

# External Quality Assurance

## Audit Report

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION

PROGRAMMES AUDITED:

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (HONS)

MASTER OF EDUCATION

MASTER IN APPLIED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Carried out between

13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Quality education for  
confident futures .

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## Abbreviations List

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AfL	Assessment for Learning
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EQA/QA audit	External Quality Assurance Audit
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IfE	Institute for Education
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
MFHEA	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority
MQF	Malta Qualifications Framework
NCFHE	National Commission for Further and Higher Education
NQAF	National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
T&L	Teaching and Learning

# Executive Summary

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## Institutional Background

The Institute for Education (IfE) is a public agency within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation in Malta and as such it is fully funded by the Government of Malta.

It was originally set up in 2015 and reconstituted as an agency in 2017. It achieved financial autonomy in 2018, but the Ministry of Education, Sports, Youth and Research continues to approve employment decisions. This also influenced employment of full-time academic staff – the first four full-time lecturers were employed by the IfE in September 2021. Now there are eight full-time lecturers and the IfE has made a collective agreement with a progression structure for lecturing staff.

While the main focus of the IfE is on providing the programmes at various qualification levels, research activities seem to be gradually emerging, too.

## 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 within the evaluation areas set out in the Procedures for Programme Audits in Further and Higher Education Institutions. 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.

The panel had several meetings prior to the onsite visit, namely, an introductory meeting, a desk-based analysis and then the scoping meeting with leaders of the IfE. The onsite visit was conducted between 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025, in the building of the IfE. The panel had a chance to gradually meet the CEO of the institution, the head of quality assurance (QA), the senior manager for research and development, the senior manager of the school of research, and the manager of human resources, heads of programmes, managers in charge of development, implementation and review of the programmes, the senior manager in charge of work integrated learning, administration and facilities, the head of admissions, the senior manager of course-coordination, school professional development, student affairs and course coordinators, lecturers of the

programmes under evaluation, staff involved in the student affairs committee, disciplinary committee, and equality, diversity and inclusion committee, students of the programmes concerned, alumni and external stakeholders.

## 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 the Institute for Education meets requirements for all Sections. The panel identified 28 examples of good practice, 21 key recommendations (19 of which are to be implemented within 12 months from the date of publication of this report and two within 24 months from the date of publication of this report) and 10 recommendations.

The recommendations in this report are meant to improve the standards already in place and to enhance good practice. The panel's overall impression about the three programmes reviewed is therefore positive.

# 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 (The Framework, hereafter), 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, and
  - 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 assurance to the public that the standards of further and higher education programmes and the quality of the learning experience of students are high. 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 Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (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 with reference to 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 aspects 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 programme audit is carried out in line with the evaluation areas set out in the Procedures for Programme Audits in Further and Higher Education Institutions which group the 11 Standards of the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (NQAF) as follows:

Section A – Design and Development of Programme of Study (Standards 1, 2, 3 and 10)

Section B – Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment (Standard 4)

Section C – Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification (Standard 5)

Section D – Teaching Staff (Standards 2 and 6)

Section E – Learning Resources and Student Support (Standards 3 and 7)

Section F – Information Management (Standards 8 and 10)

Section G – Public Information (Standards 1, 2, 9 and 11)

The NQAF Standards are:

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 the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.
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:** Milan Pol, Masaryk University, Czech Republic

**Peer Reviewers:** Elena Marin, University of Bucharest, Romania  
Philippa Sanderson, National Institute of Teaching, United Kingdom

**Student Peer Reviewer:** Matthew Kitching, Lancaster University, United Kingdom

**QA Managers (MFHEA):** Bilyana Boshova  
Sibby Xuereb

## Specific Terms of Reference

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 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 which **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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The IfE provides a broad range of programmes, using the expertise of eight full-time staff members and a large number of part-time lecturers. The three programmes under evaluation relate to the level 6 Bachelor of Education (Hons) (B.Ed (Hons)) and level 7 Master of Education (M.Ed) and Master in Applied Educational Leadership (MAEL). The first two programmes are initial teacher training programmes with 15 and 21 specialisations, respectively. The third programme, Master in Applied Educational Leadership, is targeted toward leaders in educational settings who wish to upgrade their qualification, or who are interested in developing their professional knowledge. Graduates of this programme can pursue careers as leaders in educational settings, mainly school head teachers. In all three cases these programmes are submitted for re-accreditation.

## **Analysis and Findings of Panel**

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### Section A - Design and Development of Programme of Study

#### A1 Policy for Quality Assurance

##### **Main Findings**

The IfE has developed a quality management system which can be seen as functioning on both levels, the level of the institution and the level of the programmes.

Quality assurance activities are coordinated by the Quality Assurance Department at the IfE. This unit is responsible for all main activities related to quality assurance across the institution and its programmes, and also for their relevance with regard to external quality assurance requirements.

The internal quality assurance system has been developed since the institution started to function. It can be confirmed there is a variety of forms and methods related to this, and it relates to all three programmes under evaluation, too. These forms and methods involve regular reviews, policies and procedures, among them an internal verification system, lecture observation process, peer conversation on practice process, module review, the manual of procedures, the document control, and more. Based on this, policies and processes are updated and further developed. This practice reaches both the level of the whole institution, and the level of the programmes. Responsibilities with respect to quality assurance are clearly determined at the IfE.

Procedures for ensuring academic integrity as well as those against academic fraud are in place at the IfE. There can be seen a successful effort to ensure technological infrastructure is available and functioning.

Some activities of quality assurance are conducted with involvement of students (and alumni to some extent, too), and also of external stakeholders, as was proven during the interviews.

The overall quality assurance practice is being regularly reviewed, and a quality cycle can be seen as functioning, supported by internal quality assurance policy documents, at the IfE. Recent improvements relate to expanded lesson observation activities, assessment of the performance of lecturers, and a supervision process.

The system seems to be well functioning on both levels. Still, there can be seen a potential for further development, namely, at the level of study programmes, especially by ensuring students cope well with both core and subject-related courses within the programmes (see also KR's related to section B1 of this report).

As for institutional probity, the IfE is a public agency within the Ministry of Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, and it is fully funded by the Government of Malta. The IfE operates within a transparent financial framework that is detailed in the National Budget. The IfE keeps all financial transactions within designated accounting software. The IfE also undergoes annual financial audits and budget plans undergo regular quarterly reviews and adjustments.

The budgeting process can be seen in line with the mission, objectives and strategic as well as operational plans of the IfE. Based on the documentation provided and also interviews, there are procedures to ensure that the IfE's leaders are fit for purpose.

Management and governance structures were recently updated, and they are clear and logically built. It also involved students, both in the Course Participant Representatives Committee, and in some other bodies and processes of the IfE. There are many specific units/bodies in the organisational structure of IfE, although the number of full-time staff members is limited. Many of these units/bodies have a direct relation to the programmes.

### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

### **Main Findings**

The programmes under evaluation are in line with the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) and the Malta Referencing Report.

The programmes are designed and developed based on the needs assessments derived from the discussions with relevant stakeholders across society. Students are involved in this to some extent too, in some cases.

The students' workload is expressed in ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits and it is well calculated. Learning outcomes are the basis of the programmes with knowledge, skills and competences clearly defined. The programmes under evaluation also combine theoretical as well as practical experience of the students.

The whole process of design and development of the programmes is structured into two phases. In the first phase, a proposed programme undergoes review and endorsement by the Programmes Department and the Academic Board. In the second phase, the programme is developed and submitted for internal review which has several steps (plan, carry out a SWOT analysis, execute, report, implement - and possibly new plan). Besides the Programmes Department, the Learning Programme Development experts from outside can be involved before the programme and its individual modules are reviewed by Senior Management Programme Development and Review, and then finally it is decided about the programme launch. This is a well-elaborated process that leads to the design and development of sufficiently prepared and relevant programmes.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The process for new programme development is responsive to the needs of the sector and is conducive to bottom-up initiatives of the academic staff and stakeholders.
- There is a well thought out process of phasing the design and development of the programmes.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

KR1: The IfE has found that participants perform better in subject specific modules compared to the core modules. Therefore, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should undertake a scoping study to understand why this is the case and what levers are at their disposal to improve outcomes in core modules.

### **Main Findings**

It can be confirmed that the IfE has formalised policies and procedures in place that relate to programme development and review. It uses internal as well as external expertise for this, to keep in touch not only with the developments within the programmes but also outside the institution.

Programmes are regularly reviewed, as per the designated schedule. Evaluation of sectoral needs, programme objectives, outcomes, and teaching, learning and assessment are used in this context. Also, lecturers and course participants' feedback, student intake and suggestions provided by student affairs and course coordinators are taken into consideration as sources of relevant data. An action plan is then drafted, based on this data.

The Programme Review Panel is a body dealing with programme review at the IfE. It consists of lecturers, student representatives as well as external stakeholders and, to some extent, alumni. The Programmes Department subsequently oversees the whole procedure of re-design and adjustments of the programmes.

