting
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2024	Desk-based analysis
7 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	Scoping visit online
20 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> February 2024	Onsite audit visit

### Summary of the Conclusions Reached by the Peer Review Panel

On the basis of the findings documented in the report, the panel has concluded that STC surpasses Standards 7 and 11, meets Standards 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10, and requires improvement to meet Standards 1, 2, 3 and 6. The recommendations in the report are meant to improve the Standards already in place and to enhance good practice.

The panel made three mandatory recommendations; these shall be implemented either within 1 month, 3 months or 6 months from the date of publication of this report, as indicated. They also made seven key recommendations, one of which is to be implemented within 6 months and six to be implemented within 12 months from the date of publication of this report. In addition, the panel made nine recommendations.

# About the External Quality Audit

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## Aims and Objectives of the EQA

Quality assurance in Malta is underpinned by six principles that determine the remit and function of the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education, and the relationship between internal and external quality assurance to enhance learning outcomes.

- i. The Framework is based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and enriched by the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) perspective.
- ii. The Framework contributes to a national culture of quality through:
  - increased agency satisfaction and numbers of service users,
  - an enhanced international profile and credibility of providers in Malta,
  - the promotion of Malta as a regional provider of excellence in further and higher education.
- iii. The Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is fit for purpose.
- iv. The External Quality Assurance (QA audit) is a tool for both development and accountability. The QA audit shall ensure that the internal quality management system of the provider is:
  - fit for purpose according to the provider's courses and service users,
  - compliant with Standards and regulations, and contributing to the development of a national quality culture,
  - contributing to the fulfilment of the broad goals of Malta's Education Strategy 2014-24,
  - implemented with effectiveness, comprehensiveness and sustainability.
- v. The Quality Improvement Cycle is at the heart of the Framework.
- vi. The integrity and independence of the QA audit process is guaranteed.

The QA audit provides public assurance about the standards of further and higher education programmes and the quality of the learning experience of students. It presents an opportunity for providers to demonstrate that they adhere to the expectations of stakeholders with regard to the programmes of study that they offer and the achievements and capabilities of their students. It also provides a focus for identifying good practices and for the implementation of institutional approaches to the continuous improvement in the quality of educational provision.

The MFHEA has a responsibility to ensure that a comprehensive assessment is conducted for all higher education providers in Malta. The QA audit provides an opportunity to assess the standards and quality of higher education in Malta against the expectations and practices of provision across the European Higher Education Area and internationally.

The QA audit examines how providers manage their own responsibilities for the quality and standards of the programmes they offer. In particular, the following issues are addressed:

- The fitness for purpose and effectiveness of internal quality assurance processes, including an examination of the systems and procedures that have been implemented and the documentation that supports them.
- The compliance with the obligations of licence holders with established regulations and any conditions or restrictions imposed by the MFHEA.
- The governance and financial sustainability of providers, including assurances about the legal status of the provider, the appropriateness of corporate structures and the competence of staff with senior management responsibilities.

The QA audit benchmarks the QA system and procedures within an institution against 11 Standards:

1. Policy for quality assurance: entities shall have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management.
2. Institutional and financial probity: entities shall ensure that they have appropriate measures and procedures in place to ensure institutional and financial probity.
3. Design and approval of programmes: self-accrediting providers shall have appropriate processes for the design and approval of their programmes of study.
4. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment: entities shall ensure that programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.
5. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification: entities shall consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student 'life-cycle'.
6. Teaching staff: entities shall assure the competence and effectiveness of their teaching staff.
7. Learning resources and student support: entities shall have appropriate funding for their learning and teaching activities and sufficient learning resources to fully support the students' learning experiences.

8. Information management: entities shall ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.
9. Public information: entities shall publish information about their activities which is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and readily accessible.
10. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes: entities shall implement the 'Quality Cycle' by monitoring and periodically reviewing their programmes to ensure their continuing fitness for purpose.
11. Cyclical external quality assurance: entities should undergo an external quality assurance audit by, or with the approval of, the MFHEA on a cyclical basis, according to the MFHEA guidelines, once every five years.

Peer review panels essentially ask providers the following question about their arrangements for quality management:

'What systems and procedures are in place and what evidence is there that they are working effectively?'

The approach to quality assurance can be encapsulated in a number of key questions which providers should ask themselves about their management of quality.

- What are we trying to do?
- Why are we trying to do it?
- How are we trying to do it?
- Why are we doing it that way?
- Is this the best way of doing it?
- How do we know it works?
- Could it be done better?

Answers to these questions should form the basis of the provider's critical assessment of and response to the self-evaluation questionnaire.

The approach of the QA audit is not simply about checking whether providers adhere to the regulations; it examines how providers are developing their own systems in addressing the expectations of sound management of educational standards and the quality of their learning and teaching provision. It does not involve the routine identification and confirmation of criteria – a 'tick-box' approach – but rather a mature and reflective dialogue with providers about the ways in which they discharge their obligations for quality and the identification of existing good practices.

## The Peer Review Panel

The peer review panel was composed of:

Chair of Review Panel:	Ms Veronica Montebello
Peer Reviewer:	Dr Olgun Cicek
Student Peer Reviewer:	Mr Wilbert Tabone
QA Managers (MFHEA):	Ms Sibby Xuereb Mr Giacomo Annese

## Specific Terms of Reference

The general terms of reference of the review panel were to review the fitness for purpose and effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes as implemented by the provider against the Standards outlined in the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further Education.

As defined in the MFHEA Quality Audit Manual of Procedures, the panel was responsible for examining how STC manages its responsibilities to ensure the provision of the quality and standards of the education it offers. Following the desk-based analysis and the scoping visit held with the provider and pursuant to the documentation received from STC, the panel focused their questions around three main themes and used triangulation to gain a better understanding of the QA provisions in place. The following issues were addressed:

1. the fitness for purpose and effectiveness of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes, including an examination of the systems and procedures that have been implemented, together with the documentation that supports them;
2. the compliance of STC with the established regulations and any conditions or restrictions issued by the MFHEA;
3. the governance and financial sustainability of providers, including assurance about the provider's legal status, the appropriateness of corporate structures and the competence of staff with senior management responsibilities.

These areas have, therefore, been identified as lines of inquiry.

