

External Quality Assurance

Audit Report

RDC TRAINING CENTRE

carried out on

11 July 2025

Quality education for
confident futures .

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Abbreviations List

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
BCA	Building and Construction Authority
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EQA/QA audit	External Quality Assurance Audit
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
HOI	Head of Institution
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
OHSa	Occupational Health and Safety Authority
RDC	RDC Training Centre
SAR	Self-Assessment Report

Executive Summary

Institutional Background

RDC Training Centre (RDC), located at 73 Victory Street, Qormi, Malta, is a licensed and accredited institution (License No. 2020-007), specialising in occupational health and safety education and related fields. As part of RDConsultants Ltd., the training centre benefits from a wealth of industry expertise and a commitment to enhancing workplace safety across diverse sectors. The organisational structure of RDC includes Mr Roderick Cassar as director and Head of Institution (HOI) and two (2) full-time administrative staff members responsible for student support, scheduling, and general operations. RDC has two (2) certified trainers, one of whom is the HOI himself, with expertise in health and safety, construction practices, and emergency preparedness. The training centre currently enrolls an average of two hundred (200) students annually, with class sizes ranging from five (5) to thirty (30) students per session to ensure an optimal learning environment. RDC attracts a diverse student population, including professionals from construction, manufacturing, hospitality, and healthcare sectors. The centre also welcomes individuals seeking foundational skills or certifications to enhance employability. The following are the accredited courses currently offered by RDC:

- Health and Safety for Managers Award (MQF Level 4)
- Award in Basic Fire Awareness (MQF Level 2)
- Award in Occupational Health and Safety (MQF Level 2)
- Award in Limestone and Hollow Concrete Block Laying (MQF Level 3)
- Award in Basic First Aid (MQF Level 3)
- Award in Lifting Methods and Equipment at the Workplace (MQF Level 2)

Overview of the Audit Process

This report is a result of the External Quality Assurance (EQA) process undertaken by an independent peer review panel. The panel evaluated the documentation submitted by the educational institution and conducted an audit at 73, Victory Street, Qormi, Malta. The panel is responsible for reaching conclusions on all standards. As outlined in the External Quality Audit Manual of Procedures, the MFHEA sought external expert advice to evaluate the financial capacity of the provider. Through this report, the panel also highlighted areas of good practice which, in its view, make a positive contribution to academic standards and quality of education that are worthy of being emulated and disseminated more widely.

The panel met online for the induction and the preparation of the audit on Monday 2 June 2025. The specific roles of each panel member were also discussed and agreed upon during this meeting. The panel received the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) prepared by RDC, together with other documentation. Subsequently, the panel prepared a request for additional documentation to be provided, as well as the list of RDC internal and external stakeholders with whom the panel wanted to meet and discuss matters during the audit visit. The panel met online on Thursday 19 June 2025 to undertake a desk-based analysis of all the documentation and information received. The panel shared an opinion regarding the questions for the audit meetings and agreed to alternate the chairmanship role for the different interviews. An online scoping meeting was held on Friday 27 June 2025. During the online scoping meeting, the importance of the audit process was explained

to Mr Roderick Cassar. In particular, the panel emphasised the importance that the HOI provides names of relevant external stakeholders such as alumni and student employers. This facilitated the audit process held on Friday, 11 July 2025, where the HOI and the administrative staff were present and cooperated with the panel.

The following is a summary of the timeline followed during the EQA audit process:

- Panel induction and preparation online meeting – 2 June 2025
- Desk-based analysis online meeting – 19 June 2025
- Online scoping meeting – 27 June 2025
- EQA onsite audit visit – 11 July 2025

Summary of the Conclusions Reached by the Peer Review Panel

Based on the findings documented in the report, the panel has concluded that RDC meets standards 2, 3, 5, 8, and 11, does not meet standards 10, and requires improvement for standards 1, 4, 6, 7, and 9. The recommendations in the report are meant to improve the standards already in place and to enhance good practice. The panel made five (5) mandatory recommendations (MR 1.1, MR 1.2, MR 1.3, MR 10.1 and MR 10.2), which must be implemented within six (6) months of publication of the report, two (2) mandatory recommendations (MR 9.1 and MR 9.2), which must be implemented within one (1) month of publication of the report and one mandatory recommendation, which must be implemented with immediate effect from the publication of the report. The reviewing panel made eight (8) key recommendations (KR 4.1, KR 4.2, KR 4.3, KR 6.1, KR 6.2, KR 6.3, KR 6.4, KR 6.5) which are to be implemented within six (6) months of publication of the report and another two (2) key recommendations (KR 5.1 and KR 7.1) which are to be implemented within three (3) months of the publication of the report. The panel also made eight (8) recommendations (R1.4, R2.1, R2.2, R3.1, R3.2, R8.1, R8.2, and R9.2).

