

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Institute of Family Therapy – Malta
Version 5 – July 2022



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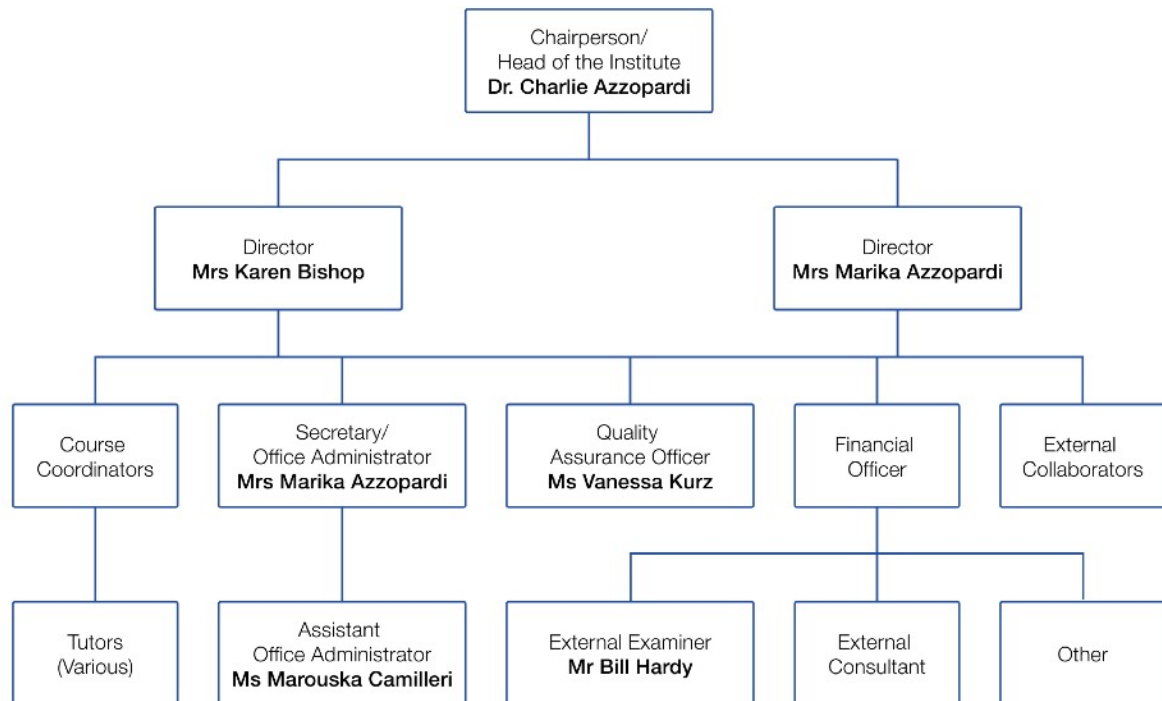
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INTRODUCTION TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

A Organisational Structure of IFT–Malta

The figure below describes the layout, authorities and responsibilities of the Institute’s Management Board.



B Scope of Application of the Quality Assurance Manual

The scope of application of the contents of this document covers the following quality assurance activities necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority with regards to local Training Institutions who provide training and development programmes.

This is an expression of commitment to develop and monitor a culture which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance in all IFT–Malta’s training provided.

C Quality Assurance Statement

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Institute of Family Therapy – Malta aims at contributing towards securing the wellbeing of individuals, families and organisations in Malta and Gozo in all its activities which include teaching and training, diverse therapeutic services, community educational services, and collaboration with organisations.

To achieve this, the Institute of Family Therapy–Malta commits itself on the following guiding principles:

- Understand, meet and strive to exceed current and future trainees and clients expectations through collaborative practices.
- Provide a framework for establishing and reviewing quality policy and related objectives by Board of Directors and create an environment in which all IFT Team members can become fully involved in achieving the organisation's objectives.
- Optimise available human resources through continuous professional development of all staff members.
- Define, document and regularly review the Institute's standard policies and procedures process.
- Identify, understand and manage the system of interrelated processes through the application of the guidelines provided by the Malta Higher & Further Education Authority, the European Family Therapy Association and the Psychotherapy Profession Board.
- Regularly identifies operational constraints and plan for possible continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the quality management system with measurable goals.
- Factual approach to Decision making: Make use of recorded data, intuitive analysis of data and information with the intent for continuous evidence-based improvement of quality.

D Document Profile and Change History

1	Document Category	IFT–Malta Quality Manual
2	List of document approvers	IFT–Malta Chairperson Board of Directors
3	Minimum list of document users to be notified upon release of document update	IFT–Malta Chairperson Board of Directors IFT Secretary Current students Prospective students Financial controller MFHEA
4	Hard copy distribution	IFT–Malta Chairperson
5	Document change history	All Changed and Updated documents are to be kept in file for records purposes

Instructions for document user with e–mail availability

All IFT–Malta team members and its service users can view currently approved quality assurance documents on www.ift-malta.com website all in one document called Quality Assurance Policy & Procedures Manual.

Message for continuous improvement

Procedures are meant to be ‘living’ documents that need to be followed, maintained and updated. If the procedure does not reflect the current practice it needs to be updated. Please contact IFT–Malta Chairperson or one of the board members to suggest updates.

E **Glossary of Terms**

Term	Definition
Organisation	IFT–Malta
Management Board	Company Directors Directors and Shareholders
QMS	IFT–Malta Chairperson
QA Officer	Quality Management System
Chairperson	Document Controller and Quality Management Systems Coordinator

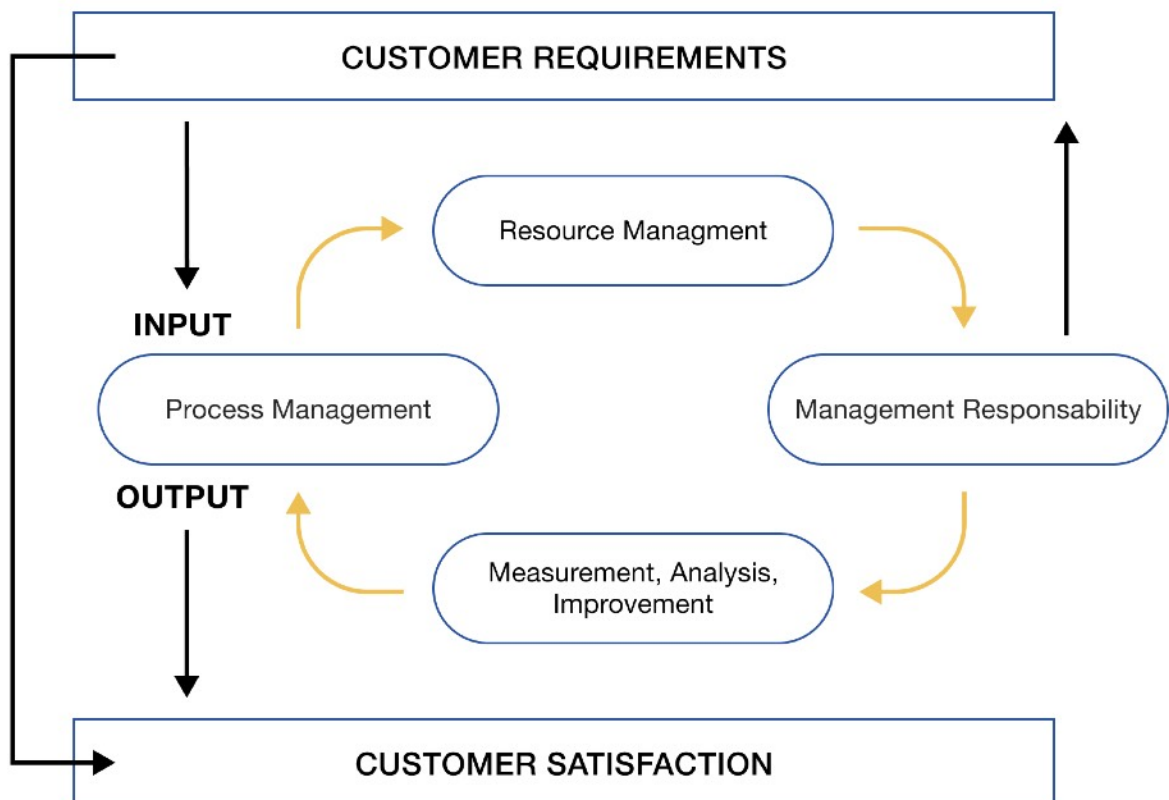
IFT – MALTA
QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance

This Institute of Family Therapy – Malta has established and documented a Quality Management System (QMS) in accordance with the requirements of the MFHEA, based on the required standards outlined in the External Audit Assurance Manual of Procedures. The Institute seeks continually to improve the effectiveness of the QMS. The Institute recognises the need for regulated and approved processes in order to achieve the goals stated within the Quality Assurance Policy & Procedures Manual. This includes:

- The interaction between processes and people,
- the effectiveness of those processes, and
- the need to adequately regulate through monitoring and continual improvement, the relevance of the processes to the organisation.

The drawing below describes the key processes of the Quality Management System



The chart above describes the main interactions between the functional groups at IFT–Malta related to the main scope of the QMS. The flowchart covers the process from training design up to consumer experience including feedback loop.

The Organisation delivers training to third parties or other external parties. Occasionally the organisation collaborates with other organisations to design and deliver such training. All training processes are performed in–house under the requirements and recommendations established by the Training Institutes Chamber of the European Family Therapy Association and of the International Family Therapy Association, as well as the Malta Association for Psychotherapy and the Psychotherapy Professions Board in Malta. Courses are in line with the parameters established by the MFHEA. IFT–Malta also ensures that the courses delivered are also in line with warranting requirements as established by the relevant authorities, for example the Psychotherapy Profession Board regulated by the Psychotherapy Act.

1.2 Documentation requirements

In order to be able to sustain an efficient and effective Quality Management System, the Institute of Family Therapy – Malta realises that it needs to:

- State what it does: establish and document processes that constitute the quality management systems.
- Does what it states: implements and maintains its quality management system.

In order to achieve the above (i & ii), IFT–Malta has documented the procedures and records required to demonstrate compliance with:

- The Institute’s own standards
- Malta Further & Higher Education Authority
- Course Committee Meetings
- Board Meetings
- Psychotherapy Act
- European Family Therapy Association
- European Psychotherapy Association

The Institute's documentation system is structured as follows:

- Quality Assurance Policy & Procedures Manual
- Documented procedures required by MFHEA

Other documented procedures needed by the Institute to ensure the effective planning, operation and control of its processes.

- Training staff about Quality Assurance processes
- An Internal Quality Assurance audit process
- Annual report which will assess and analyse the different feedback reports (student and tutor) in order to come up with an overall picture of the work being done by IFT–Malta. A report will be generated within the framework of the IFT Quality Management System together with guidelines outlined by the MFHEA.

Reference Documents include; Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of EFTA ethical guidelines and training standards, The Psychotherapy Act, and MFHEA Quality Assurance Guidelines.

1.3 Document Management: Documents of Internal Origin

A documented procedure has been established to ensure that all documents required to implement and maintain the Institute's management system are adequate and ongoing. All documents are formally reviewed for ongoing relevance and status at least once every two (2) years. A document template is available for all the various document categories hence facilitating the harmonisation of ideas and best practices across the various processes occurring within the organisation.

The following information is available for all the documents that are managed under the quality management system:

- Name of document
- Location from where latest revision of document can be retrieved (electronic folder)
- Name of person responsible to manage the storage of records (only for record sheets)

Additionally, the following information is available on records maintained in a central document secure storage system managed by IFT–Malta Chairperson.

- Names of document users to be notified electronically every time there is a document change,
- Names of document users to receive a soft copy of document as needed.
- Quality Assurance Manual is uploaded on the Institute's website.

The following types of standard document categories are available:

Students' Course Handbook

The Institute publishes a prospectus and a handbook for each course. The prospectus is found on the website under each course and provides prospective students with relevant information to guide them towards an informed choice.

The Handbooks contain all the relevant information required by students during their time of studies and all the course–related information including module description and breakdown, learning outcomes, credit distribution, teaching modalities, coursework and methods of assessment, assessment forms, reading lists, guidelines for preparing projects and assessments, code of ethics, and appendices for all the below listed forms. The handbook also makes reference to the various policies and procedures pertaining to IFT–Malta which include; the Complaints Policy, the Mitigation Policy, The Student & Staff Disciplinary Policy, The Plagiarism Policy, The Internal Quality Assurance Policy and The Student Payment Agreement Policy. Each policy can be accessed from the IFT–Malta website.

Available handbooks include:

- Handbook for Certificate in Therapeutic Care for Children and Adolescents in Out–of–Home Settings
- Handbook for BA in Psychological Therapies
- Handbook for Award in Clinical Supervision
- Handbook for the PG Dip & Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy
- Handbook for PG Certificate in Parental Alienation Studies
- Handbook for Masters in Strategic Coaching

Available forms categories include:

- Student Assessment forms
- Student Feedback Forms
- Student Course Evaluation Forms
- Student Clinical Procedure Forms

Documents of external origin

The following table provides a summary of documents originating from external sources which have been determined by the Institute to be necessary for the planning and operation of the quality management system.

Type of Document	Management
Government Gazettes containing Legal and Regulatory requirement	IFT–Malta Chairperson
EFTA — Training Institute Chamber Newsletter	IFT–Malta Chairperson
MFHEA	IFT–Malta Chairperson
Board for Psychotherapy Profession	IFT–Malta Representative

1.4 Management of Records

All record sheets are kept to provide evidence of conformity to requirements and of the effective operation of the Quality Management System. All records pertaining and referenced to the Quality Management System are considered as ‘quality records’ and are adequately revised and managed.

The use of both hard copy and electronic records is regulated in the following manner:

- All quality records are stored in a manner that ensures their safe keeping.
- Hard copies are stored under lock and key at the institute’s premises. Access to these documents is done through the office administrator & secretary or the directors.
- The method of storage allows for ready access by the appropriate authority.

- The retention times and disposal procedure is guided by the Guidelines for General Data Regulation (GDPR).
- Electronic documents are stored on a central computer. This computer is accessible only with a password and folders are accessible via password only by the administrator. Each document may also be assigned a password if it is necessary.

The Course Coordinator is responsible for collecting relevant data from and about students and transferring them to IFT–Malta Office Administrator & Secretary to store and archive the record sheets that contain students’ personal information.

1.5 IFT Management Board Responsibility and Commitment

IFT Management Board is committed to develop and implement the Quality Management System and continually improve its effectiveness. In order to achieve the above, IFT–Malta Management Board will ensure that:

- The Quality Assurance Policy is relevant to the Institute’s business, is dynamic and flexible, and provides for continuing improvement with measurable goals.
- The Policy is made known and available to all IFT–Malta service users and tutors on IFT–Malta website.
- The relevant requirements as defined by IFT–Malta for trainees & professionals involved are maintained.
- Statutory and regulatory requirements are established and communicated within the organisation through the Quality Management System.
- Client/student focused and quality driven objectives are established.
- The objectives and goals of the QMS are directed at both the external and internal clients.
- Assesses the associated resources necessary for the accomplishment of the Institute’s stated commitments.
- Resources are allocated on the basis of quality planning.

1.6 Student Focus

Students’ needs and requirements are determined through:

- Regular students’ reviews

- Mid-yearly evaluations Final evaluations
- Regular involvement of Student Representation on Course Committees
Student's direct access to course coordinator
- Individual tutorials for each student Tutors' continuous Self Evaluation Reports
- Tutors' Meetings

Quality Policy

IFT-Malta's Management Board has established and approved its relevant policy for quality assurance and provides for its continuing improvement with measurable goals.