The review team decided that, as part of an enhancement-led approach, it would issue recommendations linked to all parts of the operations of the institution. The report therefore distinguishes between:

- Mandatory recommendations (MR) which are crucial to meet a Standard and **shall** be implemented within the timeframes decided by the panel and indicated in this report.
- Key recommendations (KR) which are important to improve a Standard and **should** be implemented expediently by the institution, within the indicated timeframes, to address weaknesses.
- Recommendations (R) for improvement which are merely suggestions based on the panel's analyses and observations; these **could** be implemented by the institution.

## Institutional Context

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STC is licensed by the MFHEA to operate as a Further and Higher Education Institution (license number 2007-TC-07) from its premises in Pembroke. The premises comprise two blocks which are identical, with several training rooms and three computer labs. The institution also includes a library, a student room, a prayer room, and a conference room. Some of the premises which is currently not being used is rented to a language school which shares the common facilities with STC students. On the audit dates, STC was authorised by the MFHEA to deliver the courses listed in the MFHEA Licence Conditions from the institution's premises. National Computing Centre (NCC) Education Limited and the University of Wolverhampton (UoW) are the awarding bodies of all the programmes delivered by STC except for two which are homegrown and accredited by the MFHEA. The latter are not currently being offered by the institution. Students follow the same academic calendar as in the UK.

### **MQF Level 4 (awarded by NCC Education Limited)**

- NCC Education Level 3 Diploma in Computing (Ofqual number: 600/6407/9)
- NCC Education Level 3 Diploma in Business (Ofqual number: 600/6416/X)
- NCC Education Level 3 International Foundation Diploma for Higher Education Studies (Ofqual number: 603/0080/2)

### **MQF Level 5 (accredited and awarded by the MFHEA)**

- Award in the ADHD Adult Coaching Approach (5 ECTS)
- Award in ADHD Adult Group Coaching (10 ECTS)

### **MQF Level 5 (awarded by NCC Education Limited)**

- NCC Education Level 4 Diploma in Computing (Ofqual number: 600/0406/X)
- NCC Education Level 4 Diploma in Business (Ofqual number: 600/1325/4)
- NCC Education Level 4 Diploma in Business Information Technology (Ofqual number: 600/0624/9) (Operational End Date: 31 Mar 2021; Certification End Date: 30 Jun 2024)
- NCC Education Level 5 Diploma in Business (Ofqual number: 600/2480/X)
- NCC Education Level 5 Diploma in Business Information Technology (Ofqual number: 600/3049/5) (Operational End Date: 31 Mar 2021; Certification End Date: 30 Jun 2024)
- NCC Education Level 5 Diploma in Computing (Ofqual number: 600/3055/0)

### **MQF Level 6 (awarded by University of Wolverhampton)**

- Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Cyber Security
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Computer Science
- Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Computer Science (Games Development)
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business Management
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business Management (Human Resources)
- Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Business Management (Marketing)
- Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics

### **MQF Level 7 (awarded by University of Wolverhampton)**

- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Science in Cyber Security
- Master of Science in Computer Science
- International Masters of Business Administration

The profile of students at STC is varied, with a mix of local and international students of all age groups. STC offers both full-time and part-time provisions and provides maximum flexibility in terms of learning opportunities. The majority of part-time students are individuals already established in their respective industries. Currently, student numbers stand at 148 full-time and 64 part-time (total 212); 104 following NCC Education courses and 108 following UoW programmes of study.

## Analysis and Findings of Panel

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### Standard 1: Policy for Quality Assurance

*Policy for quality assurance: entities shall have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management.*

#### Main Findings

The panel was presented with a self-assessment report (SAR) compiled by STC based on the Standards outlined in the National QA Framework for Further and Higher Education and which clearly shows that the institution has reflected upon its specific internal quality assurance standards and identified strengths and areas for improvement. Most recommendations reported in the first round of EQA audit have been actioned. The institution also presented SWOT analysis reports carried out in 2020 and 2023 with the aim of further enhancing the provision of education delivered by STC. During the scoping visit, which was carried out online, the Head of Institution (HoI) and senior management presented an overview of the institution, how the action plan based on the first EQA audit report was implemented and the strategic plan of STC for the future. The panel noted that the latter could be developed further to give clearer direction and more explicit plans of the institution while also considering alternative measures.

Academic standards and quality assurance for courses are established and upheld through STC's collaborations with NCC Education and UoW. Each partner institution maintains ownership of its programmes, including curricula and quality procedures for programme design and review. All qualifications are aligned with the UK's Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and regulated by Ofqual (the UK's Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation). STC submits each course to MFHEA for recognition and levelling onto the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF). Assessments are set by the UK institutions, which also oversee moderation. The UoW conducts Assessment Boards each semester, involving external examiners, ensuring the highest level of rigour and consistency. IQA features prominently in the institutional structure. NCC Education and UoW regularly carry out internal reviews which ensure that STC complies with the standards set by the institutions respectively. The partnership between STC and NCC Education and UoW is symbiotic and is working well.

The IQA policies of STC can be found on the institution's website. They are fit for purpose and were last updated in August 2023, in light of the upcoming EQA audit of the MFHEA. STC does not have formal internal mechanisms for modifying existing curricula but strictly adheres to the procedures of both awarding institutions while offering regular feedback. The panel acknowledges that STC policies and quality standards emanate from those of the partner

institutions and have been put together with the involvement of senior management and academic staff. The panel also noted the plans in place to set up a Quality Committee, however, it is recommended that a person from within the institution be given the specific role of overseeing quality assurance within the institution and liaison with NCC Education and UoW on matters related to policies, procedures and standards of good practice.

The panel observed that the senior management member currently acting as the focal person is pivotal to most operations within the institution. He appears to be burdened with an excessive workload and numerous responsibilities. Introducing support staff within the organisational structure under his purview could help alleviate this burden. This modification would enable a fairer distribution of tasks and ensure the continuous implementation of quality assurance practices, especially in case of staff turnover within the institution. This centralised management system relying on a limited number of focal individuals is not viable, particularly as the institution continues to expand.

STC commits to upholding tolerance and respect among its diverse staff and students, which aligns with the MFHEA Standard. Procedures for safeguarding against intolerance and discrimination of students and staff are included in the IQA policy documents.

The panel observed that STC is enhancing its involvement with industry stakeholders, with discussions underway and some collaborations already initiated. Students particularly appreciate the internships, networking with industry and lectures/webinars from experts, and would like more opportunities which prepare them for the realities of work life and to create a possible platform for future employment.

### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

Most of the recommendations from the previous audit have been acknowledged and put into effect. STC has IQA policies that are suitable for their intended purpose, publicly available, and in alignment with the requirements of NCC Education, UoW and the MFHEA. However, a centralised management structure where most operations are dependent on two or three individuals is still somewhat in place and needs to be addressed effectively.

### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

## Recommendations for Improvement

- MR1: STC shall, within 3 months from the date of publication of this report, provide a strategic action plan of what it (STC) intends to achieve in the next 5 years and document any alternative and/or mitigation strategies while also defining how it will monitor achievements.
- KR1: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, appoint a person (a QA officer) from within the institution to oversee quality assurance within the institution and liaise with NCC Education and UoW on matters related to policies, procedures and standards of good practice.

## Conclusion

STC requires improvement to meet the requirements of Standard 1.

## Standard 2: Institutional Probity

*Institutional and financial probity: entities shall ensure that they have appropriate measures and procedures in place to ensure institutional and financial probity.*

### Main Findings

The SAR and the IQA policies and procedures submitted by STC describe the organisational structure and the governance and management arrangements within the institution, including the duties and responsibilities of the main roles within this structure. STC has a written procedure relating to the recruitment and selection criteria for the engagement of senior management, administrative and academic staff. The personal, educational and professional profiles of the persons involved in the organisation's governance and operations make them suitable and fit for purpose to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

STC Training Limited is a limited liability company registered in 2006 under registration number C-38709. The company is owned by several individual and corporate shareholders and is run and managed by a board of directors made up of several individuals. The company's memorandum of association indicates the promotion and provision of educational and training programmes as the main object of the company. Hence, the company's objects are compliant with requirements.

The company furnished us with the required tax compliance certificates, which showed that there are neither any pending returns nor any liabilities due to the Commissioner for Revenue in respect of income tax. The amount of €498 was due to the department in respect of FSS and there were three missing VAT returns. However, the company provided us with a copy of these missing VAT returns, which were submitted manually at the time, and is liaising with the department to regularise its position in this respect. Thus, we concluded that the company is compliant with fiscal compliance requirements.

After making the necessary controls and checks, we found that the company was not fully compliant with regard to the submission of annual audited financial statements as the most recent accounts submitted to the Malta Business Registry (MBR) related to 2020. Thus, the accounts for the years 2021 and 2022 are overdue.

The company's annual return submission profile is also non-compliant as the last one submitted refers to 2022, which means that the one for 2023 is missing from the MBR portal. The company furnished us with up-to-date beneficial ownership information showing that the ultimate beneficial owner of the company is Mr Peter Toledo who effectively owns 38.75% of the direct ownership of the company. The company is also up to date concerning the

submission of beneficial ownership data to the MBR. In response to our queries with regard to the missing submissions to the MBR, the company's secretary informed us that the main reason is that a merger between this company and STC International was still pending processing by the relevant authorities and the long delays incurred in this process have led to the lack of uploading of documentation which was received by the MBR.

Furthermore, STC Training Limited provided us with the signed audited financial statements for the year 2021. With regard to our analysis of the financial performance of the company, it transpired that the company has reported a loss in its last two audited financial statements and reported a growth in revenue in that period. Furthermore, an analysis of the financial position of the company showed that it had adequate cash resources and reported positive equity. Its liquid and current ratios were also in positive territory. These statements also contain a clean audit report.

Overall, we concluded that the company possesses adequate financial resources to meet unexpected challenges.

Concerning budgeting, the directors of the company provided us with their five-year financial projections.

### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

All recommendations from the previous audit have been taken on board and implemented. STC has developed a clear organigram structure and selection criteria for headship positions.

### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

## Recommendations for Improvement

MR2: STC Training Limited shall submit the following documentation within the period indicated for each recommendation:

1. To provide the Authority with a signed copy of the annual return which was due to the Malta Business Registry, within 1 month from the date of publication of this report.
2. To provide us with a copy of the signed audited financial statements for 2022, within 1 month from the date of publication of this report.

## Conclusion

STC requires improvement to meet the requirements of Standard 2.

## Standard 3: Design and Approval of Programmes

*Design and approval of programmes: self-accrediting providers shall have appropriate processes for the design and approval of their programmes of study.*

### **Main Findings**

All programmes offered by STC have undergone submission and approval by the MFHEA and can be found listed in their Licence documents. STC provides local and international students the opportunity to pursue programmes regulated by NCC Education Limited under Ofqual, and the UoW, both UK-based institutions. Course design and development is also carried out by the partner institution; however, STC is given an opportunity to contribute toward the review of these programmes. Feedback collected by both NCC Education and UoW, through reports and suggestions, is considered and occasionally implemented. The panel acknowledged that all tutors at STC are highly experienced practitioners and leaders in their respective fields, as evidenced by interviews and provided CV samples. Although STC nominates tutors, final approval rests with the awarding bodies.

STC has also developed two homegrown awards which are accredited by the MFHEA, however, to date, have not been offered. The development of these two homegrown courses engaged mainly the STC senior management and academic leaders in collaboration with tutors and ADHD Malta. These courses were developed as part of STC's corporate social responsibility engagement. STC has a Memorandum of Understanding with ADHD Malta to collaborate to train coaches and persons with ADHD. While STC has a written procedure for designing and approving programmes, it lacks some details outlined in the National Quality Assurance Framework. It is recommended that STC revise this document to incorporate standard procedures for developing new in-house courses, involving both internal stakeholders, such as students, and external stakeholders, such as industry experts and employers.

The panel noted how stakeholders would welcome the chance to participate in supporting and assisting STC in ensuring that course content aligns with the needs and demands of the industry. STC should consider inviting willing stakeholders to participate in committee meetings and contribute to the feedback which is given to NCC Education and UoW.

### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

STC is still in the process of establishing a comprehensive procedure for designing, developing and approving homegrown courses.

### Good Practice Identified

- There has been development of homegrown courses as part of STC's corporate social responsibility.

### Recommendations for Improvement

MR3: STC shall, within 6 months from the date of publication of this report, enhance the document titled "Procedure for Creating New Awards" by incorporating additional details outlined in the National Quality Assurance Framework standards. This revision should involve both internal stakeholders, such as students, and external stakeholders, including industry experts and employers.

R1: STC could consider inviting willing external stakeholders from industry to participate in course committee meetings.

### Conclusion

STC needs improvement to meet the requirements of Standard 3.