The IfE has provided clear and very concrete evidence about the programme review of all three programmes under the evaluation, and this evidence showed the whole monitoring and review process in practice. Since this is a lively process, the interviews confirmed most of it, but also indicated to some extent that there are, again, some issues to consider for the review and improvement of the programmes (see recommendation for part A2 of this report).

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The institution uses stakeholders' experiences in the process of design as well as review of the programmes.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **Conclusion**

The IfE meets the requirements for Section A.

## Section B – Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### B1 Teaching and Learning Strategies

#### **Main Findings**

The senior leadership team at the IfE are passionate in their belief that high quality teaching and learning enables all course participants to achieve their full potential. Assessment for learning (AfL) strategies are at the heart of their approach and yearly teaching observations by the Head of Quality Assurance focus on identifying good practice in this area. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook and the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures are clear efforts to provide an effective and consistent framework for the delivery of high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.

Lecturers articulated how they used Teaching and Learning (T&L) strategies to support online learning, including use of break out rooms for discussion and virtual polls/blackboards to support formative assessment. Some lecturers also commented on how they utilised the forum function on the portal to formatively assess participant engagement between lectures. Some lecturers were passionate about their desire to support participants to become highly reflective practitioners and carved out distinct opportunities for reflection within their modules.

However, concern was voiced by most participants spoken to (from across all programmes) that effective T&L strategies were not consistently being used in online lectures, and they found this ironic. They stated there was little use of break out rooms and no formative assessment had taken place in some modules. The same comments were not made regarding in-person delivery. However, all participants struggled to articulate how lecturers provided them with any formative feedback during a module. This is not to say they were not provided with formative feedback, but it identifies the need for clearer stamping or framing of the feedback and built in opportunities for participants to act upon any feedback. This finding possibly confirms the IfE's own observation from their Self-Assessment Report (SAR) that contract for service staff may not have the same support structures for their use of assessment for learning. However, it was difficult to pinpoint exactly which lecturers the students were referring to.

The participant evaluation survey completion rate is significantly below 50% and observations of teaching practice happen relatively infrequently. In addition, there was no evidence provided to suggest that triangulation between the participant survey feedback, teaching observation findings and participant progress takes place. Therefore, it appeared

that the IfE was not able to pinpoint exactly where the issues with the quality of T&L are; thus they are restricted in their effectiveness to address the issues. However, suggestions were made by the leadership team that they did know which lecturers needed more support and were using a 'nudge method' to get them to where was needed. No evidence was available to show whether or not this approach was working.

The IfE suggested that the course co-ordinators are the vehicle through which T&L concerns by participants should be raised, but it was not clear whether the course co-ordinators had not received feedback from participants, had not acted upon the feedback regarding teaching quality, or whether they had but it didn't result in any change. *NB: It is important to note the course co-ordinators were highly valued by the participants, particularly for their experience as school practitioners and this is a commendable recruitment strategy deployed by the IfE. There were some minor concerns voiced by participants that course co-ordinators weren't able to respond instantly to their requests. This could be addressed by clear expectation management during the recruitment and induction stages of the programme.*

Participants on the M.Ed and MAEL programmes commented that more needed to be done to attend to the building of professional relationships, either through introducing an initial in-person meeting at the beginning of a module or more structured online opportunities to get to know the lecturer and other participants. They saw the building of these relationships as fundamental to enhancing the impact of the teaching. Participants also commented that expectations in terms of engagement with the different modules varied significantly between different lecturers and they would appreciate standardisation in this area.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The level of school experience of contract staff and course co-ordinators is well recognised and appreciated by all participants we spoke to.
- Many of the contract lecturers know the B.Ed (Hons) participants from their substantive posts in schools. This helps them to build more effective professional relationships and relate theory more directly to participant practice.
- Some lecturers articulated how they saw their teaching as a two-way collaborative process between themselves and the participant.
- Key stakeholders state that B.Ed (Hons) participants are well prepared for the realities of teaching, and their quality is often noticeably higher than participants from other relevant institutions. Participants were described as, 'knowing what they are doing'.
- Alumni feel the programmes prepared them well for their future roles, particularly through the focus on reflection. They also stated the reputed quality of the lecturers was an important part of the appeal of the programme.

- Some lecturers identified the use of scenarios as an effective teaching method to help bridge the gap between theory and practice. Some participants also commented on the 'closeness' of the scenarios to their real-life experiences and found this approach beneficial. Lecturers implicitly commented on the use of andragogic principles, such as drawing out the participants' real-life experiences an important part of their teaching strategy. Some students also confirmed this to be the case and appreciated the importance of this opportunity.
- Lecturers reported that the quality of dissertation topics being put forward by participants was increasing over time, suggesting better preparation of participants in their understanding of highest leverage practice and knowledge of the existing evidence base.
- The Research Department reported providing weekly tutorials on research methods to provide additional support to participants outside of the Research Methods module.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

- KR2: Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should review quality assurance and feedback processes to ensure enough timely data is available for the IfE to make strategic interventions to improve any gaps in the quality of teaching and learning. This may result in the need for triangulation of data from participant feedback, teaching observations and student progress and the creation of personalised professional development pathways to support specific members of the teaching team.
- KR3: Whilst clear synthesis and collation of good T&L practice across the Institute's teaching staff occurs, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should work to ensure greater efficacy in how this information is used to drive improvements in the quality of teaching and participant progress.
- KR4: Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should provide support to lecturers to clearly stamp the formative feedback they are giving to participants and provide opportunities for participants to act and reflect upon feedback. *It may be of use to consider the [Deans for Impact Deliberate Practice model](#) as it is one of the very few that has an evidence base that supports its efficacy.*
- KR5: The Institute has identified that a significant proportion of participants struggle with meeting the standard required for academic writing. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should develop a clear action plan to address this through either programme design and/or teaching strategies. The IfE might want to consider whether asynchronous 'pre-work' prior to a programme starting would be of benefit in this regard and explore how the use of AI could be harnessed safely and ethically in this regard.

- KR6: The IfE identifies peer to peer observations as a key part of their approach to QA and developing professional practice. Therefore, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should focus attention on creating the conditions that significantly increase the number of peer to peer observations that take place.
- R1: The IfE could consider how it can support lecturers to further attend to the principles of andragogy and consider the opportunity for taught sessions as an opportunity to solve immediate and pressing 'problems.'

## B2 Student Assessment

### Main Findings

B.Ed (Hons) graduation rates (73%) are broadly in line with [European averages](#) (Berka & Marka, 2021). Comparative data at an EU aggregate level for Master's level study is not available but graduation rates appear positive at 81% for Master of Education and 80% for Masters in Applied Educational Leadership (for example, the UK average for a part-time Master's is [77.5%](#) [Office for Students Annual Review, 2022]).

The IfE's internal verification system has been designed to guarantee the validity, reliability and fairness of all assessments, promoting consistency and quality improvement. The relatively small number of 'revisions of paper' requested (16 since the IfE's inception) provides evidence of a robust system. Between 2018 and 2024, 140 modules within undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications as well as awards were verified.

The IfE demonstrated the critical role of external verification of dissertations in ensuring academic quality, rigour and integrity in the evaluation of course participants' work. The IfE's process involves external peer reviewers, who are experienced academics from other institutions tasked with reviewing a sample of dissertations independently to confirm that assessment standards align with national and international benchmarks. The sample external verification material shared demonstrates that objectivity, prevention of bias, and guarantees that the work meets the required academic criteria for the degree being awarded are secure.

More than 200 dissertation supervisors are actively involved across the programmes, meaning there are a substantial number of professionals to ensure consistency and quality from. The Research Department provides training for those who need support and encouragingly models the use of AfL strategies within these sessions.

The IfE uses a set of diverse summative assessment tools which measure, analyse and report performance of the course participants in relation to the programme's learning outcomes. These tools such as presentations, essays, forums, reports, evaluations and reflective journals provide information to both the lecturer and the course participants about the individual skills and knowledge acquired. Assessment briefs are written for every assessment by the module designer and reviewed internally to ensure consistency and parity.

Nota bene: Commendably, a huge degree of importance is placed on the role of formative assessment in participant progress by the IfE's senior leadership team. The findings regarding formative assessment have been considered in more detail in the 'Teaching and Learning' section of the report.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The IfE is highly aware of the importance of robust internal and external verification and has developed comprehensive systems and processes.
- Lecturers and participants were able to confidently articulate how participant self-management through self- and peer-assessment was promoted across the programmes, a key behaviour desired by the IfE.
- A range of assessment is utilised to both develop and assess participants' progress on programme.
- The Institute focuses on ensuring assessments align across modules. Lecturers confirm they receive and respond to internal feedback designed to build a more cohesive programme.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

- KR7: Key stakeholders reported that the dissertation places heavy demand on schools in terms of data collection. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should determine how dissertations can be adapted to reduce this burden, possibly considering the use of collective practitioner research or more focus of ethnographic methods.
- KR8: Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should also ensure schools have a voice in the areas that research is conducted in so the IfE can be of most value to the sector and be truly school-led in its approach.
- KR9: Whilst participants and alumni commented that the assessment briefs were a helpful starting point, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should ensure time is built into taught sessions for the lecturers to expand and clarify exactly what is required and provide opportunity for participants to ask questions.