Quality Objectives

Quality objectives as per Course Handbooks, including those needed to meet requirements for service, are established at relevant functions and levels within the Institute. The objectives are measurable and consistent with the IFT-Malta Quality Policy. Quality Objectives are reviewed regularly during the different fora including the Course Committee Meeting, Directors Meetings, Management Board Meetings. Tutors' Meetings, and 3-Way Meetings with students. Modified and new objectives are documented and communicated to all students and tutors, as needed. Objectives for each course are also communicated to students through the relevant Course Handbook which is given to each student on commencement of each training course.

1.7 Responsibility, authority & communication

IFT-Malta Management Board ensures that the responsibilities and authorities of the various IFT-Malta service users are defined and communicated (refer to the organisation chart and specific job descriptions). The following IFT-Malta members have specific job description:

- IFT-Malta Chairperson
- IFT-Malta secretary
- Administrator
- Board Member
- Course Coordinator
- Quality Assurance Officer

IFT–Malta Chairperson’s Additional Responsibility as Document Manager & the Quality Management Systems coordinator is to constantly maintain and improve the Quality Management System. The responsibilities include:

- Reporting to the IFT–Malta Management Board on the performance of the Quality Management System with respect to the goals set by the Institute,
- Promote the awareness of students’ & tutors’ requirements to the Institute.

IFT Chairperson is therefore required to:

- Identify, communicate and follow–up the successful closure of situations potentially resulting in client dissatisfaction.
- Ensure the Quality Management System is updated to always include the latest amendments and requirements.
- Provide training to other IFT–Malta team members on topics related to quality assurance awareness and requirements,
- Facilitate the use of the corrective and preventive action formal methodology,
- Promote and support initiatives for continuous improvement.

1.8 Internal Communication

The Institute provides resources to ensure effective communication of its processes within the various levels of the Institute. This is achieved through making information related to the Quality Management System available:

- To e–mail users (read only) through the computer network.
- To above and all others (as necessary) through managed and approved hard copies accessible from the Quality Assurance Representative.
- To Course Coordinator and students

1.9 Management Board Review

The objective of the Quality Management Review process is to provide the opportunity for Management Board members to meet and review regularly the system’s continuing stability, adequacy and efficacy with respect to the quality policy and identify

opportunities for continuous improvement and agree the necessary actions to be taken. The Management Board Meeting is held weekly and attended by the Chair, the directors and the course coordinators. Records of Meetings are minuted and circulated by the IFT secretary and the Quality Management Systems Coordinator.

1.10 Directors' Meeting

Directors' meetings are held regularly prior to the Management Board Meetings and is attended by the directors and the management to discuss business matters and make financial decisions related to the different courses. This is a space to discuss the future development of the Institute, including new courses to design, the choice of collaborators, accreditation applications, other matters related to the upkeep and upgrade of premises and facilities. Meetings are minuted and filed.

1.11 Tutors' Meeting

Tutors meetings are held on a quarterly basis and attended by the Chair, all tutors and course coordinators and are minuted by the administrator. During these meetings tutors are provided the space to discuss personal and professional matters relating to teaching and lecturing at the Institute. These meetings offer tutors and management to discuss teaching practices, professional development as well as Quality Management Processes. The Institute uses feedback emerging from such meetings to upgrade the quality of service at different levels.

1.12 IFT-Malta Resources Management

All tasks performed by the management board are undertaken on the basis that the IFT-Malta staff has had adequate training, relevant applicable education or skills and experience to ensure that the work being assigned is conforming to the requirements of the various regulatory bodies including the Psychotherapy Profession Board, the Training Institutes Chamber of the European Family Therapy Association, and the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority.

Competence, Training and Awareness

It is the responsibility of IFT-Malta Chairperson to ensure that all staff is fully aware of the relevance and importance of their activities in fulfilling the organisation's goals and objectives. To that end, and also to ensure adequate level of competency, professional development activities are planned and implemented after the needs have been

identified and evaluated. Records of professional development activities and certification are maintained by the IFT–Malta administrative staff.

Infrastructure

The Institute provides adequate facilities for its staff to perform their activities. These facilities include provisions for a suitable working environment, equipment, multimedia facilities, software, and support services.

Work Environment

Throughout the Institute's Health and Safety Policy and practices the work environment (including physical, environmental and other factors such as noise, temperature, humidity and lighting or weather) shall be reviewed to ensure that staff can safely perform their activities.

Hygiene practices in the work environment: Being a training institute the organisation, housekeeping and cleaning systems are in place to ensure appropriate standards of hygiene are maintained at all times.

In the case of third party rented facilities the same standards of work environment are observed and applied.

1.13 Audits

External Audits

IFT–Malta is subject to all statutory and legal external audits including those requested by MFHEA and MFSA. IFT–Malta's first external audit was concluded in November 2021. The report was published on MFHEA website early 2022.

Internal Audit

The Chairperson requests at his or her discretion the Quality Assurance Representative to present an internal audit report. This report shall be signed and archived by the IFT–Malta Chairperson. The results of the audits shall be communicated and discussed during the following management board meeting and corrective action taken as necessary by the assigned Course Coordinator. An internal audit collates all the information emerging regularly from all the different meetings as referred to above in detail and the feedback collected from tutors and students from

each course. The information gathered is fed back into the system and ensures the improvement of the Institute's output to meet contemporary changing needs.

Collection of Information

A documented procedure is available for defining the activities (Refer to 1.8 – 1.10)

- Ongoing and continuous monitoring of Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures as stated above in Internal Audits
- Regular Course Committee Meetings, which include Students' Representatives, where feedback is collected regarding the delivery of training, infrastructure and delivery of services.
- Regular Tutors Meetings
- Weekly Directors Meetings
- Management Board Meetings

Analysis of Information

The Quality Assurance Representative analyses the collected information to demonstrate the suitability and effectiveness of the Quality Management System, and to evaluate where continual improvement of the effectiveness of the quality management system can be made.

All Staff and students are encouraged to identify and suggest methods of improving the effectiveness of the quality management system. This Analysis is completed at the various levels and on all courses.

Corrective Action

Appropriate corrective action is minuted in the report and action is taken to eliminate the possible non-conformities and improve status. All corrective actions, if any are documented in the minutes of the weekly Directors' Meetings and Management Board Meetings.

Preventive Action

Appropriate action to prevent potential problems is taken to eliminate the root of potential non-conformity in order to prevent their recurrence. Actions taken in this regard is minuted in the relevant meeting's minutes.

1.14 Approval, monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes and awards

The Institute of Family Therapy – Malta provides high quality training in the caring professions, particularly psychotherapy. The institute is a member of the Training Institutes Chamber of the European Family Therapy Association and also as Institutional Member in Good Standing of the International Family Therapy Association. IFT–Malta is also represented on the Psychotherapy Profession Board. The training programmes offered by the institute aim to offer students highly specialised professional standards of practice required by the European Family Therapy Association, the International Family Therapy Association, the Psychotherapy Profession Board and the academic parameters established by MFHEA.

Regular monitoring and re–evaluation of the training programmes are carried out through ad hoc meetings and meetings of the Course Committee. The course committee meeting membership comprises the 3 directors of the Institute, who also teach on the courses, other staff significantly involved in the teaching such as tutors and the course coordinators, the institute secretary, and the student representatives of each course. Other students are welcome to attend. The Committee considers all operational matters of the course as they affect the students. The data collected through this process is directed to be part of the internal audit of quality assurance.

The terms of reference of **Course Committee** are as follows:

- considering annual reports and reviews of the course, in accordance with Malta Quality Assurance Procedures, and ensuring that appropriate action is taken.
- ensuring that the course admissions policy is implemented.
- monitoring the pathways offered within the course and ensuring that their content, delivery and assessment are kept up to date and remain appropriate.
- considering any proposal to change the content, delivery and assessment of elements of the course before that change is validated in accordance with the MFHEA.
- ensuring that any policy statements issued by the MFHEA studies which have an impact on course design and delivery are implemented.