## Standard 4: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

*Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment: entities shall ensure that programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.*

### **Main Findings**

The panel commends STC for its student-centred learning policies and practices, viewing them as a significant strength and a way to create a more effective and meaningful learning experience for students. Students appreciate the fact that their feedback is acted on and that tutors are approachable. Tutors guide and support students rather than simply deliver content.

An examinations and assignments policy is in effect, and a welfare officer has been appointed to provide support to students, particularly focusing on pastoral care. Additionally, an appeals and complaints procedure has been established and students are informed about it during induction week. A student council was formed in 2022. Representatives have been elected for each course at Wolverhampton, with the process ongoing for NCC Education courses.

Profiles of students with specific needs are shared with lecturers before the start of each module to inform assessment planning. This allows lecturers to be aware of these needs in advance and to coordinate with other units to make any necessary arrangements before interacting with the students, if and when required. Students are encouraged to provide psycho-educational reports for better support, including special arrangements during examinations. Formative feedback is integrated into each module, with summative feedback following results publication. Collaboration between STC and its UK counterparts ensures course materials and assessments are available on platforms like Canvas. To enhance the student experience, STC could showcase and disseminate research projects undertaken by students, potentially through a library of past student work. Academic advisors from partner institutions could also be provided

### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

There has been progress since the last audit and the follow up report: the strategy to offer courses required by industry and/or which put students on a direct pathway to achieving a higher education programme; and the soliciting of feedback from students while the module is already under way with a view to the immediate remedying of any shortcomings. Beyond the basic requirements of the NQAF (blended learning, multiple modes of delivery and pedagogical methods, mutual respect, clear learning outcomes, fair assessments etc.), STC has consistently implemented step improvements to ensure all their activities are student-centred. An examinations and assignments policy is in place.

An appeals and complaints procedure has been developed and implemented. Students are made aware of this policy during induction week. STC has employed a welfare officer to assist and support students. In 2019 a student council was created and students also acted as representatives. The pandemic made it difficult to keep the student council active. Current students' representatives were elected for each Wolverhampton course.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- STC emphasises the continuous progress made in the involvement of students in decision-making and institutional life.
- The welfare officer holds a pivotal role within the STC structure and system, and is greatly valued by students for her approachability and dedication. Students are promptly informed about the available services from the onset of their induction. This officer serves as a crucial support system for students, lecturers and administrative staff alike.
- There is a commitment to a personal approach to students and the fulfilling of individual student needs.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

KR2: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, convert the informality of the interaction between teachers, administration and students into a formal structure.

R2: STC could highlight and distribute student research projects, possibly through a library of previous student work.

### **Conclusion**

STC meets the requirements of Standard 4.

## Standard 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

*Student admission, progression, recognition and certification: entities shall consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student 'life-cycle'.*

### Main Findings

Admission requirements and procedures are accessible on STC's website. The progression rates for programmes are reasonable, and students' progression recognition, certification and internal rules are detailed in the Student Handbook, available online throughout their studies. STC's degrees comply with the MFHEA's regulations and are accompanied by a Diploma Supplement.

The panel noted that students did not encounter significant issues understanding or applying these internal rules on practices as well as regulations. Direct communication between staff and students aids in addressing issues informally, aligning with the panel's findings on student-centredness. Students also did not face difficulties in assessing their performance or selecting their learning path. They are being well informed through many channels including, MySchool, Quartz for NCC, and Canvas and eVision for WLV students. Entry requirements are publicised on the website, and interviews with academic leaders ensure students meet the required academic standards. Course-specific entry requirements are defined by partner institutions, emphasising transparency and clarity.

Each cohort undergoes a separate induction meeting before lectures begin. Results and progressions are managed through NCC Education and UoW's platforms, with students needing to meet entry requirements. Learning outcomes are provided for each assessment, tailored to the module, level, programme and assessment type.

Overall, students expressed positivity towards the quality and relevance of their learning experience at STC. The integration of theoretical learning and practical training is highly valued, along with the sense of community among students, representatives and graduates. The panel encourages STC to establish an alumni association. This initiative would enable STC to maintain a comprehensive record of its graduates and actively engage them in the institution's future growth and development.

### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

All the admissions procedures and requirements are published on the website and done through the Admissions Portal in the Student Management System (My School). Also, processes for student progression, recognition and certification are clearly outlined in the Student Handbook and communicated to students through various channels (e.g., induction briefing, Student Network Team, iStudent Hub). In addition, student progression including attendance and assessments are documented on the Student Management System. Also, all internal policies and regulations on student progression are available in the Student Handbook.

### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

R3: STC could accelerate the creation of an alumni association, in order to keep track of all its graduates and to be able to involve them in its future development.

### **Conclusion**

STC meets the requirements of Standard 5.

## Standard 6: Teaching Staff

*Teaching staff: entities shall assure the competence and effectiveness of their teaching staff.*

### Main Findings

During the audit, the panel had the opportunity to meet and discuss with several members of the teaching staff at STC. All tutors are engaged on part-time service agreements, while some senior management members work on a full-time basis.

STC only occasionally offers continuing professional development (CPD) to tutors; however, during the audit, it was evident to the panel that senior management is aware of this weakness and is committed to addressing it. The most recent CPD session was held in 2023, and was conducted in collaboration with UoW. It would be beneficial to provide these tutors with formal training in teaching pedagogy, including delivery methods, assessment techniques, and other instructional strategies. Such training would enhance their individual teaching and assessment skills, better address the diverse learning needs of students, and improve the overall quality of the programmes offered.

STC should support and foster the development of research capacity among its teaching staff to enhance the institution's overall academic and research profile. Additionally, encouraging staff to integrate their research into their teaching will benefit both their research and their students' learning experiences. STC could also promote research collaboration within the institution and with external partners.

Ensuring coordination among lecturing staff is paramount, with regular feedback sessions and biannual meetings. Additionally, facilitating more opportunities for lecturers to convene and discuss programme-related issues would be beneficial. Implementing student feedback forms and providing anonymised reports to lecturers can aid in monitoring and enhancing their performance.

The institution's recruitment processes for tutors is transparent, with clearly defined qualifications and procedures for each position. Formal annual meetings are conducted with academic leaders to foster positive relationships. Efforts are made to maintain a collegial atmosphere among staff.