- KR10: In addition to the above, participants report that lecturers have inconsistent standards for some forms of summative assessment, and this can make it challenging for participants to know how to be successful. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should determine how standardisation can be improved.
- KR11: The relatively high, albeit declining, number of extenuating circumstances suggests there is room for improvement with possibly a) the preparedness of the participants to be able to succeed on the programme, b) the quality of the teaching and learning and/or c) the assessment design. The IfE has a robust programme review process and adaptations have been made to programmes. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, and beyond, the IfE should continue to review the trend in extenuating circumstances to ensure it continues on a downward trajectory.
- R2: The IfE could give attention to how feedback from summative assessments should be used formatively to support the course participants as needed, as participants struggled to articulate how the feedback from one module improved their practice or subsequent studies. Several participants reported that the summative assessment they received was too brief to be of any value.
- R3: In relation to teaching placements, the IfE could consider the gap participants identified between what lecturers taught regarding the importance of building relationships in terms of effective classroom management, and tutors' assessment of what could be achieved within just a few days of teaching practice.
- R4: The IfE could consider the introduction of Key Performance Indicators regarding graduation rates to support the strategic focus on the IfE's ongoing work.

## **Conclusion**

The IfE meets the requirements for Section B.

## Section C – Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

### C1 Student Admission Regulations

#### **Main Findings**

The IfE website is user-friendly and designed to facilitate ease of use. It is also accessible to visually impaired candidates, ensuring inclusivity. Comprehensive support is provided during the admission process, particularly for students encountering difficulties with the website. To enhance accessibility, an AI-based support system is available twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week, assisting prospective candidates with navigating the platform. Student feedback regarding the admission process has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting its smooth and efficient operation so the panel agrees that the IfE is committed to maintaining a transparent and consistent admission process which includes ensuring that all admission criteria are applied uniformly. One-to-one support is readily available to prospective candidates to provide personalised assistance throughout the application phase.

Furthermore, the panel observed active efforts to reach prospective students through targeted marketing campaigns. These initiatives include utilising social media platforms, hosting annual open days at the Institute where interested students can engage directly with faculty and staff, and participating in career fairs to broaden outreach.

#### **Good Practice Identified**

- The IfE website showcases features designed to accommodate visually impaired candidates, complemented by AI-based support twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week to assist prospective students with the admission process.
- The Institute demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accessibility in the admission process by ensuring uniform application of criteria, providing personalised one-to-one support, and actively engaging with prospective students through targeted marketing efforts, open days and participation in career fairs.

#### **Recommendations for Improvement**

KR12: The IfE should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, provide comprehensive and easily accessible information about the admission process directly on the public section of the website. This should include detailed requirements, timelines and selection criteria, ensuring prospective students are fully informed.

- R5: The IfE could direct its efforts at increasing enrolment from underrepresented groups, such as male students and individuals from rural areas with limited access to higher education opportunities. These initiatives would align with the *Malta National Education Strategy 2024-2030*, which emphasises the importance of making the teaching profession more appealing to younger candidates and fostering inclusivity in education.

## C2 Student Progression

### Main Findings

The progression of students is continuously monitored by lecturers through attendance tracking and the provision of regular feedback. However, fewer than 25% of students complete the surveys designed to assess their satisfaction with the quality of lecturers, courses, teaching methods and assessments. Lecturers report that student feedback is generally positive and that they regularly use it to improve their teaching.

In terms of placements, bachelor-level students are required to spend six weeks in schools, while master's-level students must complete a seven-week placement. Additionally, bachelor's students participate in a micro-placement of 90 hours. Some students reported concerns during the onsite visit, particularly regarding the inadequate preparation period prior to placements. For instance, some noted receiving only a two-day job-shadowing period before their placement, which they felt negatively impacted their ability to understand classroom environments and group dynamics. Furthermore, students expressed concerns about inconsistent feedback from placement supervisors.

Regarding student progression, the IfE provides extensive support addressing both administrative and academic challenges. Administrative support begins at the admission stage and continues throughout the academic year. Counselling services are available, addressing academic and personal issues, which students have positively appreciated.

The Institute organises "working events" at least once a year to foster a sense of belonging among students. Additionally, academic support is provided through course coordinators, who act as the primary contact point for students, liaising with individual lecturers and addressing special requirements. The current student-to-coordinator ratio is approximately 80:1, with coordinators maintaining a network to facilitate communication and collaboration.

To meet diverse student needs, the Institute employs a "family-friendly" approach, offering courses online with optional face-to-face sessions. If a student faces medical issues that prevent attendance, lecturers are permitted to record sessions, allowing students to access content at their convenience. Assessment adjustments, such as extended deadlines, are also available for students who are facing difficulties.

During the admission process, students' special needs are recorded and communicated to relevant lecturers to ensure appropriate accommodations. The Institute has demonstrated flexibility in addressing individual needs, such as postponing physical activities for postpartum students to enable them to complete their courses successfully. The provision of a multi-faith room further reflects the Institute's commitment to inclusivity and catering to diverse student needs.

The Institute has established a strict plagiarism policy, utilising Turnitin, with an acceptable similarity threshold of 20-23%. Lecturers consistently review the similarity reports generated by the platform to ensure accuracy. However, some students have raised concerns about encountering issues with templates increasing similarity scores, leading to unfair outcomes. They reported insufficient support in such cases, resulting in the risk of failing exams.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The Institute adopts a "family-friendly" approach to accommodate diverse student needs, such as offering online courses with optional face-to-face sessions. Additionally, they provide recorded lectures for students with medical issues and make assessment adjustments, such as extended deadlines, for those facing challenges.
- Comprehensive support is provided through course coordinators who act as liaisons between students and lecturers, addressing academic and personal needs. Counselling services and annual "working events" to promote a sense of belonging are also noteworthy efforts.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

### **Main Findings**

The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is clearly defined in the RPL document, which sets forth a structured framework to guide the evaluation and approval process. Several mechanisms are in place to ensure the fair and consistent recognition of prior learning, with a focus on equivalency and alignment with the current programme. To qualify for RPL, the previous course must meet specific criteria, such as being at the same academic level as the course for which equivalency is sought and having the same number of ECTS credits.

The RPL process is overseen by a dedicated committee that carefully evaluates each student's application. The committee reviews the submitted documentation and determines whether the prior learning is aligned with the required academic standards. If the decision is positive, the lecturer responsible for the relevant course is informed and must provide final approval to complete the RPL process. This two-tier approval approach—committee evaluation followed by lecturer confirmation—ensures a thorough and transparent recognition of prior learning.

By implementing these mechanisms, the Institute supports students in leveraging their existing knowledge and skills while maintaining the academic integrity of its programmes. To further enhance transparency, it is recommended that the RPL document and guidelines be widely accessible to students, with clear instructions regarding the application process and expected timelines. Regular reviews of the RPL procedures would ensure that they remain aligned with current academic and professional standards.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The Institute has a clearly defined and structured framework for recognising prior learning, which ensures consistency and fairness in the evaluation process. The detailed guidelines regarding equivalency in academic level and ECTS credits help maintain academic integrity.
- The RPL process involves a thorough two-tier approval system, where the committee first evaluates the student's application, followed by confirmation from the course lecturer. This approach ensures careful consideration and final validation from those directly involved in the teaching process.
- The Institute ensures that RPL guidelines and the application process are well-documented and can be easily accessed by students. This promotes transparency and provides clear instructions for students seeking recognition of prior learning.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **C4 Student Certification**

### **Main Findings**

The IfE awards certifications upon successful course completion as outlined in the programme documentation and endorsed by the MFHEA. Criteria for grading, assessment and academic standards attained are outlined in the Rules and Regulations available online.

In addition to the programme completion certificate, the institution furnishes students with a course transcript as part of the Diploma Supplement, formatted in accordance with the European standard. This transcript comprehensively lists all study units and their corresponding grades or marks achieved throughout the course. Apart from serving as a record of academic achievement, this document details a student's academic journey, beneficial for those pursuing further studies or seeking professional employment opportunities. The alumni to both bachelor and master's programmes stated that they did not encounter any problem.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The institution possesses a follow-up process to tackle issues regarding certification.

## **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **Conclusion**

The IfE meets the requirements for Section C.

## Section D: Teaching Staff

### D1 Teaching Staff Recruitment

#### **Main Findings**

The IfE has established a comprehensive Employee Induction Booklet to ensure that all new staff members are properly integrated into the institution and understand their roles, responsibilities and the available support systems. This initiative helps foster a smooth transition for new employees and enhances their connection to the Institute's values and practices.