About the External Quality Audit

Aims and Objectives of the EQA

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

- i. The Framework is based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and enriched by the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) perspective.
- ii. The Framework contributes to a national culture of quality, through:
 - increased agency satisfaction and numbers of service users,
 - an enhanced international profile and credibility of providers in Malta,

- the promotion of Malta as a regional provider of excellence in further and higher education.
- iii. The Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is fit for purpose.
 - iv. The External Quality Assurance (QA audit) is a tool for both development and accountability. The QA audit shall ensure that the internal quality management system of the provider is:
 - fit for purpose according to the provider's courses and service users,
 - compliant with Standards and regulations, and contributing to the development of a national quality culture,
 - contributing to the fulfilment of the broad goals of Malta's Education Strategy 2014-24,
 - implemented with effectiveness, comprehensiveness, and sustainability.
 - v. The Quality Improvement Cycle is at the heart of the Framework.
 - vi. The integrity and independence of the QA audit process is guaranteed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Institutional and financial probity: entities shall ensure that they have appropriate measures and procedures in place to ensure institutional and financial probity.
3. Design and approval of programmes: self-accrediting providers shall have appropriate processes for the design and approval of their programmes of study.
4. Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment: entities shall ensure that programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.
5. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification: entities shall consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student 'life-cycle'.
6. Teaching staff: entities shall assure the competence and effectiveness of their teaching staff.
7. Learning resources and student support: entities shall have appropriate funding for their learning and teaching activities and sufficient learning resources to fully support the students' learning experiences.
8. Information management: entities shall ensure that they collect, analyse, and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.
9. Public information: entities shall publish information about their activities which is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and readily accessible.
10. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes: entities shall implement the 'Quality Cycle' by monitoring and periodically reviewing their programmes to ensure their continuing fitness for purpose.
11. Cyclical external quality assurance: entities should undergo an external quality assurance audit by, or with the approval of, the MFHEA on a cyclical basis, according to the MFHEA guidelines, once every five years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Peer Review Panel

The peer review panel was composed of:

Chair of Review Panel: Prof. Ing. Owen Casha

Peer Reviewer: Dr Ronald Aquilina

QA Managers (MFHEA): Ms Bilyana Boshova
Mr Giacomo Annese

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 institute. The report therefore distinguishes between:

- Mandatory recommendations (MR), which are crucial to meet a Standard and **shall** be implemented within the deadlines set by the panel members.
- Key recommendations (KR) which are important to improve a Standard and **should** be implemented expeditiously by the institution within the deadline set by the panel members to address certain 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

RDC Training Centre (RDC) is licensed by the MFHEA as a Further Education Institution with license number 2020-007 to provide and deliver accredited courses at 73, Victory Street, Qormi, Malta. The Head of Institution (HOI) is Mr Roderick Cassar, who is also vested with the legal representation of RDC and is one of the two (2) tutors. The mission statement of RDC is to provide high-quality, industry-relevant training that empowers individuals and organizations to create safer workplaces and improve occupational health standards. RDC attracts a diverse student population, including professionals from the construction, manufacturing, hospitality, and healthcare sectors. The centre also welcomes individuals seeking foundational skills or certifications to enhance employability. The following are the accredited courses currently offered by RDC:

- Health and Safety for Managers Award (MQF Level 4)
- Award in Basic Fire Awareness (MQF Level 2)
- Award in Occupational Health and Safety (MQF Level 2)
- Award in Limestone and Hollow Concrete Block Laying (MQF Level 3)
- Award in Basic First Aid (MQF Level 3)
- Award in Lifting Methods and Equipment at the Workplace (MQF Level 2)

RDC aims to deliver accredited training programs aligned with industry and regulatory standards. RDC fosters a practical and theoretical understanding of health and safety practices. It maintains a culture of continuous improvement through feedback and innovation. RDC plans to expand access to training by integrating technology and flexible learning modes.

Analysis and Findings of Panel

Standard 1: Policy for Quality Assurance

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

Main Findings

RDC Training Centre (RDC) offers accredited training in health and safety, emergency first aid, fire safety management, and laying limestone and hollow concrete blocks. RDC strives to provide quality education that meets the requirements of the workplace and aligns with labour market needs. Since the institute is very small, a simple management system is adopted. Operations, quality assurance, and tuition are controlled and managed by the Head of Institution (HOI), who is always available for students to help them with their requirements. Nonetheless, a weakness in such a setup is that the same person has multiple roles, thus limiting the ability to have proper checks and balances.

RDC adheres to the principles of student-centred learning and academic integrity. Discrimination or intolerance based on age, gender, religious views, race, or any other grounds is prohibited. Policies against discrimination are also in place. In addition, assessment is carried out in both the Maltese and English languages (and in certain instances also in the Italian language), according to the needs of the students. Policies against academic misconduct, including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, and other attempts to gain unfair advantage in assessment, are also in place. Procedures and policies need to be formalised in a unified document. Even though RDC has an IQA policy document that is public, this is not complete and needs to be amended. The IQA document must be further developed and presented in a way that abides by the National Quality Assurance Framework Standards (NQAF).

The only documented feedback received by the institution is the student feedback form. This is filled in at the end of each course. Many of the interviewed alumni were not aware of this student feedback form. No documented action plans and decisions based on the received student feedback were presented to the panel members. In addition, no minute records were presented to the panel members, which supports the annual review of the institution's policies and the decisions taken by the HOI. RDC's student feedback collection is not very effective. Alternative ways of collecting feedback should be sought. RDC indirectly receives feedback from both the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) and the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), which conduct spot checks on their course attendees. RDC does not have an independent evaluator to periodically review the policies and make sure that they are being followed.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

MR 1.1 RDC shall, within six (6) months from the publication of this report, consolidate and improve the IQA policy document.

- MR 1.2** RDC shall, within six (6) months from the publication of this report, have a procedure to formally document action plans and decisions taken by the HOI.
- MR 1.3** RDC shall, within six (6) months from the publication of this report, have a revamp procedure to effectively collect student feedback.
- R 1.4** RDC could seek to engage an independent evaluator to periodically review the policies and make sure that they are being abided by.

Conclusion

RDC requires improvement to meet the requirements of Standard 1.