While student feedback and module results are currently used to evaluate lecturers, there is a need to improve observations. Discussions with partner institutions are underway to implement a teacher observation and feedback programme, enhancing quality assurance efforts. Additionally, lecturers are evaluated institutionally for their availability, punctuality and reliability. The panel observes that the institution must prioritise enhancing observations, communication and coordination with partner institutions to exchange constructive feedback for programme improvement.

Overall, the institution has recruited a qualified and motivated team of teachers and industry professionals, with attention to gender balance and diversity. Support from partner institutions like NCC Education and UoW contributes to the strength of the teaching staff.

### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

STC's equal opportunities policy has been updated. The coordination of lecturing staff has been assured. Staff feedback regarding curricular contents, NCC Education materials, and the evaluation system has been taken regularly through lecturers' meetings twice a year, and individual meetings between lecturers and academic course leaders conducted. Also, there have been staff meetings organised once a month for all STC team leaders plus bi-weekly meetings for Academic team leaders. Based on the communication, each lecturer receives an anonymised report from the academic course leader, copied to the Academic Leader.

In addition, the professional requirements of all academic staff are clearly defined in the STC IQA document. The recruitment of all academic staff follows a clearly defined process in the QMS.

### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

- KR3: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, provide more opportunities for lecturers to meet amongst themselves to discuss issues related to their programmes.
- KR4: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, provide the opportunity for funding and support to foster the development of the research capacity of its teaching/training staff in participating research activities in their respective discipline.

- KR5: STC should, within 6 months from the date of publication of this report, provide lecturers with opportunities to participate in formal continuing professional training on delivery methods, assessment techniques, and other instructional strategies. This training is intended to improve their teaching and assessment skills.
- R4: STC could design a structured and consistent system of teacher observation to ensure the upkeep of teaching performance and improvement of educational quality.

## Conclusion

STC needs improvement to meet the requirements of Standard 6.

## Standard 7: Learning Resources and Student Support

*Learning resources and student support: entities shall have appropriate funding for their learning and teaching activities and sufficient learning resources to fully support the students' learning experiences.*

### Main Findings

STC is located in an old army barracks with its facilities spread across two floors, with the first floor shared with a separate institute. Facilities include classes equipped with projectors and whiteboards, a computer lab, a multi-faith prayer room, and a social room which was added following the previous audit visit, per the students' wishes. Administration offices are located on both floors, with some of the offices shared. The ground floor has accessibility features built in for wheelchair users, however, there is no lift to the first floor (although STC applied to install it but was not granted permission by the authorities due to the building's scheduled status). Overall, students expressed satisfaction with the available facilities. However, they noted concerns about the limited sanitary facilities, particularly given the number of students in instances when the premises are shared with another school. Both the students and tutors were also satisfied with the resources that are made available to them, including the physical library (that is used mostly by MQF Levels 4 and 5 students), and the online library facility provided by the UoW (used mainly by MQF Levels 6 and 7 students). Resources to tutors and the library are allocated by the administration manager on an ad-hoc basis, depending on the needs of the various academics. Furthermore, the facilities manager is responsible for upkeep of the premises and purchasing of new equipment. ICT facilities are managed by a third-party company which is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of equipment. The same company is also responsible for the upkeep of data stored on an onsite server (backed up every 24 hours) and in the cloud in both the European Economic Area (EEA) and outside (UK territory). There is also data stored on a OneDrive environment dating back to 2010.

In terms of support, students indicated that they can contact tutors via Microsoft Teams if they require further help with academic matters, and there are regularly scheduled and ad-hoc meetings between supervisors and students who are writing a dissertation. In cases of personal difficulties, the lecturer would refer them to the administration for further discussion. Overall, students feel they receive sufficient support throughout the dissertation process. They appreciate the guidance and resources provided, which help them navigate the challenges of their research and complete their projects successfully. Moreover, a qualified welfare officer is available onsite to offer further support for both students and staff. Students with diverse needs are also supported during lectures and examinations, with necessary arrangements being made. Furthermore, a module on Maltese culture is offered to foreign students to help them with integrating into the local context and to also understand their new surroundings better.

Moreover, it was noted that all administrative and academic staff were appropriately qualified, however, while CPD is rarely formally offered, tutors could attend courses on topics such as wellbeing.

### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

Since the first audit, a welfare officer has been engaged onsite to be available for students facing difficulties. The latter was a recommendation of the first audit panel taken on board. Furthermore, a student common area was added.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The multi-faith prayer room and the welfare officer onsite, available for both students and staff, are commendable.
- The administrative officer is quite passionate about the students' welfare.
- A module on Maltese culture studies is provided to foreign students to help them integrate into the local setting.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

R5: The panel suggests exploring potential solutions to address the shortage of sanitary facilities when there are other students using the same premises.

## **Conclusion**

STC surpasses the requirement of Standard 7.

## Standard 8: Information Management

*Information management: entities shall ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.*

### Main Findings

STC makes student data accessible to the administration team via an online cloud system. Sales have a separate system which records the progress from prospective to registered student, which means that the sales team would not have access to the actual student data. Stored data includes the admission records, details of the student population, assessment scores, and student participation and absences. Any special requirements, including diverse needs, are also listed in the record so that such information can be disseminated to the lecturing team, who confirm to the panel that attendance lists include such details. Compulsory attendance is monitored closely by the administration to ensure that students are meeting their obligations (including visa obligations).

Feedback is collected from students after each module using a Microsoft Forms system. Students would rate on Likert scales elements related to the delivery of the lectures, and the content, while also elaborating further in open text fields. This feedback is then made accessible to the academic leaders, who can inform the lecturers about any improvement points. Some students indicated to the panel that there had been instances when some of their feedback was taken on board. Each cohort has a student representative for their course, and there is also a student council; but the panel deduced that there are no formal meetings with administration with these groups to solicit feedback. However, formal meetings to solicit feedback on course content are organised once per semester between STC student representatives and the UoW.

Success rates are made public on the website, and while no formal tracer studies were conducted, some alumni indicated that the institution kept in touch with them to check how they were doing and their career paths. The panel encourages STC to develop a mechanism to collect alumni feedback through a tracer study and publish the results, enhancing its visibility and reputation in the educational landscape.

The panel also encourages the institution to collect feedback from external stakeholders in a formalised and consistent manner, and such information be fed back into the strategic management mechanism of the institution. This approach allows STC to make informed decisions, improve its provision of courses, and better align with industry standards and stakeholder expectations.

## Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit

- Since the first audit, STC has enhanced its data backend infrastructure and archiving. Data is now available on the cloud, and a data retention policy (data protection and privacy statement) has been created and made available to students.

## Good Practice Identified

Nil.

## Recommendations for Improvement

- KR6: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, have a system in place to collect formal feedback from external stakeholders and alumni, which information is fed back into the management mechanism of the institution.
- R6: STC could organise formal meetings with the student council and representatives for feedback.
- R7: STC could encourage more cooperation between the student council and student representatives.
- R8: STC could consider conducting formal tracer studies.

## Conclusion

STC meets the requirements of Standard 8.

## Standard 9: Public Information

*Public information: entities shall publish information about their activities which is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and readily accessible.*

### Main Findings

STC makes the most of its public information available via its website, with additional presence on social media. The website includes information on the institution, its leadership, success stories of past students, and information about the courses offered. Course information is split by year, and subsequently by module, with information presented clearly in separate panels. The panel was able to note that the following information was correctly made available on the website: the selection criteria for the programmes, intended learning outcomes, the awarded qualifications and their MQF level and credit value, the teaching and assessment procedures used, and any further learning opportunities and possible career pathways following completion of the programme. The student success rate was also found on the website. Current and past students indicated that the website was their primary source in acquiring further information, and it helped make an informed decision before applying to their chosen study programme. STC provides further information through a phone call once a prospective student contacts them. Students indicated that they do not engage with the institution's social media profiles.

Information published on the website is checked for accuracy and consistency by the administration officer, with the academic leaders being involved in updating the course information as well. However, the rest of the academic staff and student body are not consulted.

### Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit

- Since the previous audit, STC has made all relevant information available on its website. Furthermore, policies are no longer difficult to find as they are available to students via a Microsoft Teams environment. Overall, STC acted upon the recommendations presented in the first audit report.

### Good Practice Identified

Nil.

## Recommendations for Improvement

R9: The panel recommends that STC could involve students in evaluating the website content and user experience.

## Conclusion

STC meets the requirements of Standard 9.

## Standard 10: Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

*Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes: entities shall implement the 'Quality Cycle' by monitoring and periodically reviewing their programmes to ensure their continuing fitness for purpose.*

### **Main Findings**

The panel was informed that STC is not involved in quality assurance monitoring of the programmes of study awarded by NCC Education and UoW, and STC must adhere to the prescriptive curriculum set by the foreign awarding bodies which have defined content, learning outcomes, assessment and certification. However, the panel saw evidence and got confirmation during the interviews that NCC Education does give STC management, tutors and students the opportunity to give feedback and this is discussed and sometimes taken on after approval by NCC Education quality assurance who ensure alignment with Ofqual requirements. The academic development manager (at NCC Education) carries out an annual audit visit to monitor the quality of teaching and processes at STC. The panel was provided with reports of the annual monitoring exercises carried out by NCC Education and which are used by the awarding body to review and improve their programmes.

On the other hand, STC delivers the tuition of the programmes of study offered by the UoW, while setting of papers, assessments, moderation, marking and certification are all undertaken by the foreign awarding university. Course committee meetings are held after every module of programmes awarded by the UoW. These are attended by a UoW representative, STC administration, academic leaders and student representatives. The minutes from these meetings and the data of the student feedback are shared with the link tutors from UoW who carry out a monitoring visit at STC biannually. These are included in the yearly Continuous Monitoring and Improvement (CMI) reports. At the end of the academic year, another CMI report is finalised and sent to the link tutors in the UK, including teacher observations carried out during the academic year. The panel observed that STC maintains a strong rapport with NCC Education and UoW, actively providing them with feedback and suggestions. In return, these suggestions are considered when feasible and possible.

The panel learnt how ongoing improvements at STC are undertaken through informal and formal student feedback, and informal tutor and other stakeholder feedback. Formal feedback is collected from students through an evaluation form which is distributed before the end of every module.

The panel observed that STC diligently adheres to all quality policies established by the awarding bodies. Furthermore, the panel learnt about STC's initiative to establish a Policy Committee. The Committee's terms of reference, which were presented to the panel, entail the inclusion of three members: one representative from administration and two from the academic departments. The Committee is planned to convene annually to review quality assurance policies and procedures. The terms of reference stipulate that each policy must undergo a review at least once every three years. The panel recommends that the monitoring and periodic reviewing of QA policies and procedures must include the involvement of all internal and external stakeholders to ensure that they reflect changes in the educational landscape, emerging best practices, and stakeholder feedback. All minutes and reports in relation to IQA and EQA exercises are to be filed and made readily available for audit purposes.

#### **Analysis of Progress Since the Previous Audit**

Nil.

#### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

#### **Recommendations for Improvement**

KR7: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, include and involve all stakeholders in the Policy Committee which monitors and periodically reviews the institution's QA processes and procedures. Minutes of meetings should be taken and filed.

#### **Conclusion**

STC meets the requirements of Standard 10.

## Standard 11: Cyclical External Quality Assurance

*Cyclical external quality assurance: entities should undergo an external quality assurance audit by, or with the approval of, the MFHEA on a cyclical basis, according to the MFHEA guidelines, once every five years.*

### Main Findings

STC fulfils this Standard by hosting the external audit referred to in this report. This is the second QA audit cycle of this institution. Moreover, STC undergoes annual monitoring exercises by both NCC Education and UoW to ensure compliance of the teaching centre with NCC Education and UoW regulations and quality standards. STC has, to date, been given positive reports and found to be good in maintaining standards.

The management was very receptive and cooperative throughout the process of the audit and facilitated the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the panel. The panel also appreciated the openness and honesty of the interviewees during the meetings. This was instrumental for the panel in producing a well-grounded report that will eventually further enhance the operations of the institution. The panel has found STC to be responsive and self-reflective during the quality assurance audit process. This augurs well for the institution to embrace the recommendations put forward by the panel, in support of further enhancing the delivery of good quality student-centred training and compliance to the National Quality Assurance Framework.

### Analysis of Progress since the Previous Audit

- Following the establishment of a partnership with the UoW, STC has integrated an additional level of external quality assurance.

### Recommendations for Improvement

Nil.

### Conclusion

STC surpasses the requirements of Standard 11.

## Response by the Provider

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### Preamble

The Senior Management and the team at STC would like to thank MFHEA and the Review Panel for their time and constructive feedback.