- ensuring that liaison takes place with other courses and subject areas and considering the impact of change on other courses and subject areas when necessary, before introducing changes which might affect them.
- considering proposals for external examiners for the course and agreeing those to be submitted for consideration and approval by the relevant external university committee.
- considering reports by external examiners and ensuring that appropriate action is taken;
- providing a forum in which students can express their views about the management, content, delivery and assessment and ensuring that where appropriate, action is taken in response to issues related;
- a student representative from each training programme meet every three months, together with the tutors and course coordinators of the programmes to form the above forum;
- ensuring that a student feedback report is produced annually for inclusion in the final review of the course, and that outcome thereof is reported back to tutors and students

Course Coordinators

Course Coordinators meet formally every week during the Management Board Meeting and discuss students' progress and any arising difficulties ironed out and where tutors have the opportunity to share their views, and concerns if any, and put forth any suggestion for more effective learning. The meeting also facilitates conversations where tutors feel safe to give each other feedback to enhance their own personal and professional growth.

External Examiner

A foreign external examiner of established academic standing from outside the Institute is appointed for a term of 4 years, and has responsibilities to:

- attend the Final Assessment Board and approve its decision;
- inspect student work and monitor levels of marking;
- act as a peer reviewer;
- ensure that students are examined within the regulations approved for the course.

External Consultant

An external consultant with expertise in the field from outside the Institute is appointed for a term of 4 years, and has the responsibilities to:

- advise on the development of courses, both current and new programmes;
- provide guidance and feedback about IFT–Malta’s standard generally;
- submit to the Institute such reports on the progress of the course and the standards achieved as may be required from time to time.

Assessment Board

The function of the Board will be to moderate marks; to ensure that students are assessed in accordance with the respective course regulations; to consider mitigating circumstances; and to agree on recommendations made. The membership of the Assessment Board will normally be as follows:

- Chair – Head of the Institute, or other Unit responsible for the course;
- All those substantially involved as tutors and/or examiners on the course;
- The foreign external examiner(s) for the course where relevant.

A quorum for meetings of an Assessment Board will comprise half the membership, including the Chair and External Examiner(s). The Board will meet at the end of each academic year, or as required, to record marks, to make awards, to consider breaches of regulations, and to accept the comments of the External Examiner.

INSTITUTIONAL PROBITY

IFT–Malta is a Maltese owned limited company. Its revenue consists of students' fees towards the courses, and since its inception in 2010, it has succeeded in earning moderate profits; funds are managed in a way that there is always financial reserves to manage the institute teaching and other expenses needed to run the institute. It is now in the process of expanding its operations through the provision of further courses related to psychotherapy and psychology in general. This augurs very well for the future.

IFT–Malta Ltd follows all financial regulations related to private companies and its accounts are audited annually. Final Accounts for the year 2018 is being attached.

2.1 Financial Budgets

Apart from the statutory requirements regarding the preparation of financial statements, IFT–Malta has introduced a system of management accounting, mainly the preparation of a budgetary control system. This involves coordination at management level, the objective being the setting of targets against which actual results can be compared. Any discrepancies, both favourable and unfavourable, will be analysed and remedial action taken.

2.2 Engagement and Selection of Headship Positions

Eligibility to stand for Head of Institute is reserved for members of the board of directors of IFT–Malta. At present there are three directors. The chairperson position of IFT–Malta is for a term of four years, after which the chair issues an invitation in writing inviting directors interested in the position to apply. The letter of interest is addressed to the full board of directors. If more than one director shows interest in the seat, an agreement is reached between all for the selection of the chairperson. Should none of the directors show interest in the position of HoI, the existing head will automatically continue in the post for another four–year term.

DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF COURSES

3.1 Identifying gaps in the market

Guided by its mission statement, IFT–Malta directors and teaching staff commit themselves to disseminate good information about family life amongst the general public. To this effect, IFT–Malta directors and tutors are regularly hosted on local TV and radio shows. IFT–Malta also organises regular free webinars to inform and interact with the general public and generate therapeutic conversations among professional colleagues. Here they contribute their professional expertise by talking about contemporary issues relevant to Maltese family life, as well as promoting IFT–Malta. The directors and tutors themselves work in clinical settings which keeps them in contact with other professionals working with individuals and families in different therapeutic contexts. They offer consultation to organisations and professionals; clinical supervision to organisations and professionals in relation to clinical practice; systemic consultation to public or private organisations; and research on family related subjects. These activities help to identify lacunae in the helping professions available locally and to gaps in the therapeutic services offered to the Maltese communities.

3.2 Process Maps

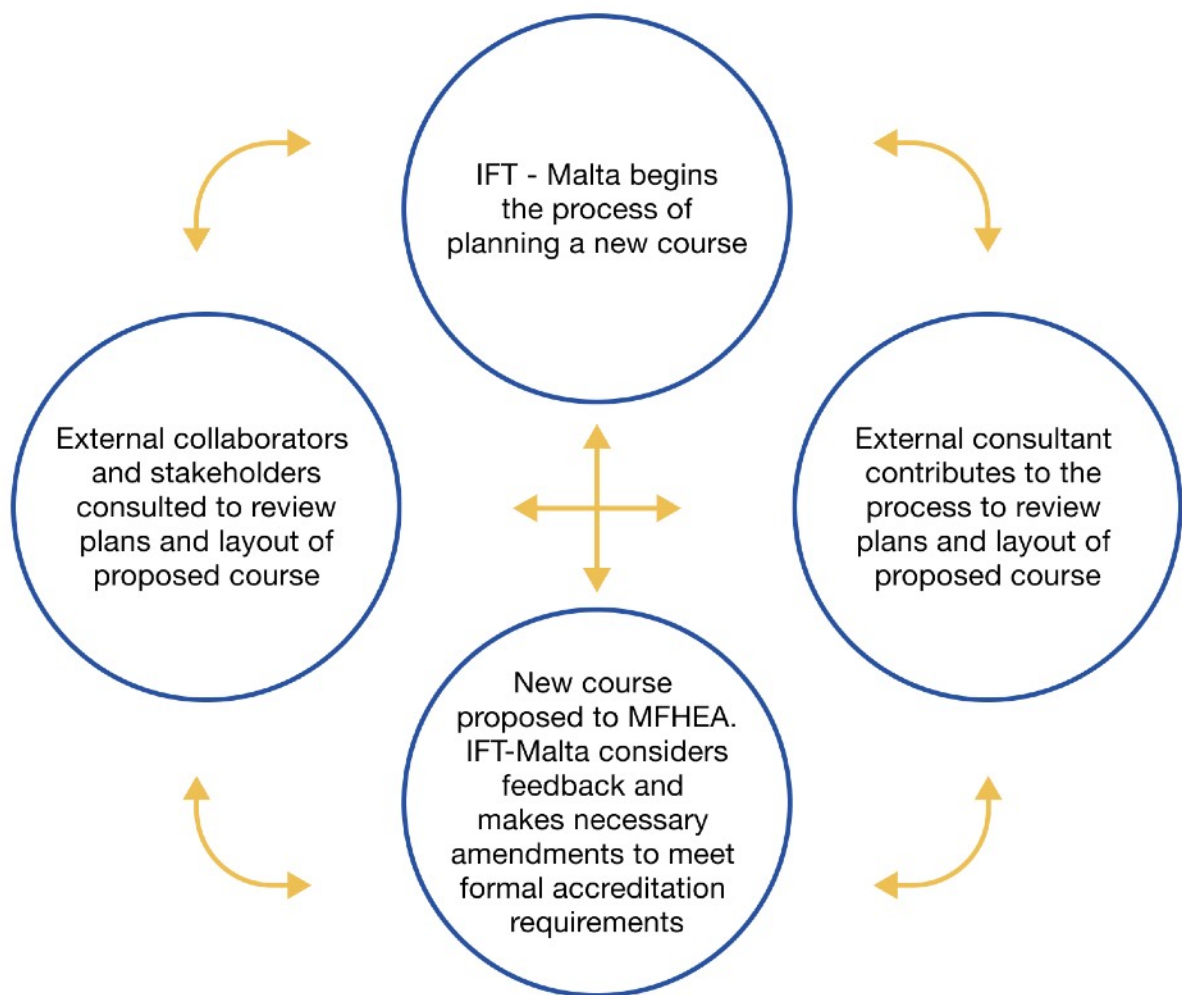
Directors of IFT–Malta are motivated to design courses which meet the needs identified by different stakeholders as explained above. Courses are planned in a way which aims to fill these gaps.