Standard 2: Institutional Probity

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

Main Findings

RDConsultants Ltd is a limited liability company registered on 4 March 2020 under registration number C 94954. The company is majority-owned by Mr Roderick Cassar, with the latter also being the current director. The Memorandum of Association of RDConsultants Ltd includes the provision of accredited courses and tuition as one of the company's stated objects, namely: "Provision of health and safety consultancy, project management (including site technical officer), training and ancillary services". The company did not provide an organisational chart, as Mr Cassar is the only individual in a managerial role (Head of the Institution and tutor). As such, there is no formal management structure in place. This was corroborated by a recent Jobsplus employee list, issued at the employer's request, showing Mr Cassar as Head of the Institution (HOI) and two other employees not involved in tuition delivery. RDC's operations are heavily centred around a single individual—the HOI—which could present challenges for business continuity, particularly if RDC plans to grow its operations. Besides the HOI, who handles the majority of the teaching, there is only one part-time tutor who provides lectures when needed. As a small organisation, RDC also employs two part-time administrative staff who manage student support, lecture scheduling, and day-to-day operations.

Based on the documentation reviewed by the accountant appointed by MFHEA, the company appears to be compliant with its fiscal obligations, including the timely submission of income tax returns, PE returns, and VAT returns to the Commissioner for Revenue. No outstanding liabilities with fiscal authorities were identified. Additionally, the company is fully compliant with the submission of its annual audited financial statements and annual return to the Malta Business Registry. However, at the time of writing, the 2023 financial statements were not yet visible on the MBR online portal. RDConsultants Ltd shared the signed audited financial statements for the year 2023, the signed profit and loss account and balance sheet for 2024, and a projected financial budget for 2025. The accountant's analysis of the company's financial performance indicates that it recorded a profit. Moreover, its financial position reflects adequate cash reserves and a positive equity balance. However, both current and liquid ratios were below the healthy range, primarily due to a reliance on borrowings and tax payables. Nonetheless, the positive equity position suggests that the company maintains sufficient financial resilience to navigate unforeseen challenges. According to the accountant's report, while the 2025 budget projects a profitable outcome, it is important to note a significant 51% decrease in revenue compared to the previous year, alongside a near doubling of operating costs. This results in a projected segment profit of only €2,620 (pre-tax) for RDC, compared to €14,875 in 2024.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

- R2.1 RDC could consider delegating some of the lecturing tasks of the Head of the Institution, so that he can dedicate more time to other strategic issues relating to the effective operations of the institution and to ensure business continuity.

R2.2 RDConsultants Ltd could follow up with the Malta Business Registry to determine why the 2023 financial statements are not yet showing on the online portal, despite being submitted on 12 December 2024.

Conclusion

RDC meets the requirements of Standard 2.

Standard 3: Design and Approval of Programmes

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

Main Findings

The review panel considers that RDC has continuously provided accredited courses since 2019 and currently accredited courses from MQF level 2 to MQF level 4 with MFHEA, which is prima facie evidence that RDC has the appropriate procedures for the design and approval of programmes in place. RDC is an educational institution that strives to provide training programs, particularly related to occupational health and safety and the construction industry.

The review panel noted that a standard operating procedure for the design of a new program is in place. RDC has a well-defined process for creating, reviewing, and approving its study programs. This process ensures that all courses meet industry standards, regulatory requirements, and student needs, guaranteeing that the programs are relevant, current, and of high quality, equipping learners with the necessary skills for their chosen industries. The stages of a typical process undertaken by RDC for the launching of a new accredited programme comprise the following.

Before developing a new program, RDC conducts a thorough needs assessment. This involves consulting informally with industry stakeholders, employers, and professionals to identify industry requirements, student demand, and emerging trends, ensuring the curriculum is relevant. Subject matter experts develop the course content, ensuring it meets the required learning outcomes and industry standards. The course content provides a detailed description of the modules in the programme, including the learning objectives, the contents of the programme, and the target audience of the program. The curriculum balances theoretical and practical learning, allowing students to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios. After the design stage is completed, the new program goes through a formal approval process. This includes reviewing the new programme's contents by RDC's two lecturers for alignment with institutional standards, and the final approval by the HOI. Then the HOI applies for accreditation with MFHEA. Once approved, all necessary documents, such as the syllabus, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and course materials, are finalised and made available to staff and students.

Programmes are continuously reviewed internally by the HOI to reflect current trends, especially where changes in legislation are concerned. The reviewing panel noted that evaluation forms filled in by students could be used more effectively to continuously enhance the service provided to students. Instructors' feedback, when presented at the end of the module, emphasised the effectiveness of the course structure, materials, and resources. The reviewing panel also noted that no major revisions to the accredited programs took place during the past five years.

Good Practices Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

- R3.1** The institution could consider capturing recommendations and feedback in a standard form to enhance the curriculum content of the programmes from stakeholders, such as industry experts, employers, and students.

R3.2 The institution could consider undertaking major revisions for those programs that were delivered over five (5) years to reflect major technological changes in the taught subject areas.

Conclusion

RDC meets the requirements of Standard 3.

Standard 4: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

Main Findings

The review panel noted that RDC's pedagogical approaches are primarily focused on student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment. Of significance is RDC's approach towards student-centred learning. The panel noted that many of RDC's students come from the construction industry and may not have strong academic backgrounds. Consequently, RDC employs a variety of teaching and learning strategies tailored to their needs. These include hands-on learning, real-world case studies, and practical exercises that relate directly to their work in the field of practice. RDC's teaching methods are also inclusive, using visual aids, simplified language, and interactive technology to accommodate different learning styles. RDC has well-established policies for teaching and learning that encourage interactive and participatory methods, allowing students to actively engage with the course content provided and apply their knowledge gained in practical situations. RDC also emphasises context-based learning through real-life situations. Such an approach helps bridge the gap between the taught academic concepts and the practical applications, thus ensuring that students can easily apply the knowledge gained in their fieldwork. Students are also exposed to the lecturers' vast experiences on the topics being lectured and the practical sessions that are held when students undertake fieldwork. Teaching methods are tailored to meet learners' needs and are subject to review based on the lecturers' evaluation sheets.

