

## IFS MALTA QA AUDIT

### SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### TAKE-UP AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### 1.2.1 – Policy for Quality Assurance

**Does not meet standard.**

#### **Recommendations**

1. KR: IFSM needs to compile a policy for quality assurance that forms part of their strategic management, is approved by management and is made available to the public. The development process of this QA policy needs to involve internal and external stakeholder feedback. The policy should include references to all the key processes identified in NCFHE IQA standard .

Following NCFHE's first audit and after receiving your findings report, the Institute of Financial Services [IFS] embarked on a process to ensure all the quality standards governing education and training institutions are addressed. The formulation of a Quality Assurance [QA] policy lies at the core of this transformation process. The Education Committee has been upgraded to formulate and hence completed our QA policy.

2. KR: IFS needs to define and establish in its QA policies an autonomous governance structure that is documented and includes under its remit the oversight of matters of an academic nature, ratification of results, handling of academic complaints, appeals and student/staff misconduct for all courses in a way that ensures impartiality.

IFS Malta adopted all your audit recommendations as the minimum standard for all our processes.  
Our Q&A policy was published on the 7th October 2019 and addressed to your office.  
This document is publicly available in its entirety on our website.  
[www.ifsmalta.org](http://www.ifsmalta.org)

This policy confirms an autonomous governance structure which oversees matters of academic nature and ratification of results. QA policy document page 8, explains visually the organisation structure. This policy establishes an autonomous good governance structure layered within all the Institute's academic qualifications, assessment and results management processes.

The complaints policy pdf, that is, section 14 of the QA policy explains thoroughly the complaints handling process from inception to appeal stage.



complaints policy.pdf

Appeals policy is listed under section 1.2.4 – Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.

<p>3. Management needs to upload on the IFSM website the IQA policies and procedures. Furthermore, the Institute needs to explain on its website the policies and procedures that are applicable only to the locally accredited courses and provide or indicate access to the policies and procedures of the foreign awarding bodies.</p> <p>4. IFSM should consider compiling, with the involvement of the stakeholders, a strategic document covering a 3 to 5 year period.</p> <p>5. IFSM is to incorporate in its policies the need to involve and obtain formal feedback from internal and external stakeholders in the discussion and development of the institute's strategy that consolidates their achievement and sets out the strategic direction, quality objectives and</p>	<p>Malpractice policy section 20 pages 63-71 relates to misconduct.</p> <p> student malpractice policy.pdf</p> <p>The QA policy is publicly available at:  <a href="https://ifsmalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/QA-policies-of-IFS-Malta_20191007.pdf">https://ifsmalta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/QA-policies-of-IFS-Malta_20191007.pdf</a></p> <p>Each policy facet within the QA policy commences with a note in bold print indicating applicability, that is, either to locally accredited courses or those awarded by our foreign principals</p> <p>Our 60 year history proves that the Institute embraces such management tools and that the Institute's qualitative management in compiling such exercises are prepared with the involvement of all stakeholders.  The coming 3/5 year term plan is in progress.</p> <p>In compiling these policies, the IFS has sought to formalise the existing best practices of the same Institute and also referred to the national quality assurance framework for further and higher education which is the national guide compiled by the NCFHE which is responsible for the national quality assurance in fulfilment of Malta's interational obligations in this field.</p>
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policy formulation for enhancing the student experience offered by IFSM.

6. Compile a procedural document explaining the selection criteria and recruitment procedure of academic staff for both locally and foreign accredited courses.

7. IFSM senior management should review the role of the head of Business in the context of the projected growth.

These policies apply to programmes which are the property and lead to qualifications awarded by ifs malta. Programmes offered by other awarding bodies through ifs malta are subject to the policies of that particular awarding body.

Other policies outline standards for programme approval, monitoring, review and modifications. The Administrators [main committee members], staff members, lecturers and students take on their responsibilities in quality assurance with academic integrity and freedom. IFS is vigilant against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against persons or entities who provide fair feedback or constructive criticism.

Recruitment at ifs Malta is a proactive initiative. The Institute seeks professionals who are highly experienced in their field. This makes it possible for the student to not only gain the academic knowledge required from the qualification, but also gain exposure to on-the-ground expertise only a seasoned professional can possess.

QA section 7 recruitment policy pages 20-23.



tutor recruitment and appraisal.pdf

This role was reviewed and constantly being followed up for sustainability. We are in the process of forwarding a proposal to MFHEA regarding the evolution of this role.