Early on in the process, the external consultant who also acts as an external peer, will be consulted to review the plans and layout of any new course being designed by IFT–Malta. Other stakeholders in the field including but not limited to; other professionals, heads of agencies/organisations, students, and alumni, may also be engaged in the process of planning a new course. The latter will be formally documented to highlight the processes involved. A process map will also be drawn out to illustrate the key design, development, internal and external approval processes, and identifying ownership and responsibility for key decision making processes. The process map will also include research work carried out during the planning of the new course, that includes feedback from students, alumni, industry stakeholders who may also be a part of the consultation system in the course development process. Once the necessary documents required are completed, the application form is sent to the MFHEA for feedback and eventual accreditation.

The teaching methods and learning outcomes designed for new courses are in line with those discussed in training circles and on–line platforms. Content of teaching is planned in line with the recent literature on the subject. Teaching methods are also influenced by student feedback along the years which is gathered and documented

regularly. Method of delivery of course content takes many forms which include lecturing, group discussions and group projects, video reviews and role-plays. The students' welfare is kept in mind, when designing and structuring courses to enable smooth student progression and students' successful completion of their training.

IFT-Malta is listed as a registered Higher Education Institution and all its courses are career oriented and accredited by MFHEA.



STUDENT LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

The focus of the services offered by IFT–Malta remains that of providing a high–end experience to students following its training courses. It prides itself on putting its trainees’ welfare at the forefront. It does this through investing in the institute’s relationship with the trainees and continues to do so, even after they graduate. This is maintained by regular social events during Christmas, Easter and summer for all students, past–students/graduates and staff. These extra–curriculum activities continue to build cohesion and a sense of belonging both among the students themselves and between the students and staff at IFT–Malta. IFT–Malta continues to keep contact with the graduates and staff through PPD seminars and the recent introduction of webinars. These webinars are available for both students and graduates, and teaching staff. Graduates are even invited to be part of IFT–Malta by joining the teaching staff.

Each course being taught at the institute is appointed a Course Coordinator who is not only responsible for the overall and smooth running of the course, but also to support the student throughout their studies. The course coordinator liaises between the different stake holders on the course. Students are given the email address of the course coordinator and IFT–Malta secretary who can be contacted for practical difficulties students may encounter. The course coordinator is responsible to keep students informed of any changes taking place and/or of information that they would need to know about, such as Committee Meetings dates and any correspondence students might need. At the beginning of the course year, students are informed that their point of reference is the Course Coordinator. The Course Coordinator is available to meet the student individually to discuss the support needed. He or she acts as the students’ support structure and monitors the overall students’ progress, seeing that the student is managing the course work, and can balance their family/work/study commitments. Students who may be going through personal difficulties can be supported to seek additional help. The Course Co–ordinator holds evaluation meetings as well as ad hoc meeting should the students need to address any arising issues or evaluate their progress.

4.1 Information to Students an Assessment and Assessment Procedure

On commencement of the course each student is provided with the IFT–Malta Student Handbook. The Handbook clearly outlines the assessment strategy being used for each assessed component of the course. The assessment criteria, as outlined in the assessment forms (Doc F) of each course project necessary towards year course completion is included in the handbook. Students will be aware of the required written work of each module to be submitted, and relevant deadlines. The course co–

coordinator is available throughout the course for any clarifications that may be needed. The assessment forms contain a detailed breakdown of the marking scheme and criteria for each project or assignment. Thus, the students will be well aware of what is required of them during the course and how their learning will be assessed.

4.2 Assessment Procedures of Written Work

Most written course work is double marked and moderated by two tutors. Most of the marking of assignments is at present carried out by the more senior staff at the institute, who are responsible for the overall running of the courses. They meet for this purpose to discuss students' assignments, and when needed revise method of markings. In cases of tutors disagreeing over a mark to be assigned, a third tutor reviews the project to ensure fairness to students and that standards required are being met. The tutor responsible for marking assignments follow the criteria and method of marking as per feedback form of the relative assignment. Students are clearly informed with detailed written feedback by each tutor marking the project or assignment.

4.3 Assessment Procedures of Presentations

Students are expected to demonstrate their learning through the presentation of some of their work. Students are provided with the relevant assessment criteria in the course handbook. To ensure fairness and grade moderation at least two tutors will be present for this presentation. Each tutor assesses the work presented by the student independently and subsequently both marks are moderated. Written feedback is given to student by both tutors, outlining a breakdown of marks and comments on the content.

4.4 Assessment Board

All final marks, prior to be communicated to students, will be approved by the assessment board, composed of the course coordinator, the markers, and the IFT–Malta Chair. A final signed assessment copy of marks awarded for each project/assignment/dissertation is archived. The results are communicated to students individually. The Assessment Board uses the following standard grading scheme:

A+	95% – 100%	Work of exceptional quality
A	80% – 94%	Work of excellent quality

B+	75% – 79%	Work of very good quality
B	70% – 74%	Work of good Quality
C+	65% – 69%	Work of average quality
C	55% – 64%	Work of fair quality
D+	50% – 54%	Work of rather low quality
D	45% – 49%	Marginal Pass
D	45%	Maximum grade obtainable following re-assessment
F	0% – 44%	Unsatisfactory work

4.5 Students failing a project, assignment, presentation or dissertation

In the case of a student failing a project, assignment or presentation during the progress of the course, he or she will have the opportunity to resubmit the written project not later than four weeks after the assessment feedback has been delivered to students. If the student wishes he or she can request a meeting with the year coordinator to discuss the work presented and how to improve on it for resubmission purposes (Even though this feedback has been already given to students in writing). Students who avail themselves of the opportunity to resubmit their work can only be allocated a pass mark if their work satisfies the assessment criteria. Students who again fail their project on resubmission will not be able to complete the course. These circumstances are brought up in the Course Committee Board.

4.6 Late submissions & Mitigating circumstances

Students are expected to submit assignments, projects, presentations and dissertations by the dates specified in the handbook provided or as established in due course. When a student is unable to meet the required deadline for course work submission, he or she needs to write a formal request to the year coordinator about their difficulty in meeting the deadline and the reasons supporting this as soon as possible. The year coordinator presents the situation for the Course Committee's consideration. The Secretary or Course Coordinator will provide student with a formal reply communicating the Committee's decision.

In exceptional circumstances at the Board's discretion, the student will not be penalised for late submission, and a later submission date will be discussed. No work will be accepted after the extended deadline. Exceptions to this can only be made

upon presentation of evidence (e.g. medical certificate showing the trainee has suffered illness) indicating obstructions to completion.

In situations other than the above, late submissions will be penalised by a deduction of 10 points from the overall mark achieved, as long as projects, assignments, presentations and dissertations are handed in by the agreed extended deadline. Students are to refer to IFT–Malta's 'Mitigation Policy' for further information about requesting extensions/late submissions.

4.7 Taking leave of absence

Students will be provided with all the course dates at the beginning of each year to better plan the year ahead. This coupled with monthly blocks is aimed at facilitating students' regular attendance. At the intake interview students are advised that attendance is compulsory and that students can meet the time requirements for this course of studies. Students are aware that a minimum of 80% attendance is required to fulfil course requirements. Because of the nature of the course where a considerable amount of learning is carried out through students' participation in group work, discussions and reflections, students' ongoing attendance is of paramount importance.