## Response to Key Recommendations and Recommendations Made by the Peer Review Panel

Action plan		
Recommendations	Actions to be taken to address the recommendations	Date for completion
Standard 1:		
KR1: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, appoint a person (a QA officer) from within the institution to oversee quality assurance within the institution and liaise with NCC Education and UoW on matters related to policies, procedures and standards of good practice.	A QA Officer was appointed from within the institution to oversee quality assurance.	January 2025
Standard 2:		
N/A		
Standard 3:		
R1: STC could consider inviting willing external stakeholders from industry to participate in course committee meetings.	Action taken as per Homegrown Award policy.	February 2025
Standard 4:		
KR2: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, convert the informality of the interaction between teachers, administration and students into a formal structure.	According to STC's policy, formal way of communication between students, administration and teachers must be in the form of an email using STC credentials or via Microsoft Teams message. According to teachers' contract, a response is given within three working days.	February 2025

R2: STC could highlight and distribute student research projects, possibly through a library of previous student work.	This will be discussed with partner University of Wolverhampton.	October 2025
Standard 5:		
R3: STC could accelerate the creation of an alumni association, in order to keep track of all its graduates and to be able to involve them in its future development.	Action taken.	April 2025
Standard 6:		
KR3: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, provide more opportunities for lecturers to meet amongst themselves to discuss issues related to their programmes.	Action taken. Lecturers have an opportunity to meet prior to the start of an academic year, prior to AMR, and Course Committee meeting.	September 2024
KR4: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, provide the opportunity for funding and support to foster the development of the research capacity of its teaching/training staff in participating research activities in their respective discipline.	Not currently in capacity of STC.	
KR5: STC should, within 6 months from the date of publication of this	Action taken.	

report, provide lecturers with opportunities to participate in formal continuing professional training on delivery methods, assessment techniques, and other instructional strategies. This training is intended to improve their teaching and assessment skills.		
R4: STC could design a structured and consistent system of teacher observation to ensure the upkeep of teaching performance and improvement of educational quality.	Action taken – Computing school in September 2023 and Business school September 2024.	September 2023
Standard 7:		
R5: The panel suggests exploring potential solutions to address the shortage of sanitary facilities when there are other students using the same premises.		
Standard 8:		
KR6: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, have a system in place to collect formal feedback from external stakeholders and alumni, which information is fed back into the management mechanism of the institution.	Action taken.	July 2025

R6: STC could organise formal meetings with the student council and representatives for feedback.	Action taken.	April 2025
R7: STC could encourage more cooperation between the student council and student representatives.	Action taken.	December 2024
R8: STC could consider conducting formal tracer studies.	Action taken.	September 2025
Standard 9:		
R9: The panel recommends that STC could involve students in evaluating the website content and user experience.	Action taken.	August 2025
Standard 10:		
KR7: STC should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, include and involve all stakeholders in the Policy Committee which monitors and periodically reviews the institution's QA processes and procedures. Minutes of meetings should be taken and filed.	Action taken	August 2025
Standard 11:		
N/A		

## Response to Mandatory Recommendations Made by the Peer Review Panel

Action plan		
Mandatory recommendations	Actions to be taken to address the recommendation	Date for completion
Standard 1:		
MR1: STC shall, within 3 months from the date of publication of this report, provide a strategic action plan of what it (STC) intends to achieve in the next 5 years and document any alternative and/or mitigation strategies while also defining how it will monitor achievements.	Head of Institution shall share the strategic action plan of what STC intend to achieve in the next 5 years.	April 2025
Standard 2:		
MR2: STC Training Limited shall submit the following documentation within the period indicated for each recommendation: 1. To provide the authority with a signed copy of the annual return which was due to the Malta Business Registry, within 1 month from the date of publication of this report. 2. To provide us with a copy of the signed audited financial statements for 2022, within 1 month from the date of publication of this report.	Action completed.	January 2025

Standard 3:		
MR3: STC shall, within 6 months from the date of publication of this report, enhance the document titled "Procedure for Creating New Awards" by incorporating additional details outlined in the National Quality Assurance Framework standards. This revision should involve both internal stakeholders, such as students, and external stakeholders, including industry experts and employers.	A Homegrown Award policy was created, and will be shared with MFHEA and uploaded on STC website.	February 2025

## Annexes

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### Annex 1: Review Panel Bio Notes

In the setting up of the review panel for STC Training, the MFHEA sought to maintain a high degree of diligence in the process of selection of the members of the peer review panel. The panel sought to be composed of specialists in quality assurance to act as external peers, professionals and practitioners of quality assurance frameworks, as well as students who, prior to the audits, attended professional training seminars organised by the MFHEA.

The following bio notes present the profiles of the members of the peer review panel. The bio notes are correct as at the time the QA audit was carried out, i.e., between 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

#### **Chair of Review Panel: Ms Veronica Montebello**

Ms Montebello is a visiting senior lecturer at the University of Malta where she imparts her expertise in both online and face-to-face teaching. Additionally, she serves as a Clinical Supervisor within the Faculty of Dental Surgery and the Faculty of Health Science. In her academic pursuits, Ms Montebello has earned degrees in Dental Hygiene and Health Sciences, complemented by a Masters in Blended and Online Education from the University of Edinburgh. She has achieved the status of Senior Fellow with the Higher Education Academy in the UK. Her commitment to advancing healthcare education is evident through her active involvement in the development, delivery, and evaluation of various online modules at the University of Malta and MCAST. Ms Montebello collaborates with foreign universities to enhance educational programmes, showcasing her dedication to global education standards. With a background as a registered dental hygienist, Ms Montebello has made significant contributions to both the public and private sectors. Her leadership experience includes a tenure as the Director designate at the Department of Programme Implementation, MFH, also a senior executive role at the Directorate of Allied Health Care Services. Presently, she holds the position of Lead Profession Manager at the Department of Dental Surgery, MDH and works closely with the People Management Division, MHA. Ms Montebello was the project leader for an ambitious ESF project and is involved with the Malta team on the EU HEROES Joint Action. She also forms part of the WHO Malta delegation on Health Workforce planning and forecasting. Notably, Ms Montebello has spearheaded key projects such as the Competence Assessment Framework (2013), widely utilised by Allied Health Professionals within the public service. Additionally, her contributions to the National Health Workforce Strategy underscore her dedication to shaping and optimising healthcare systems.