The review panel noted that RDC strives to deliver the courses in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the creation of the learning process through discussions and small group work. This was confirmed by all the students and alumni who were interviewed during this audit. They also expressed their utmost satisfaction with their lecturers who continuously assisted them to achieve the course's objectives. Of importance is the provision of training material or notes that are sent to students via email or that are provided in hard copy.

The provision of continuous feedback by lecturers through formal assessments and evaluations to guide the learning journey directly to the learners efficiently and helpfully is one of the main strengths of RDC. This feedback was greatly appreciated by the learners and contributed towards their skill improvement in a timely fashion. The lecturers' self-assessment report, coupled with the students' feedback standard form ensures that the course objectives are met. Student evaluations are undertaken post each programme. Students can ask questions or provide feedback to the lecturer at any time during the course. This open communication channel is beneficial for enhancing the teaching and learning processes offered by RDC. Assessment is conducted fairly and consistently through clearly defined rubrics and transparent evaluation criteria. RDC undertakes a range of assessment methods, comprising written examinations, practical assignments, and group work. To maintain fairness, RDC undergoes an informal internal verification of the assessment paper, and the corrected students' submissions are undertaken by RDC's two lecturers, to ensure that grading standards are applied consistently across all courses.

When students' submissions are in the form of assignments, as in Level 4 courses, students use paid-in anti-plagiarism software to check for similarities with other previous assignments or other publications on the same topic. However, since for Level 2 and 3 courses, RDC uses multiple choice questions as a form of assessment, the issue of plagiarism does not arise in these situations. The review panel noted that there is evidence that lecturers provide a mark for the assignments and remarks where appropriate to students for every module that is delivered. The panel noted that to address student diversity, RDC

implements measures such as differentiated instruction, which allows for varying levels of complexity in learning materials. Additionally, RDC offers one-to-one tutoring and mentoring sessions to ensure that students who struggle academically receive personalised support. The review panel also noted that RDC does not have a student complaints procedure and form in place. Although no major complaints have been registered by students, students communicate via e-mail to the administrative staff or verbally to the HOI.

Good Practice Identified

Students are exposed to the vast practical experiences of their lecturers on the topics that are discussed during the lectures.

Recommendations for Improvement

- KR 4.1** RDC should standardise, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, and implement procedures for the internal verification process of assignments and tests compiled by lecturers before being submitted to students.
- KR 4.2** RDC should formulate, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, a standardised procedure for the internal verification of corrected assignments and tests submitted by students by a second assessor to ensure consistency and fairness in the marking of assignments.
- KR 4.3** RDC shall develop, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, a standardised students' complaints and appeals procedure and implement it in practice by not accepting any other form of communicating a complaint.

Conclusion

RDC requires improvement to meet the requirements of Standard 4.

Standard 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

Main Findings

Admission: The institution promotes its courses via the website, Facebook page, and through established connections with stakeholders in the industry. Currently, there is no formal ongoing marketing campaign as the HOI feels that there is no such need at the time. The accredited courses do not require specific academic entry requirements, and as such, there is no such information available on the institution's website. However, the panel advises that some information related to age requirements and language comprehension can be added to ensure clarity with prospective applicants. Although the courses are offered to the public, the HOI noted that currently, most students are selected and presented through their respective employers. The reviewing panel also learnt that students often call or send an email to RDC to request further information about the offered courses and the procedure to apply for one of the courses being offered.

Progression: The fact that the currently offered courses are relatively short, the only way for the participants to be updated on their progress is through informal feedback during the sessions.

Certification: On completion of the training course and following assessment, a certificate is issued by the administration. The provided certificate contains the requirements, including the level of study, date, and MFHEA license number.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

KR 5.1 RDC should, within three (3) months from the publication of this report, publicly list the basic requirements, including age and language comprehension, for the accredited courses on offer.

Conclusion

RDC meets the requirements of Standard 5.

Standard 6: Teaching Staff

<i>Teaching staff: entities shall assure the competence and effectiveness of their teaching staff.</i>
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Main Findings

The policy related to the teaching methodology adopted by RDC focuses on student-centred methods such as group work and discussions with students based on the lecturers' and students' work experiences. This approach to student-centred learning, including clear communication of assessment criteria and providing personalised support, contributes continuously to a positive student experience. All the lecturers are specialised in their fields academically, as well as having several years of hands-on experience. This ensures that lecturers have the appropriate knowledge to deliver the programs effectively at RDC.

Lecturers are currently engaged through recommendations with the knowledge that they can deliver the lectures. The review panel noted RDC has the updated curriculum vitae of its two lecturers in place, delineating their employment history as well as their academic qualifications. Should RDC decide to undertake to recruit lecturers, they have the recruitment and selection policy in place, which is based on a number of set criteria that aid RDC to select the most appropriate lecturer who is able to deliver effectively the assigned programme and to fit within the culture of RDC. However, the panel noted that this policy lacks the formulation of a set of standard questions to be used during the recruitment interviews with prospective candidates.