<b>1.2.2 – Institutional Probity</b>	
<p><b>Meets standard.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. IFS should develop a clear organigram structure in order to facilitate the identificatin of roles needed within its operations struftures.</li> </ol>	<p>Included in Q&amp;A policy document section 2 page 8. The organisational hierarchy addresses the defined management responsibilities. Apart from providing a clear distinction between management and administration, roles, have been redefined and formalised in clear jobs descriptions.</p>
<b>1.2.3 – Design and Approval of Programmes</b>	
<p><b>Meets standard.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. compile the policy and procedure describing the process of design, development and approval for locally accredited courses.</li> </ol>	<p>The education committee as delegated by the main committee of the Institute, is responsible for the approval and maintenance of new and existing programmes. This committee is given the</p>

2. Involve both students at the course proposal and course approval stages.

necessary technical and administrative assistance by the said main committee.

A two-stage approval process for new courses is employed. This attempts to ensure that approved programmes are in line with IFS vision, strategy and resource possibilities.

The first stage which addresses the objectives of the programme and the rationale is aimed at ensuring that the intended learning outcomes are clear and achievable, and that resources are available to allow delivery of the programme to an acceptable standard. The involvement of stake holders is encouraged at this stage with a view to promote programmes which are responsive to emerging market demands.

Once a proposal is given the first stage or 'in-principle' approval by the main committee of the Institute, the focus then shifts on the details of the teaching and learning methods as well as the assessment techniques to be adopted in delivering the programme as required in the second stage of approval.

This stage focuses on the design and detailing of the programme.

Design of new programmes is a very important process at IFS Malta. During the process, the institute is required to follow rules for design and approval of its programmes as stipulated in the national framework.

Full design is described in Q&A policy document section 3 pages 9-12.



design and approval  
of programmes.pdf

## 1.2.4 – Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Improvement to meet standard.

#### Recommendations:

1. KR: a formal reference or statement of commitment for the use of student feedback instruments to ensure essential quality aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and support is to be included in the IFSM QA policy and procedures and ensure that records are archived and retrievable.

2. Practices need to be introduced for locally accredited courses to ensure fairness and consistency of examinations in the form of internal verification of assignment brief and assessment decisions or second examiners/moderators.

The formal student commitment is expressly stated and endorsed in Q&A policy document section 4 on page 13. The administrative staff offers unconditional assistance to all students during the programme duration and beyond.



student centred  
learning teaching and

QA policy section 15 pages 50-51 relate to the consistency and fairness in examinations and assessments.



consistency and  
fairness in exams.....

QA policy section 16 pages 52-55 describe our invigilation guidelines comprehensively.

3. Given the fact that the assessment method of choice adopted by the awarding bodies is mainly time constrained assessments, the panel recommends that IFSM set-out an internal procedure that describes the invigilation procedure and student conduct of locally accredited courses.

4. Compile and upload, student misconduct, complaints, appeals, plagiarism policy and procedure for locally accredited courses that include, where possible, links to the relevant policy and procedures of ifs partner institutions.



exam invigilation  
guidelines.pdf

Student misconduct policy is catered for in QA section 20 pages 63-71



student malpractice  
policy.pdf

Appeals QA policy section 13 pages 43-49.

This policy describes in detail the path a student is to follow should an appeal be lodged.



appeals.pdf

Where, through a complaint, policy section 14 pages 43-49 we learn of a failure in our processes, the actions taken to resolve this also include those that apply to other learners and/or to improvements at our processes.

	 <p>complaints policy.pdf</p> <p>Plagiarism policy section 12 pages 35-37</p>  <p>plagiarism.pdf</p>
<b>1.2.5 – Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and certification</b>	
<p><b>Meets standard.</b></p> <p><b>Recommended:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document policy for ensuring that late applications are not to be accepted as this would impact the contact hours for such students as well as possibly the overall learning experience of the entire cohort.</li> <li>2. Policy and guidelines for the definition and assessment of prior learning need to be documented to ensure consistency and fairness in the application of recognition of prior learning.</li> </ol>	<p>Section 19 sets out the consequences due to late applications.</p>  <p>late applications.pdf</p> <p>Q&amp;A policy document section 5 pages 15-16 explains how our Institute recognises prior learning and how it is applied.</p>  <p>rpl policy.pdf</p>

## 1.2.6 – Teaching Staff

**Requires improvements to meet standard.**

**Recommendations:**

1. To include tutor appraisal process as part of the QA policy as part of the PDCA improvement cycle and include the tutor appraisal proces .
2. To provide tutors with opprortunities in CPD to up-skill their pedagogical competencies.