Full-time lecturers are encouraged to allocate 20-30% of their workload towards research activities, with dedicated funding provided to support their academic endeavours. Additionally, they are provided with the opportunity to attend two conferences per year, further promoting professional development and engagement with the broader academic community.

Lecturers are also encouraged to participate in the annual symposium and are given guidance to contribute to the *Malta Journal of Education*, promoting scholarly communication and research dissemination. The Institute supports this initiative through the School of Research, which offers research topics for exploration. However, it is the responsibility of the lecturers to pursue their research, whether individually or in collaboration with peers, ensuring a broad engagement with relevant academic inquiries.

As part of its commitment to international collaboration and academic excellence, the Institute has secured the Erasmus Charter, highlighting its eagerness to participate in international projects that enhance educational opportunities for students and staff alike.

The Institute's performance plan highlights the importance of observing practice and extracting research questions from real-world experiences. This process is designed to encourage faculty to connect their research activities with practical, on-the-ground teaching challenges.

Lecturers on a contract for service also maintain strong communication with course coordinators, ensuring alignment with course goals and requirements, which is essential for maintaining high academic standards across all courses.

To support staff development, the Institute holds regular induction meetings for lecturers, both full-time and those on a contract for service. These sessions offer valuable information, clarify expectations, and provide an opportunity for new staff to ask questions and engage with their colleagues in a collaborative setting. This focus on continuous professional development reinforces the Institute's dedication to fostering an engaged, well-prepared teaching workforce.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- Many part-time lecturers at the Institute are highly valued by students for their practical experience, as they actively teach in schools and maintain a strong connection to real-world educational issues.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **D2 Teaching Staff Numbers and Academic Background**

### **Main Findings**

The IfE employs eight full-time faculty members, all of whom are required to have a minimum of 10 years of teaching experience and a master's degree. However, most of the full-time lecturers also hold PhDs, ensuring a high level of expertise and academic qualification within the institution. In addition, contract-based lecturers are required to submit a sample teaching class as part of the recruitment process to assess their teaching abilities.

While the Institute is open to expanding its full-time teaching staff, such decisions are ultimately made by the government, as the IfE is a public institution. When new full-time positions become available, the Institute publishes the job requirements on its official website and also shares these opportunities within local school networks, ensuring broad outreach and transparency.

For contract-based service positions, the Institute typically seeks lecturers with the dual responsibility of both course development and the ability to deliver lectures once the course begins, emphasising flexibility and expertise in both curriculum design and teaching delivery.

The Institute has also earned certification for gender equality in the workplace, demonstrating its commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all staff. This achievement reflects the Institute's ongoing efforts to promote gender balance and create a supportive work atmosphere that aligns with its values of fairness and equal opportunity for all.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The IfE demonstrates a strong commitment to gender equality in the workplace, having earned certification for this achievement.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **D3 Teaching Staff Professional Development**

### **Main Findings**

At the beginning of each academic year, the Institute conducts information sessions with coordinators to assess the professional development needs of lecturers, including areas such as presentation skills. These professional development needs are openly communicated, and the Institute strives to allocate funding to allow lecturers to attend conferences; however, this is contingent on the availability of the budget, meaning not all lecturers may receive funding.

Professional development course attendance is tracked through the staff application form, ensuring that all participation is documented. The Institute also provides a diverse range of in-house training sessions to support pedagogical innovation and to ensure that lecturers remain up to date with emerging technologies in education.

Lecturers actively ensure their teaching aligns with current trends and advances in their field by attending school events, engaging in school-based research, and participating in international and European conferences. This continuous engagement with the broader educational community helps maintain the relevance of their teaching.

To assess and improve lecturers' professional development, the Institute's Head QA conducts monthly meetings with lecturers to discuss various approaches for enhancing professional

practices. A new practice has been introduced, though only two lecturers have participated so far. It involves lecturer evaluations through a peer observation protocol, where colleagues observe each other's teaching and engage in open, reflective discussions to learn from and improve their practices.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The IfE conducts yearly sessions to assess lecturers' professional development needs.
- The IfE conducts a variety of in-house training sessions that keep lecturers updated on pedagogical innovation and emerging educational technologies.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

KR13: The IfE should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, establish a formalised teacher appraisal process to regularly assess and support lecturers' performance, offering structured feedback to foster continuous improvement in teaching practices.

KR14: The IfE should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, incorporate explicit professional development (PD) in Assessment for Learning (AfL), as this remains a key concern raised by participants in the online sessions. Providing targeted training and support in AfL strategies would help address these challenges and enhance lecturers' ability to implement effective assessment practices.

R6: The IfE could explore funding opportunities that would enable lecturers on a contract for service to access the same professional development opportunities as full-time faculty members, ensuring equitable access to conferences and other career-enhancing events.

R7: The IfE could consider developing a set of key topics or guidelines in consultation with schools, to help lecturers select relevant and impactful conference themes. This approach would ensure that participation aligns with professional growth, institutional goals, and the specific needs of the education sector, making research more beneficial and applicable.

R8: The IfE could consider developing a system that promotes a culture of professional growth through regular peer observation that involves all lecturers, allowing them to observe and reflect on each other's teaching.

## **Conclusion**

The IfE meets the requirements for Section D.

## Section E – Learning Resources and Student Support

### E1 Learning Environment

#### **Main Findings**

The institution provided evidence as part of its SAR that confirms the IfE benefits from a safe and secure environment. In order to assure itself of legal and regulatory compliance relating to its premises, the IfE conducts a risk assessment and takes action accordingly; this is the responsibility of the Administration Department, which formally reports to the Administration Board. A security company has been contracted to oversee the premises, and the campus is equipped with a security camera system.

All areas benefit from clear directional signage, which was confirmed during the premises tour. The main entrance is accessible via an exterior ramp for members of the institution's community and visitors with mobility impairments.

Classrooms are equipped with modern and functional technology. Students have access to learning resources accessible through a modest but functional library that also includes some computer stations. The panel found that the facilities are of an appropriate size and quality for the current size of the student population.

The panel confirmed that there are adequate washroom facilities available onsite and that these and other rooms are subject to a regular and effective cleaning regime.

Established Health and Safety policies are publicly accessible via the institution's website and the panel verified that appropriate fire safety measures are in place, including fire doors, alarm systems, emergency lights, exit signs and clear evacuation plans. First aid kits are readily accessible on the IfE premises and designated first aiders have been appointed and trained.

#### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

## **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **E2 Facilities and Learning Resources**

### **Main Findings**

The IfE has 14 lecture rooms, all of which are equipped with wireless internet access, interactive whiteboards, and video conferencing equipment. The Institute also has a multi-faith room on the ground floor. The facilities comply with all legal requirements to guarantee accessibility, safety and security, while also prioritising environmental and ecological considerations. The Institute informed the panel about numerous sustainability initiatives, including the use of a water reservoir, installation of solar panels, energy timers and plans for a paperless campus. The institution is also currently working to improve accessibility to the institution through the installation of a lift that is currently planned for 2026.

The institution has a physical library, which the panel inspected and found to be fit-for-purpose. The IfE committed expenditure of €12,034.83 and €27,422.05 on books in 2022 and 2023, respectively; with a further €1,105.92 spent up to June 2024. The institution maintains data on library usage, which shows that only a very small number of students sought access to physical texts between 2022 and 2024.

In addition to physical learning resources, the institution has a variety of digital resources available for staff and students, including an online learning portal that houses an integrated video conferencing tool, Blackboard Collaborate, and grants access to an extensive range of journals, eBooks and case studies through its virtual library, and through subscriptions with ProQuest, EBSCO and SAGE. Students also have access to quantitative and qualitative data analysis software.

In addition to its own premises and resources the institution makes use of a range of external venues and facilities. These include school laboratories, the Marsa Sports Complex, and the National Sports School. The IfE uses these to provide practical, hands-on learning experiences in diverse professional settings. The panel confirmed that there are rigorous due diligence procedures in place for external premises that include site visit evaluations and confirmation of health and safety licenses and liability insurance. Students confirm that these facilities are effective in supporting their learning.

### **Good Practice Identified**

- The provision of a multi-faith facility is notable.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **E3 Student Support**

### **Main Findings**

The panel heard about the institution's personalised approach to teaching and learning as part of its course participant centred approach. Students have access to a range of support services at the Institute. This includes support from academic staff, including academic tutors and dissertation supervisors, who offer face-to-face and online consultations. Staff maintains appointment hours, which are regularly communicated to students who can book sessions. In addition, the panel confirmed that staff members are highly flexible and offer students consultations out of standard office hours to meet their needs.

Course co-ordinators and the Senior Manager Course Co-ordination and School Professional Development also provide direct assistance to students. This support is organised from application to graduation and includes contributions to induction, administration for online learning, attendance and assessment processes, and accessing learning materials. Beyond scheduled teaching sessions, co-ordinators also help students to access academic writing support and assistance with research methods and teaching practice. Students informed the panel that while the support provided from course coordinators was useful, they felt it necessary that their part-time hours be extended to ensure timely responses to queries.