The reviewing panel noted during this audit that lecturers undertake Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities during the year. RDC emphasises that the CPD of lecturing staff is a key factor in their personal growth, with both lecturers participating in workshops and seminars hosted by the Health and Safety at Work Authority and the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), and attending other industry conferences. RDC encourages lecturing staff to engage in continuous learning to improve their teaching strategies, particularly in the integration of technology into the learning process. Such personal development opportunities allow lecturing staff to keep abreast of teaching methodologies and industry trends, such as integrating digital tools and resources into the learning process. The panel has learned during the audit that this is particularly important as the construction industry increasingly adopts digital technology for project management and design. However, the panel observed during the audit that no official records are held on these CPD activities at RDC.

The panel noted that RDC demonstrates its commitment to quality teaching by appraising students' feedback at the end of each module. Also, the panel noted that it is commendable that the lecturer who teaches Level 4 undertakes a detailed self-assessment report on the delivery of the programme and presents it to the HOI. The analysis of this self-assessment by RDC's HOI enhances the quality of teaching and addresses areas for improvement. However, the reviewing panel noted that formal peer review visits are not undertaken during the delivery of lectures at RDC.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

KR 6.1 RDC should set up, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, an interviewing board comprising more than one (1) person and formulate the procedure, comprising also a set of

standardised questions or prompts to be applied during the interview process to recruit prospective candidates.

- KR 6.2** RDC should formulate, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, a standard document that captures any CPD activities that are undertaken by staff.
- KR 6.3** RDC should formulate, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, a standard document that captures a detailed self-assessment report on the quality of teaching at the end of a program completion, based on a standard set of measurable criteria.
- KR 6.4** RDC should set up, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, a standard document that delineates the teaching observation procedure, comprising also a teaching observation sheet based on a set of standard measurable criteria.
- KR 6.5** RDC should set up, within six (6) months of the publication of this report, a standard document that delineates the lecturer's contract of employment and the corresponding job description.

Conclusion

RDC requires improvement to meet Standard 6.

Standard 7: Learning Resources and Student Support

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

Main Findings

The panel noted that the physical resources and facilities made available for teaching and learning purposes are somehow adequate and support the educational goals and requirements of the current programs offered at the institution. Nonetheless, the panel noted recommends that the premises need to be improved in terms of cleanliness and upkeep. In addition, writing tablet chairs would be more adequate and ergonomic than the currently employed solution of giving students a wooden slab to write upon. A cleaner and more polished environment is expected from the institution. Nonetheless, the premises have the necessary access and teaching facilities in place. In order for RDC to align to its licensing conditions, the panel advises that whenever training is held outside the premises to carry out practical sessions, the HOI is to inform the MFHEA via email to obtain the necessary clearance.

With regards to the physical teaching resources required to ensure adequate level of training for the accredited programs, the panel members noted that the institution has several CPR mannequins and other specialised equipment as needed for teaching. The interviewed alumni seemed generally satisfied with the level of the resources (including the teaching material and notes) that was made available for both theoretical and practical learning purposes. Although the institution has an online website, it does not make use of the online platform to disseminate information necessary for prospective students such as providing a handbook including the student obligations and rights, policies, and other key information. The panel recommends that it is important that such information is made available to the students, to assist them in making informed decisions and enhance their learning experience.

Although the restricted number of administrative personnel at RDC, there appears to be a suitable level of engagement and assistance to the students. As explained by the HOI, the institution's personnel are very approachable and easy to reach. This was confirmed by the alumni interviewed during the audit. Individual attention and support were also emphasised. Arrangements are in place to support students who encounter difficulties in their studies. While there is previous planning with regards to the language to be used during the delivery and assessment (normally Maltese or English), when students are not adequately familiar with these languages, arrangements for an interpreter are to be made.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

KR 7.1 The institution should, within three (3) months from the publication of this report, make available key information for the students via the website or a student handbook.

MR7.2 The institution shall, with immediate effect from the publication of this report, improve the cleanliness and upkeep of the premises and acquire writing tablet chairs for its students.

Conclusion

RDC requires improvement to meet Standard 7.

Standard 8: Information Management

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

Main Findings

The review panel noted that RDC has protocols that are in conformity with the procedures of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act (Cap 586). RDC ensures that all the personal data collected, which is held within the institute's servers, is correct and up to date, administered fairly and lawfully, processed following good practice, and not kept for a period longer than is required by law. The panel observed that RDC gave adequate assurance that contents relating to students' names, surnames, and academic records for the purpose of issuing academic transcripts or certificates shall be kept for 40 years.

The panel also noted that, in line with GDPR, RDC holds data relating to the profile of the student population, including prevalence of vulnerable groups, and students' satisfaction with their programmes in an anonymised manner for 4 years from the date of course completion.

The administrative staff handles most of the data generated at RDC. The panel noted that RDC has data management arrangements in place based on a physical file system as well as spreadsheets for the collection of key information about its students and lecturers. However, the panel observed that RDC rarely analyses and evaluates the data generated at RDC. Access to student records is limited and controlled, with specific guidelines for who can access the records. This ensures that only authorised individuals, such as administrative staff and lecturers, can access the information for legitimate purposes. This access procedure enables RDC's administration to run its programmes effectively and to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals within the Institute.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

- R8.1** RDC could consider storing the data in one database so that the analysis and evaluation of students' data, leading to assessing student performance, identifying trends, and making decisions on course delivery, may be carried out more effectively.
- R8.2** RDC could consider formalizing the procedure for traceability of alumni relating to employability and career progression.

Conclusion

RDC meets the requirements of Standard 8.