The tutor recruitment and appraisal policy includes tutor appraisal on a regular basis as part of the continued improvement cycle and sets out tutor's CPD.

IFS has implemented a structured and systematic approach in order to regularly evaluate and adjust modes of delivery, methods throughtout the acadmic year, depolying:

- Tutor deploying and appraisal policy
- Tutor selection criteria
- Tutor selection process
- Tutor appriasal
- Train the trainer

Vide QA policy section 7 pages 20-23.



tutor recruitment and appraisal.pdf

**1.2.7 – Learning Resources and Student Support.**

**Meets standard.**

**Recommendation:**

1. To ensure that all students are appropriately informed of the available learning resources.

Included in QA Learning resources and student support policy document section 6 pages 17-19.  
This section offers best advice support available to students thus enabling their progress in their academic progress.



learning resources  
and student support.r

**1.2.8 – Information Management**

**Requires improvement to meet standard.**

**Recommendations:**

1. KR: to ensure appropriate document traceability, the Institute needs to identify and adopt a practical policy for revision control of official academic and administrative documents under the scope of the quality management system.

QA policy Section 9 obliges our Institute to publish information about all programmes and all activities in a manner that is objective, clear, up-to-date and easily accessible.

<p>2. KR: the Institute should have in place a data protection policy which defines who has access and the nature of data that can be accessed. The policy should also include guidelines on secure storage.</p> <p>3. IFSM needs to revise the way it collects and analyses the student satisfaction and graduate feedback in a way that ensures that the information obtained from the studies informs the decision-making process thus resulting in the enhancement of the student experience</p> <p>4. Finalise the set-up and implementation of an integrated system which incorporates admissions, student records including special needs and exit information is necessary for ensuring data integrity</p> <p>5. The IFSM quality management system documentation needs to be adequately referenced and revised to ensure reliable information management such that both students and staff always have in hand access to current and approved versions of documents.</p>	<p>QA GDPR policy Section 8 treats the sensitive GDPR privacy and information management issues explaining all rights and duties.</p> <p>IFS has implemented a structured and systematic approach in order to regularly evaluate and adjust the Institute's information management, depolying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GDPR Privacy policy and information management.</li> <li>• Data collection process</li> <li>• Website and social media management</li> <li>• Analytics management and interpretation</li> <li>• access levels management</li> <li>• Security levels</li> <li>• Rights and duties on data collection contacts and complaints procedure.</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>GDPR.pdf</p> </div> <p>An integrated data base is being operated that incorporates all student's information from initial enrolment to qualification attainment.</p> <p>This system is constantly being updated to ensure data relevance.</p>
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**1.2.9 – Public Information**

**Meets standard**

**Recommendations:**

1. IFSM does not publish statistics on pass rates obtained by their students in the various courses that they are pursuing. Therefore it is recommended for a system to be in place to obtain and publish student progress and pass rates within the various courses being pursued.

Section 9 obliges our Institution to publish information about all programmes and all activities in a manner that is objective, clear, up-to-date and easily accessible. The published statistics system is in progress. On completion this will be publishing all the relevant identified data.

**1.2.10 – On going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes.**

**Requires improvement to meet standard.**

**Recommendations:**

1. KR: IFSM needs to establish and implement a structure and schedule for operational, academic and curricular review to ensure that the output of such reviews conducted by IFSM and the foreign awarding bodies. IFSM also needs to make a provision for the involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the external review process – as required by the standard. It is also being recommended that documentation of the meeting

Included in QA policy document section 10 pages 31-33 to ensure that our Institution's teaching evolution in content, modes of education provision and cooperation, also through internationalisation and the use of digital learning and contemporary forms of communication.

proceedings, feedback and decisions are formally recorder.

2. Establish a structured process for monitoring and cyclical review of locally accredited courses that also describes the resoures necessary and involves internal and external stakeholders.



ongoing monitoring  
and review.....pdf

Monitoring and periodic reviewing of programmes are an important part of our QA system. The process follows the quality cycle so that courses deliverd are fist evaluated, then reviewed, further action is planned as necessary and finally decisions taken as an outcome of the plan are implemented in a timely manner.

In order to address the recommendatios in relation to this standard, new processes were designed to address;

- Updating of our home-grown courses.
- Upgrading website for alumni facilitating social and educational networking
- QA policy review process, in fact, the Student Witdhrwal policy is a recent addition post NCFHE's audit.

**1.2.11 – Cyclic Eternal Quality Assurance**

**Meets standard.**

**No recommendations.**