



National Commission for
**Further and
Higher Education**
Malta

COVERING NOTE TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT REPORT PREPARED BY THE
NCFHE FOLLOWING A REVIEW OF

STC Training Centre

September 2017

INTRODUCTION

The NCFHE Board has received from the Quality Assurance Committee and has endorsed the attached report drafted by the external review panel which has been set up to carry out a quality audit of STC Training Centre in line with the requirements of the *National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education*. The review took place between the 3rd and the 5th of October 2017 and the report reflects the findings as at that time.

All providers that undergo an NCFHE audit are measured against the 11 Standards laid down in the Maltese *National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education*; these Standards are based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), which inform the quality assurance systems of all countries signatory to the European Higher Education Area, and are enriched by EQAVET.

The Board is determined that the Commission should carry out its regulatory responsibilities for standards in further and higher education independently, even-handedly, objectively and in a transparent manner. The Board notes that this is the first NCFHE quality assurance audit of STC Training Centre and has taken due account of the learning process which this has inevitably entailed. The response to the audit by STC Training Centre I is included in the report.

ANALYSIS

The quality audit is a tool for both development and accountability; it has reviewed the internal quality assurance system of the STC Training Centre and assessed whether the system is:

- fit for purpose according to the STC Training Centre'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 2014-2024;

- implemented with effectiveness, comprehensiveness and sustainability.

The audit benchmarks the QA system and procedures within an institution against eleven Standards, namely:

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 external quality assurance, approved by NCFHE, at least once every five years.

The main lines of inquiry were focused on securing a better understanding and triangulating the information on the following:

- i. The relationship between NCC Education and STC.
- ii. The management of Quality Assurance at STC
- iii. STC's capacity and resources to ensure a student-centred approach to teaching and learning, especially given that it operates solely with part-time teaching staff.

FINDINGS

On the basis of the findings documented in the report, the panel has concluded that STC Training Centre meets standard 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. It surpasses requirements for standard 11, and requires

improvement for standards 1, and 4. The recommendations in the Report are meant to improve the standards already in place and to enhance good practice.

In view that the Group has a negative asset position (excess of liabilities over assets) since the current assets are not sufficient to cover Trade and other payables, the Board requires that the shareholders should submit to the NCFHE a declaration for the continued financial support of the Group.

FOLLOW-UP

The institution will be asked to draw up an action plan with timeframes of implementation to show how the recommendations made by the panel will be addressed. The Commission will be measuring the actions taken by STC Training Centre in a follow-up to this audit. The follow-up, which will take place in September 2019, will document STC Training Centre's take-up and implementation of *all* the recommendations put forward by the review panel in the report.