Standard 9: Public Information

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

Main Findings

RDC uses Facebook as its primary social media platform. Some information about both the accredited and non-accredited courses offered by RDC is available on their official website (<https://www.rdconsultants.net/>), but certain sections need to be updated because they are either incomplete or feature incorrect statements, such as that certain courses are currently undergoing accreditation by MFHEA. The reviewing panel recommends that RDC includes the passing rate for each course. The RDC website includes a mission statement, and while it features the IQA policy document of the institution, the latter is incomplete or too generic in certain sections and thus needs to be revised. Policies and procedures are not readily available on the RDC website. The panel learnt during the audit that the maintenance of the RDC website is carried out by the HOI. Students get to know about RDC's courses mainly by word of mouth but also via the website and social media platforms. Any course enquiries received via the phone, social media, or other modes of communication are mainly dealt with by the administrative staff and sometimes by the HOI. Information about a particular course is made available to the prospective attendees either via email or viva voce.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

- MR 9.1** RDC shall, within one (1) month from the publication of this report, provide detailed information about the content of each accredited course on its website. This is to be presented in a standardised format and to include the following: course name, MQF/EQF Level, duration, guided learning hours, total qualification time, ECTS Credit Value, delivery method, learning outcomes, assessment method, date of next intake, mode of attendance, grading system, and language.
- MR 9.2** RDC shall, within one (1) month from the publication of this report, publish an updated version of its IQA document on its website together with policies and procedures.
- R 9.2** RDC could indicate the passing rate and the payment fee for each course on its website. If the payment fee cannot be disclosed for commercial reasons, a note on the website stating that prospective students or customers may contact RDC for a quotation.

Conclusion

RDC requires improvement to meet Standard 9.

Standard 10: Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

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

Main Findings

During the meeting held with the HOI, it was stated that the programme monitoring and periodic review process is based on the analysis of the feedback received from both the students and the industry stakeholders, including local authorities. The HOI stated that the institute believes in the importance of providing high-quality courses to its customers while satisfying their expectations. In addition, the HOI stated that the institute's policies are updated on an annual basis and that the institute is committed to remaining open to ideas that may impact the operations of the institute. Nonetheless, the reviewing panel noted that the feedback received from the students and the industry stakeholders is very limited and is neither properly documented nor recorded. The only documented feedback received by the institution is the student feedback form. This is filled in at the end of each course. No documented action plans and decisions based on the received student feedback were presented to the panel members. In addition, no minute records were presented to the panel members, which supports the annual review of the institution's policies. No documented evidence of feedback received from the industry stakeholders or an independent evaluator, who is an expert in the field, was provided by the institution.

Good Practice Identified

None.

Recommendations for Improvement

MR 10.1 RDC shall, within six (6) months from the publication of this report, formulate a procedure to record and minute meetings held with industry stakeholders on possible programme updates and policy revision, while documenting actions and decisions based on the outcome of such meetings.

MR 10.2 RDC shall, within six (6) months from the publication of this report, formulate a procedure to involve an independent evaluator to periodically review the courses offered by the institution, monitor the delivery of these courses, and record suggested recommendations, changes, and action plans.

Conclusion

RDC does not meet the requirements of Standard 10.

Standard 11: Cyclical External Quality Assurance

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

Main Findings

This is the first audit cycle for RDC. The peer review panel notes that RDC supported the audit throughout the entire process - this is evident from the communication with the MFHEA officers before the audit, the response to requests for documents made by the panel, and the information provided throughout the scoping visit and the audit interviews. The panel comments that the HOI, Mr Roderick Cassar, who facilitated the entire audit, was cooperative and supported the panel throughout the process.

Recommendations for Improvement

None.

Conclusion

RDC meets the requirements of Standard 11.

Response by the Provider

Preamble

We acknowledge receipt of the findings for RDC Training Centre, and appreciate the thorough review conducted by the audit team, which will further support our commitment to maintaining quality and commitment to high standards of training. We have already started on the recommendations provided, and have already applied some of them, in line with our values that students receive the best training experience possible. We will address each observation and recommendation received with integrity in line with the belief and ultimate aim of ensuring the best training experience possible is delivered. Through the actions outlined in this report, RDC will aim not just to meet expectations as set by the audit but to exceed them by embedding sustainable improvements across our training centre. To mention more specifically, the IQA, student handbook, webpage, training courses, and student administration forms will continue to be updated in line with your review and the requirements of standards.

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

Action plan		
Recommendations	Actions to be taken to address the recommendations	Date for completion
Standard 1:		
	The IQA policy shall be reviewed in detail by an independent advisor and updated accordingly within the timeframe provided.	30 th Aug 26
	Consultancy has already started to formalise plans, including any updates to policies and procedures, in line with recommendations from HOI	30 th Aug 26
	Whilst noting that RDC has tirelessly explained and informed students of the importance of student feedback, specifically for ensuring that tuition is effectively provided, we shall nonetheless implement further procedures in line with recommendations provided to effectively collect student feedback. Consideration is in fact being given to clarify such a requirement for feedback from students even at the enrolment stage, not just at end of course. To note further that we already collect, record and analyse feedback from students, and we have proactively engaged with students to ensure the training provided is achieving its goal.	30 th Aug 26
	RDC is already in talks with an independent third party specifically to carry out reviews at least annually on the following areas: - Training programme, i.e. the syllabus being taught - Outcome of training provided, mainly pass rates - Applying feedback from students for continuous improvement - Ensuring tutors are up to date and have in-depth knowledge of the course on offer -	30Apr2026