Students are encouraged to attend all blocks and to participate fully. It is only in exceptional circumstances that students may be allowed to take leave of absence and only if this falls within the 20% attendance bracket. A student requesting leave of absence is asked to write a formal letter of request to the course co-ordinator, stating clearly the reasons behind this request, which is discussed during the following directors' meeting, where the request is discussed. If it is concluded that the request for leave of absence is legitimate, then permission is given provided that her /his overall attendance will be within the mandatory attendance of 80% as stated above.

4.8 Granting extension for duration of course

Students who for serious reasons need to apply for an extension of the duration of the course, are first to write formally to the course coordinator who will then discuss the request during the next directors' meetings. Each case will be treated on its own merit before a decision is taken and communicated.

As a wide guideline, should mitigating circumstances be present, IFT–Malta will do its best to support the students to successfully terminate their studies. As a general rule, if a student drops out of a course year resulting in less than 80% attendance the student will need to join the next cohort that corresponds with their year of study and

repeat the year. There is no automatic provision for this arrangement, as IFT-management cannot guarantee a new course starting every year.

4.9 Selection of dissertation tutors

By the end of their course, on some courses, students are requested to write a research dissertation. Research methods seminars and research groups are spread throughout the course to help students plan and reflect on their research dissertation. Each trainee will also be assigned a research supervisor with whom they will discuss their process. Research supervisors are allocated by matching the supervisor's expertise to the student's choice of theme. Students may also be consulted about their choice of supervisor, who can also be external to IFT-Malta. If the dissertation tutor chosen is an external they may be approached by the Course Co-ordinator to invite them. Research supervisors need to be relevantly warranted professionals. The final decision for the choice of dissertation tutors lies with Board of Examiners.

4.10 Ethic Approval System where applicable

IFT-Malta Research Ethics Policy

a. Structure

The first level of submission of any piece of research carried within the remit of IFT-Malta will be the research supervisor. Each trainee is assigned a research supervisor to guide the trainee ethically, thematically and methodologically throughout the process of producing and ethically correct piece of research. After a research proposal and Ethics Committee Application form have been submitted to the supervisor, it is the supervisor's responsibility to bring the proposal to the awareness of the Institute's Research Ethics Committee. The role of the Institute's Ethics Committee is to ensure ethically sound research is taking place by its registered trainees. The Institute's Research Ethics Committee is made up of the Institute's Chair, an Institute's member, and an external member invited only when there are ethical dilemmas.

b. Principles

There is a general obligation to undertake research of merit (having pedagogic and/or scientific value) as well as maintaining the integrity of the academic discipline. The line of accountability becomes particularly important if there are breaches of ethical

requirements or the research protocol has not conformed to required and approved ethical standards. The Institute's Research Ethics Committee will retain ultimate authority and responsibility. This does not in any way absolve the trainee and supervisor from their responsibilities should they breach recommendations issued by the Institute's Research Ethics Committee. The General Data Protection Regulation law is observed.

Specific requirements are:

- Protection of participants i.e. eliminate, mitigate, reduce any potential harm as a consequence of their involvement in research;
- Supervision by competent supervisors;
- Protection of supervisees from possible harm;
- Obligation to obtain and record informed consent from participants or appropriate other;
- Maintenance and preservation of confidentiality;
- Volunteered participation;
- Identification and remit of levels of authority in granting a favourable ethical opinion;
- Protection of the reputation of the Institute.

The Institute Research Ethics Committee guiding principles are:

- Reasonableness (i.e. conform to the simple test that a lay person would judge the procedure sufficient for purpose);
- Manageability (i.e. limit administrative record keeping to its practicable minimum);
- Robustness (i.e. provides a sufficiently thorough and workable system fit for purpose);
- Accountability (i.e. placing the responsibility for ethical conduct of the proposed research with the supervisor and trainees).

c. Appropriate Level of Ethical Opinion

If the supervisor assesses that the design is sufficient for purpose and there are no foreseeable risks, then the research may be exempt from consideration by an Institute

Research Ethics Committee and it is not necessary to seek additional ethical opinion. Criteria for exemption include;

- Sample not drawn from staff associated with student
- Children are not selected as research participants
- Non sensitive subject matter
- Deception is not part of the research design
- Participants are made anonymous
- Non problematic confidentiality issues
- Sample does not involve vulnerable participants.

If the proposal carries any risk and/or the research involves any of the following a formal ethical opinion is required and an application to the research ethics committee shall be submitted:

- Any risk to participants' health or well being
- Within a survey/questionnaire items which may be potentially offensive, distressing or personal to a particular target group
- payment or benefits in kind given to participants
- participants are students or members of the Institute
- participants are associated with students' profession or place of work
- Sample involves vulnerable populations including children

Submissions to the Institute Research Ethics Committee must use the appropriate original documentation. The Institute Research Ethics Committee will consider research proposals and research made for the purpose of compiling a research project or dissertation as part of the respective course/program.

Research by staff and/or funded research for which the Institute of Family Therapy – Malta has been funded to conduct will be considered through other channels.

d. Supervisor Responsibilities

The Chair of the Institute of Family Therapy – Malta is responsible for teaching and research carried out within the Institute and under the supervision of staff. S/he delegates responsibility to supervisors to ensure any trainee involved as researcher is aware of the Institute's ethical guidelines and that these guidelines are observed. The

generation of the research topic, soundness of the research design, and management of the trainee during the period that the research is conducted are primarily the responsibility of the supervisor. The supervisor in consultation with the trainee makes the decision whether to seek a formal ethical opinion. It is the supervisor's responsibility to assess whether the research is exempt (see exemption options above) or whether the research requires Institute and/or External ethical opinion.

Supervisors should be aware that there may be ethical implications if the proposed methodology is faulty so that the resulting collected data cannot be subjected to meaningful analyses. Technical proficiency of the research design is the responsibility of the supervisor and the supervisor is advised to participate in research methods sessions and consult with other supervisors and consultants to clarify appropriateness of research method selected by trainee in consultation. Supervisors of trainee research are therefore asked to make three assessments: the soundness of the research design, the risk loading of the research, and which level of ethical opinion is appropriate.

e. Research Design

In projects involving primary data collection the scientific merit and quality of the research design is a matter of judgment for each supervisor e.g.

- viable estimate of the number of respondents
- appropriate control groups
- adequate informed consent
- adequate information sheet
- appropriate analytic methods
- relevant contextualising of research literature

In projects involving desk studies, analysis of secondary data supervisors may consider e.g.

- permissions necessary to conduct the secondary analysis
- viability of access to sources
- adequacy of analytic methods to undertake the analysis/review
- key references

The format supervisors wish students to submit their proposals is a matter of preference of the supervisor. This paperwork should be kept and be available for auditing purpose.

f. Risk Loading

The supervisor carries a further responsibility to establish any risk factors attached to the proposal, the participant or the investigator:

- location of the data collection
- vulnerability of the potential participants
- sensitivity of the subject matter
- payment to participants

It is the supervisor's responsibility to assess which ethical committee is appropriate and whether to approve or otherwise at supervisory level, whether to refer to the Institute Research Ethics Committee. If an independent ethics opinion is required, the supervisor can approve the research only when a favourable ethics opinion is received by the independent external professional. If the research requires an external ethical opinion, the Institute Research Ethics Committee shall ensure the provision of the qualified person to act as the external member of the Institute's ethics committee.

g. Procedure

Meeting schedule

The Institute Research Ethics Committee proposes to meet one week after the students' deadline for the submission of research proposals and Institute's Ethics form. Other meetings may be called ad hoc as deemed necessary thereafter.