Ms Montebello is a respected figure in European and international academic circles, actively participating in numerous professional federations, committees and associations. She holds a position on the Council for the Professions Complementary to Medicine. Since 2016, Ms Montebello has been an expert panel reviewer and chairperson of several External Quality Assurance audits and programme evaluations for MFHEA.

**Peer Reviewer: Dr Olgun Cicek**

Dr Cicek is a life-time learner and an expert on higher education studies, mainly in internationalisation, policy and development, accreditation and quality assurance areas. He is an international expert on review and evaluation processes, also on online evaluation and virtual site visits for institutional as well as programme levels. He is project expert on ISO 9000 Standard, European Union and World Bank projects on Higher Education. Always eager to explore new challenges and contribute to Higher Education Institutions, Dr Cicek has 28 years of teaching, research, accreditation and quality assurance experiences and networking in global Higher Education in Europe, the Mediterranean, Middle East, Far East and in the USA.

**Student Peer Reviewer: Mr Wilbert Tabone**

Mr Tabone is a researcher in the areas of artificial intelligence, human-computer interaction and the application of technology in the arts and cultural heritage. He graduated BSc (Hons) with first class honours in Creative Computing from the University of London and later read for an MSc in Artificial Intelligence at the University of Malta, conducting his research at the Bernoulli Institute for Mathematics, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, University of Groningen in the Netherlands. Mr Tabone is actively involved in the cultural, technology and education sectors and is also an activist for a number of Maltese and international NGOs, including the Commonwealth Youth Council. He is currently a Marie Skłodowska-Curie PhD fellow in the Netherlands whilst also contributing to creative computing development in the Maltese heritage sector and serving as a quality assurance auditor for the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). Mr Tabone formed part of Malta.AI, the Malta National Task Force on Artificial Intelligence, tasked with formulating Malta's national strategy on AI.

## Annex 2: Agenda of the Onsite Visit

### STC Training

Dates: 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

Venue: Block D, Triq Giorgio Mitrovich, Pembroke, PBK 1014, Malta and Block A, Alamein Road, Pembroke, Malta

#### Day 1 – Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> February

08.30 – 09.00	Arrival and preparation
09.00 – 10.00	Meeting with Head of Institution
10.00 – 10.15	Panel discussion
10.15 – 11.00	Meeting with Administration Manager
11.00 - 11.15	Panel discussion
11.15 – 12.00	Meeting with Administration and Academic Executive (Wolverhampton Programmes) and Administration Officer
12.00 – 13.00	Working lunch
13.00 – 14.00	Meeting with students following programmes awarded by NCC Education at MQF Level 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCC International Foundation Year Diploma Business (MQF L4)</li><li>• NCC International Foundation Year Diploma Computing (MQF L4)</li></ul>
14.00 – 14.15	Panel discussion
14.15 – 15.15	Meeting with students following programmes awarded by NCC Education at MQF Level 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCC Diploma in Computing (MQF L5)</li><li>• NCC Diploma in Business (MQF L5)</li></ul>
15.15 – 15.45	Meeting with alumni who followed NCC Education programmes (from all programmes at MQF Levels 4 – 7)
15.45 – 16.15	Meeting with alumni who followed University of Wolverhampton programmes (from all programmes at MQF Levels 4 – 7)
16.15– 16.30	Conclusions of Day 1

## Day 2 – Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February

08.30 – 09.00	Arrival and preparation
09.00 – 10.00	Meeting with lecturers for programmes awarded by NCC Education at MQF Levels 4 and 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NCC International Foundation Year Diploma Business (MQF L4)</li><li>• NCC International Foundation Year Diploma Computing (MQF L4)</li><li>• NCC Diploma in Business (MQF L5)</li><li>• NCC Diploma in Computing (MQF L5)</li></ul>
10.00 – 10.15	Panel discussion
10.15 – 11.00	Meeting with academic leaders
11.00 – 11.15	Panel discussion
11.15 – 11.45	Meeting with stakeholders from industry and employment who benefit from the programmes offered by STC
11.45 – 12.00	Panel discussion
12.00 – 12.30	Online meeting with representatives from NCC Education
12.30 – 13.30	Working lunch
13.30 – 14.15	Meeting with students following programmes awarded by the University of Wolverhampton at MQF Level 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University of Wolverhampton BA(Hons) Degree in Business (MQF L5)</li><li>• University of Wolverhampton BSc(Hons) Degree in Computer Science (MQF L5)</li><li>• University of Wolverhampton BSc(Hons) Degree in Cybersecurity (MQF L5)</li></ul>
14.15 – 14.30	Panel discussion
14.30 – 15.15	Meeting with students following programmes awarded by the University of Wolverhampton at MQF Level 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University of Wolverhampton BA(Hons) Degree in Business (MQF L6)</li><li>• University of Wolverhampton BSc(Hons) Degree in Computer Science (MQF L6)</li><li>• University of Wolverhampton BSc(Hons) Degree in Computer Science (Games Development) (MQF L6)</li><li>• University of Wolverhampton BSc(Hons) Degree in Cybersecurity (MQF L6)</li></ul>

15.15 – 15.35	Interview with student representatives across all the programmes
15.35 – 15.45	Panel discussion
15.45 – 16.15	Meeting with Sales and Administration
16.15 – 16.30	Conclusions of Day 2

### Day 3 – Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February

08.30 – 09.00	Arrival and preparation
09.00 – 10.00	Meeting with students following programmes awarded by the University of Wolverhampton at MQF Level 7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Wolverhampton International MBA (MQF L7)</li> <li>• University of Wolverhampton MSc in Cybersecurity (MQF L7)</li> </ul>
10.00 – 10.15	Panel discussion
10.15 – 11.15	Meeting with lecturers for programmes awarded by the University of Wolverhampton at MQF Levels 5, 6 and 7
11.15 – 11.30	Panel discussion
11.30 – 12.00	Meeting with representatives from University of Wolverhampton
12.00 – 12.15	Panel discussion
12.15 – 12.30	Meeting with Welfare Officer
12.30– 13.30	Working lunch
13.30 – 14.00	Tour of premises (including library)
14.00 – 15.30	Panel discussion on Initial Findings
15.30 – 16.00	Presentation of Initial Findings to STC



**Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)**

Quality Assurance Office

J Abela Sclaro Street, Hamrun. HMR 1304, Malta.

**Email:** [qa@mfhea.mt](mailto:qa@mfhea.mt)

**Tel:** +356 2598 1489

**[www.mfhea.mt](http://www.mfhea.mt)**