The institution's Student Affairs Office is located in the Admissions Department and provides career, emotional and wellbeing support. The panel found that careers advice commences even prior to enrolment. Applicants, who include those considering a career change, are offered one-to-one consultations with the Student Affairs Manager, who is also a trained careers counsellor. The institution provides wellbeing advice and assists students by referral to external counselling services where necessary.

The panel heard numerous examples of staff supporting students through periods of illness. However, while staff articulated a process for students to disclose disabilities through the

admissions process the panel found that this could be more rigorous; in particular, considering the demographic profile of the student body and the fact that mature learners may be less likely to have identified additional needs as part of their earlier education. The panel considered that any unidentified needs have the potential to contribute to attrition rates.

Terms of reference for the Student Affairs Committee assign it wide responsibility for the strategic development of student affairs. However, minutes of the Student Affairs Committee demonstrate that it is almost entirely focused on the consideration of extenuating circumstances. The panel considers that the institution needs to place a stronger emphasis on discharging its full responsibilities. The terms of reference also lack a specified minimum frequency for meetings as part of the institution's annual quality cycle.

The panel was informed that the Student Affairs Office gathers feedback on its service and uses this to enhance its practices and the Office informs the central institutional action plan compiled by the Quality Assurance Department. The panel considered that the IfE has a comprehensive approach to gathering feedback on academic programmes and that there is anecdotal evidence of the Institute acting on student feedback related to support services. However, the panel found that the institution could place a stronger emphasis on capturing and acting on feedback concerning administrative and support services, such as IT, counselling and careers, etc., where currently there appears to be an imbalance between feedback on these services and the academic programmes. For example, the central institutional action plan is focussed on programmes and modules and the Annual Internal Review report does not clearly state how student feedback on support services was considered as part of the audit.

The IfE has a range of suitable, fit-for-purpose policies in place to regulate and underpin its student support services. These policies include a Data Protection Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Electronic Devices Policy. There is, however, a lack of any substantial objectives or performance indicators that are directly linked to student support or student affairs in the Strategic Plan 2021-2030, with no obvious sub-strategies in place. The panel considered the institution may benefit from considering its strategic imperatives for student support and how this is reflected in corresponding documentation.

Information concerning student support is communicated via the website, which includes information about the IfE's participant centered approach, the Student Affairs Office, multi-faith facilities and student well-being. This information is detailed in the website's 'Learning with the Institute for Education' section, which also contains information about teaching, assessment and accreditation of prior learning. The panel determined that the Institute would benefit from reviewing the content structure on the website, and also student handbooks, to enhance the clarity and detailed nature of information pertaining to student support. For example, the panel found it more difficult to find relevant information about careers and disability support. The institution informed the panel that, in addition to written

information, the Student Affairs Manager plays a central role in communicating the availability of support services, including to prospective students.

### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

- KR15: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, review the content structure of student support information on the website to aid accessibility and level of detail provided for stakeholders.
- KR16: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, ensure student feedback mechanisms comprehensively and consistently capture detailed information about the institution's administrative and support services.
- KR17: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, strengthen disclosure and diagnostic processes for students with disabilities.
- KR18: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, ensure that the Student Affairs Committee effectively and consistently discharges the full range of its responsibilities as outlined in the terms of reference.
- KR19: The institution should, within 24 months from the date of publication of this report, review strategic objectives and include an appropriate focus on student support and that this informs the work of the Student Affairs Committee.
- KR20: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, expand membership of the Student Affairs Committee to include student membership.
- R9: The institution could establish a minimum frequency of meetings in terms of reference for the Student Affairs Committee.
- R10: The institution could incorporate student involvement into the Annual Internal Review process.

### **Conclusion**

The IfE meets the requirements for Section E.

## Section F – Information Management

### F1 Information and Records

#### **Main Findings**

The IfE operates an online portal that utilises integrations to support students end-to-end, from admission to graduation. The portal is used to support onboarding for course participants and lecturers, the delivery of student programmes and other processes. The portal facilitates the operational needs of all IfE departments and stores key information about students, staff and lecturing staff engaged on a contract for service basis. These profiles include employment history, academic qualifications, teaching assignments and timetables, and are assigned to a unique user ID. The institution informed the panel this is especially helpful in maintaining an overview of staff contracts, where currently approximately 500 staff members hold more than 1,200 contracts as staff can be appointed in multiple roles. The portal also assists the University in respect of GDPR requirements and its sustainability objectives, including by offering a paperless solution.

The portal enables IfE to produce and analyse a number of relevant reports. This includes data on programme statistics, finance and employment contracts. It also allows institutional departments to issue forms online and automate key processes. Programme statistics are used by courses to inform annual monitoring processes and by the Student Affairs Office to support progression and stage targeted interventions with individual students and cohorts. The institution informed the panel that there are some challenges extracting data reports from the current portal and the IfE is therefore in the process of procuring ancillary platforms that will improve data access and usability for staff. Notwithstanding the intention to further invest in ancillary IT systems, the panel found clear examples of staff making effective use of data, for example, to conduct trend analyses between attendance and assessment data to stage interventions.

The IfE has established protocols for retaining information that are set out in its Records Retention Schedule. The schedule addresses individual and departmental responsibilities, arrangements for handling data breaches and disposal of data as well as complaints procedures. The panel found that staff members understand their responsibilities in relation to managing data. For example, the Human Resources Department outlined its arrangements for document destruction and managing sensitive information. The institution's policies and procedures have been mapped to the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Legislation and to ensure their GDPR compliance, and the panel confirmed that staff understood their responsibilities under these policies. The institution plans to conduct a Cyber Security Audit that will lead to several work streams designed to strengthen information security.

The IfE has appointed a Data Protection Officer to oversee GDPR compliance and data protection strategies. Robust data security measures, such as encryption and access controls, are in place to protect against unauthorised access and data breaches. The institution's Data Protection Policy ensures the rights of individuals, including access, rectification, erasure, restriction, data portability, and objection to processing, are upheld. The IfE engages in regular training and awareness programmes are conducted to ensure all staff understand their data protection responsibilities.

The IfE also has an established Intellectual Property Rights Policy that ensures all creations, innovations and academic content produced within the IfE are safeguarded and properly attributed to their creators. The policy details ownership of intellectual property for employees and staff on temporary contracts and outlines the rights of course participants and arrangements for the protection of intellectual property.

Furthermore, the institution has a codified Freedom of Information (FOI) policy and procedures that, where relevant, work to ensure appropriate public access to information. They also set out the IfE's approach to providing accurate responses to FOI requests, adhering to relevant legal frameworks and the role of staff in this process.

### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

KR21: The institution should, within 24 months from the date of publication of this report, strengthen data reporting capabilities and approaches to support data informed decision-making.

## **Conclusion**

The IfE meets the requirements for Section F.

## Section G – Public Information

### G1 Course Information

#### **Main Findings**

For public information, the IfE mainly uses its website ([The Institute for Education - IfE](#)) and also the prospectus providing detailed insights into the programmes offered.

This information includes the selection criteria for the programmes, overall objectives and learning outcomes, the qualifications awarded, including information on the EQF/MQF level and ECTS learning credits, the teaching and assessment procedures used, the pass rates, and the further learning opportunities available to students. Also, the information about possible career pathways available as a result of following the programmes is provided. The information on student support possibilities is not clearly available at the website, though (see the KR related to Section F).

The website of the IfE seems to be regularly updated to reflect the latest information.

The website also contains the section “Frequently asked questions” (FAQ) which addresses a range of services offered by the institution.

It can be confirmed that the website as well as the prospectus of the IfE provide clear, sufficiently detailed and structured information on programmes offered. This can help prospective students to make informed decisions.

Also, hyperlinks to individual programmes lead to information of a sufficient level of detail.

#### **Good Practice Identified**

Nil.

## **Recommendations for Improvement**

Nil.

## **Conclusion**

The IfE meets the requirements for Section G.

## **Response by the Provider**

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### **Preamble**

Since its establishment in 2015, the Institute for Education (IfE) has been firmly committed to delivering an excellent course participant experience underpinned by the highest standards of teaching, learning and research. To support this commitment, the IfE has developed a robust Quality Management System which not only drives the implementation of the IfE's Strategic Plan but also ensures effective academic planning and continuous improvement. This system is fully aligned with the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education and benchmarked against internationally recognised standards, reinforcing the IfE's position as a quality-driven institution.

The IfE warmly thanks the MFHEA and the members of the peer review panel for undertaking the EQA Programme Audit and compiling this report. The audit has provided a valuable and constructive opportunity to evaluate programme delivery in depth, reflect critically on current practices and identify further opportunities to enhance the quality of provision.

The sections that follow set out the IfE's formal response to the Programme Audit recommendations and the concrete actions to be undertaken, reflecting its ongoing commitment to accountability, improvement and excellence in higher education.