Submissions

Every trainee shall submit a copy of the research proposal together with a completed copy of the Institute's ethics form to one's supervisor, and which the latter shall sign and hand over as approved to the Institute Research Ethics Committee. If the proposal requires a formal ethical opinion from Institute Research Ethics Committee 3 copies of the proposal and 3 copies of the ethics form shall be submitted to the

Institute Research Ethics Committee. The Institute Research Ethics Committee will consider proposals sent to it and either

- Give a favourable opinion;
- Require some adjustments and render an opinion when satisfactorily dealt with;
- Refuse the application and ask for review of research and re-submission of proposal with changes.

Details of all submissions will be recorded on a spreadsheet maintained by the Institute's office for auditing purposes.

h. Dissertation and other Examining Boards

The following are the existing IFT–Malta boards:

- Ethics Committee (refer to p.**19** of this document)
- Assessment Board (refer to p.**29** of this document)
- Management Board Review (refer to p.**21** of this document)
- Course Committee meeting (refer to p.**18** of this document)

i. Assessment Board

The function of the Assessment Board is to moderate marks; to ensure that students are assessed in accordance with the course regulations to consider mitigating circumstances. The membership of the Assessment Board will normally be as follows:

- Chair of the Institute
- Course Coordinator
- Any other examiners involved in the assessment
- The external examiner(s) for the course, where applicable

A quorum for Assessment Meetings of the Assessment Board will comprise the Chair, External Examiner (where applicable) and an examiner. The Board will meet at the end of each academic year, or as required, to finalise marks, record marks, to consider breaches of regulations or special requests like request for extension, and to consider the comments of the External Examiner.

j. Management Board Reviews

The objective of the Quality Management Review process is to provide the opportunity for Board members to review, at planned intervals, the system's continuing stability, adequacy and effectiveness with respect to the quality policy and identify opportunities for continuous improvement and agree the necessary actions. Records of Meetings are compiled and circulated by the IFT secretary and the Quality Management Systems coordinator.

k. Course Committee Meeting

This has been explained on pg. **18** of this document.

4.11 Plagiarism and other misconduct

Plagiarism is understood as submitting as one's own work, irrespective of the intent to deceive or not, that derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. This includes quoting another person's work without due acknowledgement of the source as well as submitting someone else's work as part of the student's own without identifying clearly who did the work. Every submitted written project or assignment has to be accompanied by the Institute's 'Assignment Submission Cover Sheet' which is a signed declaration that the work the student is submitting is original and is their own. Plagiarism is taken very seriously, and a system is in place that helps IFT–Malta to protect against plagiarism. Tutors are instructed to use the programme when they suspect that a student's work is not original. If plagiarism is detected, this might result in a student to be withdrawn from their course of studies. IFT–Malta has its own 'Plagiarism Policy' which acts as a guide on how the situation is managed. Reference is made to the latter in the students' handbook and the full policy can be accessed and downloaded from the IFT–Malta Website.

Assignment Submission Cover Sheet

Instruction to student: This cover sheet must be submitted with every assignment or project which is to be assessed by IFT–Malta as part of the established training requirements. It is a regulatory quality assurance requirement that every assessment submission is authenticated as the work of the named student.

Student Name	
ID card No	
Course	
Course Year	
Title of Assignment/Project	
Date of Submission	
Signature	

Statement of confirmation of authenticity: By the act of submitting this form the student declares that this is his/her work. The work has neither, in whole or in part, been knowingly presented elsewhere for assessment, nor has it been copied in part or entirely. The student has properly acknowledged any material that has been used from other sources. Attention is drawn to the plagiarism policy of IFT–Malta. Plagiarism can result in a student being withdrawn from a qualification.

4.12 Complaints Procedure

The Institute of Family Therapy – Malta is committed to providing high quality training for all its students. To ensure this, a complaints procedure is in place. The latter can be accessed and downloaded from the IFT–Malta website. The Institute’s Complaints Procedure is intended to provide a clear framework within which students’ complaints can be expressed and a resolution found in a timely and effective way. Complaints or

dissatisfaction with any aspect of the Institute's training should be dealt with according to the indicated Complaints Policy.

4.13 Records of Assessment Process and Grading

Students' copies of their feedback on their course work and assignments are kept at IFT and filed by the secretary together with any relevant correspondence held between the student and the secretary/Course Co-ordinator for ease of retrieval.

4.14 Appeals Policy

An appeals procedure is in place that helps students to file a formal request to question decisions taken by tutors regarding their grades. This appeals procedure may also be applied in cases of plagiarism. The Institute has created an 'Appeals Policy' which can be viewed and downloaded from the IFT-Malta website.

STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

IFT–Malta courses are advertised on the IFT–Malta website and on our Facebook page. Its courses are open to both Maltese and foreign students. Students apply for the course by filling in the detailed application form found on the IFT–Malta website. They also need to present their Curriculum Vitae and certificates. Once it is established that they meet the necessary criteria to be considered for the course in question, they are invited to sit for an interview with two members of the institute. An interview guideline is used to give some uniformity to the interview process. The interview serves IFT–Malta the opportunity to get to know its prospective trainees, and for the trainees to meet the institute members who are often the directors and tutors on the course. Prospective students are also given more information on the course structure, course modules and methods of assessment. The interviewer is there to answer any queries the prospective trainee might still have. Prospective trainees are questioned on their working contexts and an emphasis is made on their need to be working in a setting that supports their learning. This does not apply to Bachelor's Degree in Psychological Therapies applicants.

After the interview the office administrator sends the prospective students a letter of acceptance and informs them about method of payment for the course. Different arrangement for payment is agreed upon, should student disclose some difficulties around the method proposed. The course coordinator introduces herself to the new students via email, explaining her role in the course and forwards them, the timetable for the full year. The morning of the first study–block is used to orient the students further to the course handbook, and goals and learning outcomes of the overall course. As our training courses are about working with vulnerable people, a strong emphasis of the course is on personal and professional development, exploring connections between the personal and the professional and the relationship between the two. For this working environment to build and grow the trainees need to get to know each other and gradually build that safety needed for sharing. Thus, during the first study block time is spent on trainees getting to know each other where the tutors facilitate an environment for growth and development. Confidentiality is expected.

As explained earlier, our student–centred approach which IFT–Malta feels is the one of the most important principal that guides its courses, helps students through the course year. IFT–Malta staff does its utmost to see the trainees to the end of their studies so that they successfully graduate. The course coordinator would be in touch with all the students' progress and identifies any areas which the student might need more help and support with. This help and support are given. Being a small institute where the number of trainees in class does not usually exceed 15, this personal attention is possible.

5.1 Post Graduated Certificate in Parental Alienation Studies

This post-graduate course is unprecedented in Europe and graduates of this program will be enabled and acquainted with detailed contemporary literature and evidence based best practices in assessment, case formalisation, legal report writing and clinical interventions with families optimising the outcomes for children and young people across their lifespan. This program is designed specifically for professionals and other key stakeholders across the social, legal, mental health, medical, nursing, social care, allied health, youth work, counselling, psychology, clergy, education and psychotherapy fields who find themselves working with families and young people experiencing the trauma of Parental Alienation.

5.2 Bachelor's Degree in Psychological Therapies

This degree is the first of its kind in Europe, offers an in-depth exposure to different psychological and psychotherapeutic models at an undergraduate level. It provides an innovative approach and targets individuals who have a keen interest in learning specifically about, and plan for a career in psychotherapy. This course helps students solidify their knowledge and skills in psychotherapy at a graduate level, preparing them for eventual specialist training. The course provides a sound background to major concepts outlining psychotherapy including history of psychotherapy, theories of change, research in psychotherapy and ethical practice. The nature of the course is intended to facilitate entry to Masters level training in any of the psychotherapeutic modalities taught on the course including the Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy. It is considered standard practice in psychology and psychotherapy that a warrant is obtained only after the Masters level of training is achieved.