Standard 2:		
	Following from the above, currently Roderick Cassar and Louis Coleiro shall remain effectively the main tutors for RDC. This is sufficient for current operational levels and capacity. RDC will still however consider the possibility of further expansion by introducing further tutors and exploring further related topics related to the current subjects being taught. There will be periodic reviews, at least annually, to consider the need for further tutors thus ensuring the Institute meets its requirements of IQA standards and simultaneously maintain quality in tuition and achieve business growth.	30Apr2026
	We confirm that the annual audited accounts for the year end 31 December 2023 have been filed and are showing on the Malta Business Registry. In case of difficulty please contact us and we can show you online.	30Apr2026
Standard 3:		
	RDC is dedicated to training and student development. We already have reviews in place to better understand the training quality being provided and courses that may be required. We shall nonetheless take the recommendation made to further enhance these reviews by the use of standard questions and multiple choice type of answers specifically to facilitate the use of statistical reporting in support of the aim of continued improvement in the service provided. The setup of a standard template in line with the aim to facilitate reporting to enhance content of the programmes shall be subject to review by the independent advisor and shall be include research with industry experts and employers, not just students, to ensure the effectiveness of the feedback form.	31Aug2026
	As part of the annual review on the syllabus and feedback received, RDC shall implement a formal periodic programme review cycle, at least annually, whereby consideration is given to changes in regulation, technology, industry or other market conditions.	31Aug2026
Standard 4:		
	RDC shall setup procedures for fair and robust assignments that ensure students are effectively tested for their knowledge gained from tuition provided. These assignments shall focus on the training being provided and shall be subject to updates based on results, feedback received and regulation changes.	31Aug2026
	Assignments shall be subject to four eyes principle, whereby a second tutor is assigned the task to review and assess marks provided.	30Apr2026
	The current informal procedure of managing complaints shall be formalised and specific standard templates setup for collecting student complaints and providing right to appeal. A register shall be kept of any complaints, how they are managed and remedial actions taken. Such procedure, including the form and register, will be reviewed independent to ensure fairness for both student and RDC, and as part of the continued development of RDC.	31Aug2026

Standard 5:		
	Entry requirements (age and language competence) is clearly defined and published on course details available online.	30Apr2026
Standard 6:		
	The current tutors and independent advisor will ensure the setup of a standard set of questions in line with requirements made and the training centre to ensure a structured interview process when recruiting new tutors. This will consist mainly of specific questions and expected key points that should be answered from potential candidates. The procedure and questionnaire setup will be subject to periodic reviews and update according to changing circumstances and requirements of RDC.	31Aug2026
	The current informal way of ensuring CPD is done by tutors shall be formalised by the setup of a training register that clearly identifies CPD training done. The register shall be reviewed annually to identify potential shortages and requirements for update in training by tutors.	30Apr2026
	RDC is in possession of a report that summarises attendance, pass rates, and feedback based on standard questions mentioned above which will help further with analysing the success in tuition of a lecturer.	30Apr2026
	Discussions will be held with the second tutor, in line with the four eye principle mentioned above, and further review will be done by the independent advisor with the aim to ensure that tutors deliver effectively the training required. Such reviews shall be logged onto a report in support of continued development and improvement in service.	30Apr2026
	Lecturer's contract of employment and job descriptions will be standardised to ensure the desired level of qualification when recruiting. This will help in ensuring the desired level of continued professional development by tutors which further enhance the training provided to students.	30Apr2026
Standard 7:		
	The student handbook will be updated with more detail provided so as to ensure students are better informed of the training being provided and other training available. Such information will be available both online and directly to the student on request.	30Apr2026
	We note that the premises were in progress of being painted and repaired at the time of inspection which have now been completed. RDC offices and training centres are now subject to cleaning twice weekly. The chairs have been updated with writing tablets as recommended.	30Apr2026
Standard 8:		
	RDC is currently exploring the viability of using a system for the implementation of a centralised digital data management system.	31Aug2026

	Any use of IT systems will be subject to detailed review and risk analysis for continued compliance with GDPR requirements.	
	Development of an alumni tracking procedure may not be possible since it implies continued review of a student's employment history which goes beyond the remit of a training centre. The aim of RDC is and will remain focused on ensuring that the student develops further their knowledge and skills in support of their employment and career development. However RDC cannot continue tracking what a student opts for following the successful completion of training.	31Aug2026
Standard 9:		
	RDC's website has been fully updated to include:	
	Detailed course information (MQF level, duration, learning outcomes, etc.)	30Apr2026
	Clear and structured course descriptions	30Apr2026
	RDC will be updating the IQA Policy and institutional procedures in collaboration with the independent advisor. Once completed, these will be published online, including any policies and procedures.	
	The % pass rate and fee applicable will be updated to the information on courses available online.	
Standard 10:		
	RDC shall hold minutes of any meetings held with employers and businesses to ensure that any recommended updates to training, any new courses requested, feedback received and suggested updates to policies and procedures. These minutes would be used as part of the annual quality review by the independent external evaluator, and as part of business planning by management.	31Aug2026
	Following from the point just noted, the independent external evaluator will be requested to report in writing its findings, including recommendations for update to policies and procedures, and such reports shall be stored safely.	31Aug2026
Standard 11:		
	RDC is committed to maintain ongoing compliance and to continue strengthening its QA framework in preparation for future audits.	30Sep2026