## 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
<b>Section A: Design and Development of Programme of Study</b> [The IfE meets the requirements for Section A.]		
KR1: The IfE has found that participants perform better in subject specific modules compared to the core modules. Therefore, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should undertake a scoping study to understand why this is the case and what levers are at their disposal to improve outcomes in core modules.	The IfE will undertake a scoping study to better understand why participants perform better in subject-specific modules compared to core modules. This study will include an analysis of student performance data, feedback from participants and alumni, and consultations with lecturers delivering core modules. Findings will be used to identify the factors influencing outcomes in core modules and to determine appropriate interventions, which may include adjustments to curriculum design, teaching strategies, assessment approaches and additional academic support for participants. The results of the study will inform an action plan aimed at enhancing student outcomes and ensuring greater consistency across all modules.	Nov 2026
<b>Section B: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment</b> [The IfE meets the requirements for Section B.]		
KR2: Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should review quality assurance and feedback processes to ensure enough timely data is available for the IfE to make strategic interventions to improve any gaps in the quality of teaching and learning. This may result in the need for triangulation of data from participant feedback, teaching observations and student progress and the creation of personalised professional development pathways to support specific members of the teaching team.	The IfE will strengthen its quality assurance and feedback processes by undertaking a comprehensive review of current mechanisms, identifying gaps and revising policies to ensure that timely and meaningful data is consistently collected and analysed. This will include the introduction of more regular opportunities for course participant feedback, the standardisation and enhancement of lecture observations and the development of systems to monitor course participant progress more effectively. Findings will be triangulated through an integrated reporting framework to support evidence-based decision making and enable timely strategic interventions. In parallel, professional development pathways will be established for staff, informed by quality assurance outcomes and embedded into appraisal and review processes. Course participants, alumni, staff and external stakeholders will be engaged during the whole process to ensure transparency, inclusivity and benchmarking against best practices.	Nov 2026
KR3: Whilst clear synthesis and collation of good T&L practice across the Institute's teaching staff occurs,	The IfE confirms that good teaching and learning practices are already collated and synthesised through existing structures such as staff meetings, QA reports	Nov 2026

<p>within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should work to ensure greater efficacy in how this information is used to drive improvements in the quality of teaching and participant progress.</p>	<p>and the sharing of good practices identified in lecture observations, through course participant feedback, as well as through professional development workshops and evaluation meetings with all stakeholders. To strengthen the impact of this work, the IfE will ensure that examples of good practice are more systematically shared across programmes, including through dedicated sessions in staff development events and internal communications. Feedback obtained from stakeholders will be synthesised and explicitly fed back into these processes. The IfE will also explore mechanisms to track the uptake and effectiveness of shared practices, including through the systematic review of lecturer and peer observations, in order to consolidate evidence of their impact. This will help ensure that dissemination leads directly to measurable improvements in teaching quality and possibly participant progress.</p>	
<p>KR4: Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should provide support to lecturers to clearly stamp the formative feedback they are giving to participants and provide opportunities for participants to act and reflect upon feedback. It may be of use to consider the <a href="#"><i>Deans for Impact Deliberate Practice model</i></a> as it is one of the very few that has an evidence base that supports its efficacy.</p>	<p>The IfE will continue supporting lecturers in clearly communicating formative feedback and providing participants with structured opportunities to reflect upon and act on that feedback. Presently, lecturers provide feedback summaries and/or in-text comments through Turnitin Feedback Studio and are guided by the IfE's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook as well as its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures. Building on these practices, the IfE will explore and integrate evidence-based approaches such as the Deans for Impact Deliberate Practice model, which emphasises high-quality, actionable feedback and structured reflection. Professional development and guidance will be provided to ensure lecturers deliver ongoing feedback during the course of each module that is specific, timely and aligned with learning objectives, and to create opportunities for participants to respond to feedback in meaningful ways.</p>	<p>Nov 2026</p>
<p>KR5: The Institute has identified that a significant proportion of participants struggle with meeting the standard required for academic writing. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should develop a clear action plan to address this through either programme design and/or teaching strategies. The IfE might want to consider whether asynchronous 'pre-work' prior to a programme starting would be of benefit in this regard and explore how the use of AI could be harnessed safely and ethically in this regard.</p>	<p>The IfE currently offers several rounds of 10-hours training in Academic Writing. This is non-accredited and offered to all course participants on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The IfE has also incorporated modules such as 'Academic Skills for Undergraduate Studies'; 'Academic Research Skills' and 'Inquiry in Education' which focus on this specific area. The IfE will explore further ways to enhance these competences which may include: recommended prep-work to prepare for programme learning, incorporating feedback on academic writing in all modules, incorporating academic writing skills within assessment rubrics, sensitising lecturers to address this issue within their respective modules.</p>	<p>Nov 2026</p>

<p>KR6: The IfE identifies peer to peer observations as a key part of their approach to QA and developing professional practice. Therefore, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should focus attention on creating the conditions that significantly increase the number of peer to peer observations that take place.</p>	<p>The IfE recognises peer observations as a key component of its quality assurance framework and approach to developing professional practice. The documentation and process for peer observations have been updated in 2024 to clarify objectives and provide better guidance and training for observers. Supportive structures will be enhanced to encourage participation, ensure consistency and maximise the professional development benefits of peer observation. Progress will be monitored to increase both the frequency and quality of peer observations, thereby enhancing teaching practice and contributing to the overall quality assurance of learning and teaching.</p>	<p>Oct 2026</p>
<p>R1: The IfE could consider how it can support lecturers to further attend to the principles of andragogy and consider the opportunity for taught sessions as an opportunity to solve immediate and pressing 'problems.'</p>	<p>The IfE recognises the value of andragogical principles in enhancing adult learning. At present, lecturers are guided by the IfE's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook and the <a href="#">Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures</a>, which are regularly updated and encourage learner-centred approaches and embed AfL strategies. As noted in the recommendation addressed in Section D, the IfE is strengthening its focus on AfL through targeted professional development. Building on this, the IfE will also provide further support to lecturers on applying andragogical principles, with an emphasis on designing taught sessions that respond to participants' immediate needs and real-world challenges. This will ensure that learning remains problem-focused, relevant and reinforced by effective assessment practices that promote reflection and progression.</p>	<p>Oct 2026</p>
<p>KR7: Key stakeholders reported that the dissertation places heavy demand on schools in terms of data collection. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should determine how dissertations can be adapted to reduce this burden, possibly considering the use of collective practitioner research or more focus of ethnographic methods.</p>	<p>The IfE acknowledges this recommendation and confirms that the School of Research already promotes practice-based methodologies such as Action Research, Reflexive Research, Case Studies and Classroom Ethnography, which encourage participants to conduct research within their own classrooms. These approaches, delivered through tutorials, seminars and workshops, are designed to reduce the burden on schools while maintaining academic rigour. Moving forward, the IfE will place greater emphasis on action research, and project-based and philosophy-based dissertations, while also providing concrete examples and discussions on how collective practitioner research and ethnographic methods can be applied effectively.</p>	<p>Oct 2026</p>
<p>KR8: Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should also ensure schools have a voice in the areas that research is conducted in so the IfE can be of most value to the sector and be truly school-led in its approach.</p>	<p>This aligns with the recommendation to undertake a joint training and PD needs analysis with schools and IfE lecturers to strengthen staff expertise in line with school needs. The School of Research has already engaged with Heads of Schools through Council of Head meetings and distributed a survey, while also gathering input from visiting lecturers on emerging research priorities. From this academic year, the process will be formalised through an open call for</p>	<p>Nov 2026</p>

	lecturer recommendations and reinforced by the School of Research. This priority has now been integrated into the IfE's Strategic Objectives following consultation with stakeholders.	
KR9: Whilst participants and alumni commented that the assessment briefs were a helpful starting point, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should ensure time is built into taught sessions for the lecturers to expand and clarify exactly what is required and provide opportunity for participants to ask questions.	The IfE notes that assessment briefs are already made available to participants during the first lecture, providing ample time for questions and discussion. Lecturers review the briefs and associated rubrics in detail within online/in-person sessions to ensure clarity on both requirements and marking criteria, and at their discretion may also review draft assignments prior to submission to provide constructive feedback that supports academic development. Participants are also encouraged to contact lecturers via email for any queries and a dedicated online forum will be made available to provide a central space for participants to raise questions and access clarifications. To further strengthen this practice, the IfE will standardise the allocation of dedicated time within taught sessions for assessment-related Q&A, ensure greater consistency across programmes, and where necessary develop supplementary written guidance to address common participant queries.	Oct 2026
KR10: In addition to the above, participants report that lecturers have inconsistent standards for some forms of summative assessment, and this can make it challenging for participants to know how to be successful. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, the IfE should determine how standardisation can be improved.	The IfE has an in-built review system of all assignment briefs provided to students. This includes a review of the assignment title, its alignment with the MFHEA application, its wording, expectations from students and rubrics. This assignment brief is made available to students from their first lecture to know how they are going to be assessed and provides ample opportunity for learners to raise questions. Moreover, part of the first lecture is dedicated to the lecturer explaining the assignment brief to students to explain in detail what is expected. The IfE will work to make assessment briefs and rubrics clearer and to allocate time for questions towards the end of the module to ensure learners understand what is expected of them.	Oct 2026
KR11: The relatively high, albeit declining, number of extenuating circumstances suggests there is room for improvement with possibly a) the preparedness of the participants to be able to succeed on the programme, b) the quality of the teaching and learning and/or c) the assessment design. The IfE has a robust programme review process and adaptations have been made to programmes. Within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, and beyond, the IfE should continue to review the trend in extenuating circumstances to ensure it continues on a downward trajectory.	This recommendation is welcomed and the committee commits to regularly assessing the nature of extenuating circumstance requests received with the intent to ameliorate processes that may possibly lead to a decrease in extenuating circumstances.	Ongoing

<p>R2: The IfE could give attention to how feedback from summative assessments should be used formatively to support the course participants as needed, as participants struggled to articulate how the feedback from one module improved their practice or subsequent studies. Several participants reported that the summative assessment they received was too brief to be of any value.</p>	<p>Lecturers at the IfE currently provide feedback on summative assessments through Turnitin Feedback Studio, including both summary comments and in-text annotations. While summative assessments are module-specific, the feedback, together with associated rubrics, develops transferable skills such as academic writing, critical analysis, referencing and application of theory, supporting improved performance in subsequent modules. To strengthen the formative value of this feedback, the IfE will provide professional development for lecturers focused on giving more detailed, actionable feedback and explicitly highlighting how it can be applied beyond the immediate module. The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook and the <a href="#">Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures</a> will continue to serve as key references and additional emphasis will be placed on integrating feedback discussions into taught sessions to ensure participants fully understand and can act upon the guidance provided.</p>	<p>Oct 2026</p>
<p>R3: In relation to teaching placements, the IfE could consider the gap participants identified between what lecturers taught regarding the importance of building relationships in terms of effective classroom management, and tutors' assessment of what could be achieved within just a few days of teaching practice.</p>	<p>The IfE will continue strengthening the measures already in place by building on the existing pre-placement tutorials for students, which prepare them with practical strategies for developing rapport and managing classrooms effectively within short placements. In parallel, tutor guidelines will be further refined to ensure clarity on what is realistically achievable within the limited timeframe of teaching practice. Additionally, dedicated workshops for practicum visitors and tutors will remain a regular feature, enabling consistent expectations, shared understanding, and constructive feedback across all stakeholders. These actions will be continuously enhanced to maintain alignment between theoretical preparation and practical assessment during teaching practice.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>R4: The IfE could consider the introduction of Key Performance Indicators regarding graduation rates to support the strategic focus on the IfE's ongoing work.</p>	<p>The IfE will look into setting KPIs related to graduation rates. This will be done consciously and aware that external factors such as attractiveness of the profession, supply of supply educators within the education sector and demand for specific subject streams by secondary school students may interfere with the number of applicants and potential graduates for a given programme.</p>	<p>Dec 2026</p>
<p><b>Section C: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification</b> [The IfE meets the requirements for Section C.]</p>		
<p>KR12: The IfE should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, provide comprehensive and easily accessible information about the admission process directly on the public section of the website. This should</p>	<p>The IfE strives to provide as much information as possible to prospective and enrolled applicants. Details such as entry requirements, timelines and selection criteria are currently available on the IfE website <a href="http://ife.edu.mt">ife.edu.mt</a>, in the published IfE Prospectus available both as a printed version as well as digital</p>	<p>Mar 2026</p>

include detailed requirements, timelines, and selection criteria, ensuring prospective students are fully informed.	and included also in the supporting circulars disseminated regularly. The IfE commits to exploring new ways to present this information in a simpler manner on the upcoming rebranded website.	
R5: The IfE could direct its efforts at increasing enrolment from under-represented groups, such as male students and individuals from rural areas with limited access to higher education opportunities. These initiatives would align with the Malta National Education Strategy 2024-2030, which emphasises the importance of making the teaching profession more appealing to younger candidates and fostering inclusivity in education.	The IfE implements targeted marketing campaigns as well as other initiatives specifically intended for minority groups. It will continue to direct its efforts towards underrepresented groups whilst being aware that the teaching profession is more attractive to females, a notion widely common across various countries. Furthermore, the IfE is also in the process of offering course streams and full qualification programmes intended to encourage younger generations towards the profession.	Ongoing
<b>Section D: Teaching Staff</b> [The IfE meets the requirements for Section D.]		
KR13: IfE should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, establish a formalised teacher appraisal process to regularly assess and support lecturers' performance, offering structured feedback to foster continuous improvement in teaching practices.	The IfE notes that a formalised lecture observation process is already in place, led by the Head QA, which provides structured reports with specific criteria, identifies good practices and offers recommendations for development. Building on this existing framework, the IfE will develop a formal lecturer appraisal process that will provide lecturers with regular, structured feedback and tailored professional development opportunities.	Oct 2026
KR14: The IfE should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, incorporate explicit professional development (PD) in Assessment for Learning (AfL), as this remains a key concern raised by participants in the online sessions. Providing targeted training and support in AfL strategies would help address these challenges and enhance lecturers' ability to implement effective assessment practices.	The IfE notes that its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook, along with the <a href="#">Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures</a> , already guide lecturers in implementing effective AfL practices. Building on these existing resources, the IfE will provide targeted professional development focused on AfL strategies, including workshops, guidance materials and opportunities for reflective practice. These actions will continue to enhance the lecturers' ability to implement effective assessment practices, respond to participant feedback and support continuous improvement in learning outcomes and teaching quality.	Sept/Oct 2026
R6: IfE could explore funding opportunities that would enable lecturers on a contract for service to access the same professional development opportunities as full-time faculty members, ensuring equitable access to conferences and other career-enhancing events.	Currently, all lecturers, including contract for service lecturers, have access to the IfE library, both physical and online, which includes a wide range of journals, books and e-books. To further support contract for service lecturers, the IfE will explore funding opportunities building on its increased capacity to generate funding made available as from this year through Erasmus. The IfE will also examine the possibility of offering attendance at IfE conferences at a reduced fee. A clear process will be established for contract lecturers to request access to professional development opportunities, ensuring transparency,	Ongoing

	fairness and monitoring of participation to promote equitable access and professional growth.	
R7: The IfE could consider developing a set of key topics or guidelines in consultation with schools, to help lecturers select relevant and impactful conference themes. This approach would ensure that participation aligns with professional growth, institutional goals, and the specific needs of the education sector, making research more beneficial and applicable.	This seems to be in line with recommendation to undertake a research needs analysis with schools to strengthen the relevance of research carried out by CPs and staff in line with needs of schools. It appears it is recommended to extend this also to CPD of IfE lecturers and staff in line with research needs of schools. It may be best to undertake both analyses jointly. The School of Research has already attended two Council of Head meetings of two Colleges. One of the items on the agenda discussed was Heads of Schools providing us with research areas they deem relevant to research emerging from what they encounter in their schools. A form was also disseminated and we received only some responses. During any opportunity we've had we have also discussed with visiting lecturers at the IfE to provide us with emerging research areas that we can suggest to our students. However, this academic year, this will be taken on in a more structured manner by sending an open form to lecturers to provide us with their recommendations. With the commencement of the new scholastic year, this will continue and be reinforced by the School of Research. Worth mentioning is that this has, as from this year, been incorporated into the IfE's Strategic Objectives.	Ongoing
R8: The IfE could consider developing a system that promotes a culture of professional growth through regular peer observation that involves all lecturers, allowing them to observe and reflect on each other's teaching.	This is in line with the recommendation within Section B. The IfE confirms that a system for peer observation is already in place to promote professional growth among lecturers. To further strengthen this system, the updated documentation and guidance for observers introduced in 2024 will be utilised to encourage greater participation, ensure consistency and maximise professional development benefits while fostering a culture of reflective practice. The IfE will also monitor the uptake and outcomes of peer observations and report on these, ensuring the process remains effective and contributes meaningfully to teaching enhancement.	Oct 2026
<b>Section E: Learning Resources and Student Support</b>		
[The IfE meets the requirements for Section E.]		
KR15: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, review the content structure of student support information on the website to aid accessibility and level of detail provided for stakeholders.	Although the current website includes this <a href="https://ife.edu.mt/student-affairs/">https://ife.edu.mt/student-affairs/</a> , the IfE will seek ways to make this information more accessible under the upcoming website re-design.	Mar 2026
KR16: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, ensure student feedback	In the effort to collect valuable feedback from the users of the administrative and support services of the IfE, we commit to seeking ways to implement an	Sept 2026