Response to Mandatory Recommendations Made by the Peer Review Panel

Mandatory recommendations	Actions to be taken to address the recommendation	Date for completion
Standard 1:	RDC acknowledges the results of the audit, and has immediately started working on improving feedback from and communication in general with students. Discussions are being held with an independent advisor and consideration is being given to updating application forms, website and other means to ensure better feedback from students. RDC wishes to note that some of the students seem to have forgotten at the time of your interview that a feedback form was actually filled, in fact we have maintained such records in line with the expectancy that we continue to improve our training.	
MR1.1	The IQA policy shall be reviewed in detail by an independent advisor and updated accordingly within the timeframe provided.	30 th Aug 26
MR1.2	Consultancy has already started to formalise plans, including any updates to policies and procedures, in line with recommendations from HOI	30 th Aug 26
MR1.3	Whilst noting that RDC has tirelessly explained and informed students of the importance of student feedback, specifically for ensuring that tuition is effectively provided, we shall nonetheless implement further procedures in line with recommendations provided to effectively collect student feedback. Consideration is in fact being given to clarify such a requirement for feedback from students even at enrolment stage, not just at end of course. To note further that we already collect, record and analyse feedback from students and we have proactively engaged with students to ensure training provided is achieving its goal.	30 th Aug 26
Standard 7:	RDC apologises if at the time of the audit the premises were being updated.	
MR7.2	An independent contractor was engaged and the office has now been painted and repaired. RDC offices and training centres are now subject to cleaning twice weekly. The chairs have been updated with writing tablets as recommended	30Apr2026

Standard 9:	RDC 's acknowledges the recommendations on better information for students about courses available and making sure an updated IQA is placed on the Institute's website.	
MR9.1 & MR9.2	RDC's website has been fully updated to include: - Detailed course information (MQF level, duration, learning outcomes, etc.) - Clear and structured course descriptions RDC will be updating the IQA Policy and institutional procedures in collaboration with the independent advisor. Once completed, these will be published online, including any policies and procedures. The % pass rate and fee applicable will be updated to the information on courses available online.	30Apr2026
Standard 10:	RDC will set regular meetings, and engage an external professional who will check and ensure meetings are held and documented in line with quality standards, including feedback from students and other stakeholders.	
MR10.1	RDC shall hold minutes of any meetings held with employers and businesses to ensure that any recommended updates to training, any new courses requested, feedback received and suggested updates to policies and procedures. These minutes would be used as part of the annual quality review by the independent external evaluator, and as part of business planning by management.	31Aug2026
MR10.2	Following from the point just noted, the independent external evaluator will be requested to report in writing its findings, including recommendations for update to policies and procedures, and such reports shall be stored safely.	31Aug2026

Annexes

Annex 1: Review Panel Bio Notes

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

The following biography notes present the profiles of the members of the peer review panel. The bio notes are correct as of the time the QA audit was carried out on Friday, 11 July 2025.

Chair of Review Panel:

Prof. Ing. Owen Casha received the BEng (Hons) degree (summa cum laude) in Electrical Engineering from the University of Malta in 2004. From September 2007 till June 2008, he was on a research collaboration with CEA-LETI (Grenoble, France) and ST-Microelectronics, as part of his doctoral studies. He received a PhD in Radio Frequency Integrated Circuit Design from the University of Malta in 2010. Prof. Ing. Casha is currently an Associate Professor with the Department of Microelectronics and Nanoelectronics. His research interests are low-voltage low-phase-noise radio frequency oscillators and synthesizers, high-speed integrated circuits, embedded systems, RF MEMS, and design of assistive devices. He authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications in conference proceedings, journals, and book chapters. Prof. Ing. Casha was the co-investigator in a number of EU and National funded research projects, including LAB4MEMS, LAB4MEMS II, SPEECHIE, Interreg CESBA MED, ESAIRQ-EUREKA Cluster PENTA, SALT-CITY and SMARTCLAP, and is currently involved in IPCEI and PREMIERTOGO. Prof. Ing. Casha has sat on a number of NCFHE/MFHEA QA review panels for various institutions, acted as a COST Action proposal evaluator, and as an evaluator for the Post Doc Reach High Scholarships in 2015.

Peer Reviewer:

Dr Ronald Aquilina is a senior lecturer at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST). At MCAST, he currently lectures on Research Methods in the Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, and Master's in Research Methods, specialising in the application of Grounded Theory and the use of MAXQDA as an analysis tool for qualitative research. He is also the primary supervisor for candidates pursuing the professional Doctorate in Research at MCAST. He was previously a senior lecturer at St Martin's Institute for Higher Education, lecturing on Information Systems and Management to undergraduate students. He was also vice-principal of the same institute between 2007 and 2011. Dr Aquilina was also Information Technology Manager at Marsovin Group and Systems Manager at Dowty (Malta) Limited. Dr Aquilina graduated in Economics with Honours from the University of Malta. He furthered his studies by reading for a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from the same University. He completed his formal education at the Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen. At RGU, he earned his Doctorate in Business Administration by doing original research on IT strategizing in small firms. He also attained a postgraduate certificate in higher education (PCGHE) at the Saint Martin's Institute for Higher Education.

Annex 2: Audit Visit Agenda

RDC Training Centre Further Education Institution 11 July 2025

Venue:	RD Consultants
08.30-09:00	Arrival at the venue, MFHEA EQA Panel Preparation Meeting
09.00-10:00	Meeting with Head of Institution
10.00-10:15	Internal MFHEA EQA panel meeting
10.15-11:15	Meeting with students from all courses
11.15-11:30	Internal MFHEA EQA panel meeting
11.30-12:30	Meeting with Tutors
12.30-12:45	Internal MFHEA EQA panel meeting
12.45-13:30	Administration/ Admission Personnel
13.30-14:30	Working Lunch and Panel Discussion
14.30-15:30	Meetings with Alumni
15.30-15:45	Internal MFHEA EQA panel meeting
15.45-16:15	Meeting with External Stakeholders
16.15-16:30	Internal MFHEA EQA panel meeting
16.30-16:45	Presentation of Initial Findings Peer Review Panel and Head of Institution



Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)

Furter Education Unit

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

Email: further.education@mfhea.mt

Tel: +356 2598 1489

www.mfhea.mt