mechanisms comprehensively and consistently capture detailed information about the institution's administrative and support services	instant feedback mechanism to collect feedback on the support services being offered by the Admissions Department.	
KR17: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, strengthen disclosure and diagnostic processes for students with disabilities.	The IfE commits to encouraging applicants to disclose their health requirements whenever this is possible and respecting the discretion of applicants in doing so.	Jun 2026
KR18: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, ensure that the Student Affairs Committee effectively and consistently discharges the full range of its responsibilities as outlined in the terms of reference.	The Student Affairs Committee is committed to discharging all of its responsibilities in line with the established terms of reference. It will continue to honour its obligations as delineated in the same TORs.	Ongoing
KR19: The institution should, within 24 months from the date of publication of this report, review strategic objectives and include an appropriate focus on student support, and that this informs the work of the Student Affairs Committee.	The Student Affairs Committee will continue to direct its focus on student support and will ensure that the strategic objectives of the committee are aligned with this main focus.	Jun 2026
KR20: The institution should, within 12 months from the date of publication of this report, expand membership of the Student Affairs Committee to include student membership.	The Student Affairs Committee confirms its commitment to maintaining a valuable relationship with course participants through student membership whenever this is possible. It will continue to fulfil its obligations by ensuring that confidentiality is safeguarded, potential conflicts of interest are managed, and no ethical boundaries are crossed.	Ongoing
R9: The institution could establish a minimum frequency of meetings in terms of reference for the Student Affairs Committee.	This recommendation is welcomed and will be incorporated in the TORs accordingly.	Mar 2026
R10: The institution could incorporate student involvement into the Annual Internal Review process.	The IfE confirms that student involvement is already incorporated into the Annual Internal Review process. In addition to the participation of the Course Participant Representative Committee, feedback surveys are conducted regularly and the resulting feedback is included and analysed within the annual Internal Review reports. To further strengthen this engagement, the IfE will continue to formalise opportunities for course participant representatives to contribute to review discussions and ensure that outcomes from the review are communicated back to the wider student body.	Sept 2026

<b>Section F: Information Management</b>		
[The IfE meets the requirements for Section F.]		
<p>KR21: The institution should, within 24 months from the date of publication of this report, strengthen data reporting capabilities and approaches to support data informed decision-making.</p>	<p>The IfE notes that work is already underway to strengthen data reporting capabilities and support data-informed decision-making. A dedicated project to create an IfE-specific data mart is in progress to enhance internal reporting and business intelligence needs. The first phase of the project is scheduled for release by the end of 2025, with subsequent phases to follow throughout 2026 and 2027, ensuring a robust and phased approach to improving access to timely and meaningful data to drive strategic and operational improvements.</p>	<p>Dec 2027</p>
<b>Section G: Public Information</b>		
[The IfE meets the requirements for Section G.]		
N/A		

## Annexes

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### Annex 1: Review Panel Bio Notes

In the setting up of the review panel for the Institute for Education (IfE) the MFHEA sought to maintain a high degree of diligence in the process of selecting the members of the peer review panel. The panel is 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 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

#### **Chair of Review Panel:**

**Milan Pol** is Professor of Education and, from 2014 to 2022, Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic). At this faculty he is head of the doctoral programme of Educational Sciences. His professional interests are divided into leadership in education and evaluation in education. In the field of evaluation, he is often invited to evaluations arranged by ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) and has been head/a member of evaluating panels of QAA (UK), FINEEC (Finland) and SQAA-NAKVIS (Slovenia). He participates frequently in institutional/programme evaluations in higher education in various countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Malta, Romania, Slovakia and others). In 2010-2016 he was a member of the Accreditation Committee of Slovakia. He is author of numerous publications (<https://www.muni.cz/en/people/75-milan-pol/publications>) and works as editor-in-chief of *Studia Paedagogica*, a Scopus-databased journal, and a board member (formerly chairperson) of the European Network for Improving Research and Development in Educational Leadership and Management (ENIRDELM). He was conferred with an honorary doctorate (Honoris Causa Doctor) from University of Latvia (2023).

### **Peer Reviewers:**

**Elena Marin** is senior lecturer at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest. She is in charge of several courses such as Inclusive education, Learning and Cognition and Instructional Theories. Her main research focus is on inclusive education, initial teacher training system and the social dimension of higher education. She has published several articles and a book on the topic of inclusive education and is particularly interested in analysing how the initial teacher training systems are managing to respond to future teachers' needs to face inclusion in the classroom. Moreover, the interest spreads across higher education systems with an interest in pinpointing ways universities can become more accessible and inclusive. She partners in several Erasmus+ funded projects exploring inclusive education (COALITION and Co-Creating inclusive school communities, Oriental 4VET), as well as providing services as external evaluator for different national and international calls.

**Philippa Sanderson** is an English teacher by trade. Undertaking her MA in Education in 2013 lit Philippa's passion for research and she has since been an advocate of evidence-informed practice, designing and delivering a range of professional development programmes, delivered to thousands of trainee teachers, teachers and leaders across England. She has held several leadership positions, including running a teaching school, and has worked as an educational researcher on international curriculum pilots. More recently she led the 'Outstanding' Star SCITT provision in the Northwest and West Midland before taking up the role as Director of Teaching Development in England's flagship institution devoted to the full 'golden thread' of professional development, the National Institute of Teaching. As a career changer herself, she is passionate about encouraging and enabling professionals from other sectors to move into teaching.

### **Student Peer Reviewer:**

Matthew Kitching is currently a PhD student in Higher Education at Lancaster University, where his work focuses on international quality assurance and student leadership and development. In addition, he is Deputy Chief Executive Officer at Buckinghamshire New University. In this role he is responsible for wide ranging student support services including advice, representation, sport, volunteering and civic engagement. He also holds Board roles at several European quality assurance agencies, including the European Council for Business Education where he is responsible for accreditation standards, site visits and training peer reviewers and EQ-Arts, where he is serving as a researcher on a European funded project exploring urgent and emerging skills needs in the creative industries. He has extensive experience of conducting programme audits for a wide range of quality assurance agencies, across five continents and of reviewing material related to inclusive education programmes. This includes as a panel secretary responsible for reports.

## Annex 2: Agenda of the Onsite Visit

### Programme Audit Agenda: Institute for Education

Dates: 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Venue: [Institute for Education \(IFE\), Martin Luther King Road, Pembroke, PBK 1990](#)

DAY 1 - MONDAY, 13 <sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025			
08.30 – 09.00	Panel preparation meeting for Day 1 of the programme audit		
09.00 – 10.00	Head of Institute - CEO		
10.00 – 10.15	Internal panel meeting		
10.15 – 10.45	Head Quality Assurance		
10.45 – 11.00	Internal panel meeting		
11.00 – 12.00	Senior Manager Research and Development  Senior Manager School of Research  Manager Human Resources		<a href="#">Ms Teams Link</a>
12.00 – 12.10	Internal panel meeting		
12.10 – 13.10	Head of Programmes  Senior Manager Programme Development and Review  Education Officer Training and Development  Manager Programme Development and Implementation		
13.10 – 14.10	Internal panel meeting and lunch break		

14.10 – 15.00	Senior Manager Work Integrated Learning  Senior Manager Administration  Manager Facilities  Senior Manager IT  Manager System Administrator		
15.00 – 15.10	Internal panel meeting		
15.10 – 16.00	Head of Admissions  Senior Manager Course Co- ordination and School Professional Development  Manager Student Affairs  Course Co-ordinators		<a href="#">Ms Teams Link</a>
16.00 – 16.15	Conclusions of Day I		

**DAY 2 - TUESDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**

08.30 – 09.00	Panel preparation meeting for Day 2 of the programme audit		
09.00 – 10.00	Lecturers of programme Bachelor of Education (with different specialisations)		
10:00 – 10.30	Internal meeting		
10.30 – 11.30	Lecturers of programme; Master in Applied Educational Leadership		
11.30 – 11.45	Internal meeting		
11.45 – 12.45	Students Affairs Committee  Disciplinary Committee  Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee		
12.45 – 13.45	Internal meeting and lunch break		
13.45 – 15.15	Any other additional meeting and tour of the Premises		
15.15 – 16.15	Students from the three programmes		<a href="#">Ms Teams link</a>
16.15	Conclusions of Day 2		

<b>DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025</b>			
08.30 – 09.00	Panel preparation meeting for Day 3 of the programme audit		
09.00 – 10.00	Lecturers of programme; Master of Education (with different specialisations)		
10.00 – 10.15	Internal panel meeting		
10.15 – 11.15	External Stakeholders		<a href="#">Ms Teams link</a>
11.15 – 11.30	Internal meeting		
11.30 – 12.30	Alumni of programmes; Bachelor of Education (with different specialisations) and Master in Applied Educational Leadership (MAEL) and Master of Education		<a href="#">Ms Teams link</a>
12.30 – 13.30	Internal meeting + lunch break		
13.30 – 14.00	Any other additional meeting		
14.00 – 15.00	Final internal panel meeting		
15.00	Final presentation of the initial findings, conclusions of Day 3		



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