5.3 Certificate in Therapeutic Care with Children and Adolescents in Out-of-Home Settings

This course renders students favourable candidates for career improvements as well as give them an edge when seeking jobs in residential care. This certificate is an asset when seeking any type of work with children and youngsters due to the applicability of the knowledge base provided. This course does not lead to a professional warrant since care-working is not currently a regulated profession. This course aims to be the first step to raise the level of care given to children and adolescents to a professional standard and become a regulated occupation.

5.4 Award in Clinical Supervision Course

This course is designed and delivered in line with the European Psychotherapy Associations and International Psychotherapy Associations standards of supervision practice. It also meets the training criteria of the local Board for the Psychotherapy Profession. It gives its graduates the necessary qualification to become Clinical supervisors in their field of study.

5.5 Postgraduate Diploma in Systemic Family Psychotherapy

This course is designed and delivered in line with the European Family Therapy Association and with the International Family Therapy Association. Upon successful completion of the diploma trainees will be eligible for Masters level training either within the same institution or other European institutions.

5.6 Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy

This is a qualifying level training which prepares individuals to practice Systemic Family Psychotherapy and meets the requirements for registration as a warranted psychotherapist with the local Board for the Psychotherapy Profession.

Students who successfully finish their training are awarded certificates of qualification and a detailed transcript of the course undertaken. Their records are kept and safely stored both in soft and hard copies at IFT–Malta office.

5.7 Masters in Strategic Coaching

This course enables professionals coming from different backgrounds including humanities, social sciences, education, legal, business, sports, management and other professional areas like youth empowerment, active ageing, addictions, and more to learn cutting edge competences, skills and knowledge to become competent Master Strategic Coaches. The program draws from the Strategic, Communication, Cybernetic and Systemic paradigms to enable successful graduates to meet the demands of a professional coaching career within organisations or in private practice, and to work with a range of client groups in various professional settings.

5.8 People with Specific Needs

Upon applying for the course students may communicate their specific needs in the provided space on the application form. Any requirements in relation to individual

disabilities or any specific learning needs are to be communicated to the interview panel, during the admission interview. When a student has specific needs that should be communicated with the tutors involved, a meeting is carried out in order to establish the best way for them to adapt their teaching and resources accordingly. IFT–Malta premises and teaching venues are fully accessible to individuals in wheelchairs according to MEPA regulations.

5.9 Alumni

The IFT–Malta website has a dedicated page to Alumni inviting past students to form part of the alumni network which is a forum for sharing good practices. Some of the activities involved are group supervision with their former course–coordinators, peer supervision services and invitations to social and academic activities such as seminars. All IFT–Malta ex–students are automatically considered part of this growing Alumni group, however formal registration is encouraged.

TEACHING STAFF

It is the policy of IFT–Malta to support the teaching staff in their teaching and delivering of lectures and for this purpose, different procedures are in place to ensure that standards for the individual courses are being met.

6.1 Recruitment of staff

When recruiting teaching personnel, IFT–Malta ensures that they have the necessary qualifications and expertise to teach on the respective course. All teaching staff must have be relevantly qualified and competent. They all have at least a Masters Degree level of training in the field they are teaching in and they are all clinicians working in their field of expertise. All IFT–Malta teaching staff work on part–time basis. Recruitment takes place based on the needs of the courses being taught. Once IFT–Malta identifies the appropriate knowledge base needed to teach on the course, as well as the level of qualification and expertise needed, we approach eligible individuals to enquire their interest to teach with IFT–Malta. Once an informal agreement is reached, prospective tutors are assigned a topic to teach on the module of the course in question. We meet with the tutor to discuss expectations and goals and desired learning outcomes. Tutors have access to the course handbook to familiar themselves with the course outline and structure. Tutors are requested to self–evaluate their teaching methods and style of teaching. A form is issued after every lecture for tutors to fill. This has been a new addition to our quality assurance policies and we have received positive feedback on its use. Students are also encouraged to give feedback on all aspects of the course, and this includes feedback on the tutors. This constructive feedback is shared as appropriate.

6.2 Continuous Professional Development

IFT–Malta is a member of the European Family Therapy Association’s Training Institute Chambers (EFTA TIC) which meets regularly to discuss training standards across Europe and share experiences and ideas about training, particularly psychotherapy training. IFT–Malta directors attended these EFTA TIC Conferences to share and discuss innovations in teaching methods, and ways to use incorporate research in our teaching practice. Conference Participation and Attendance –EFTA TIC 2012, EFTA Convention 2013, Visited Family Institute Glamorgan 2013, EFTA TIC Conference in Rumania 2014, IFT–Malta coordinated and hosted EFTA TIC Conference 2017.

6.3 IFT–Malta Membership

IFT–Malta teaching staff is highly supported and encouraged to engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This is also a prerequisite imposed by the Psychotherapy Act. This may include internal fora of discussion, as well as attending training seminars both locally as well as internationally. IFT–Malta staff is regularly involved in:

- Self–reflexive practice;
- Teaching staff meet quarterly;
- Teaching seminars where IFT–Malta hosts forums, at least once a year, where tutors are invited to reflect on their teaching practice, share their experiences, identify possible areas of growth, and discuss ways to keep their teaching innovative;
- Team Building Practices – bi-annual staff training session, extending these into social events where staff can engage informally with each other;
- A new procedure that IFT–Malta has recently introduced is self–evaluation of tutors after each lecture. Tutors are asked to fill in this form which helps them to evaluate their work and identify areas they need improvement on. This form is then sent to the course–coordinator who files it in their records;
- IFT–Malta chair who is responsible for the overall teaching at the institute regularly joins the tutor delivering a lecture, to monitor their teaching and students’ learning;
- Regular course committee meetings as explained in more detail above, invite students and tutors to share feedback on all aspects of their learning and teaching experience. Tutors and directors meet on their own to discuss the courses, students and share any information. Students’ representatives join later to share the feedback they collected from the different groups. This procedure encourages transparency which facilitates growth through constructive feedback at all levels.

The environment created for tutors teaching at IFT–Malta is one of support that facilitates safety and confidentiality for tutors to approach any of the institutes’ directors or course coordinator should they encounter any difficulties or challenges in their teaching.

Directing Staff

Dr. Charlie Azzopardi B.psy.(Hons.) M.Sc. (UOL) Doct. Sys. Psych. (UEL)

Mrs. Karen Bishop B.Psy. (Hons.), M.Sys. Psy. (UEL) PhD student

Mrs. Marika Azzopardi BA.

Foreign Examiner Staff

Mr. Billy Hardy Senior lecturer in Psychotherapy and is a UKCP registered Psychotherapist, Consultant, trainer and accredited AFT Clinical Supervisor.

6.3 Personal and Professional Development Policy

It is the Policy of the Institute of Family Therapy – Malta to provide assistance and support to its directors and tutors to increase the effectiveness of their performance in their present professional positions, as well as to encourage them to obtain skills, knowledge, and abilities, which may improve their opportunities for career advancement within the Institute. This Policy stems from the view that professional development and continuous learning are necessary to maintain the quality of the Institute of Family Therapy – Malta staff and their continued readiness and ability to contribute effectively to the mission and goals of the Institute.

a. Eligibility

A director is by default eligible for the benefits provided by this policy and procedures for position or job related programmes and activities. Other engaged non-directing staff becomes eligible after having completed the probationary period, if required, and the job performance is rated as satisfactory or better, for pro-rata benefits according to their time involvement.

b. Scope

For purposes of this Policy, professional development programmes and activities may include but are not limited to: opportunities for on-the-job training, cross-training, coaching, supervision, internships, attendance at courses, seminars, conferences, lectures, meetings, workshops, and participation in professional and technical associations.

c. Guidelines for Time Spent in Professional Development

The amount of time spent on professional development programs will vary with the individual director. Because directors are co-owners of IFT-Malta, and because all directors and all other invited tutors are not employed directly by IFT-Malta, all related opportunities for professional development will be done in the directors' own time, unless IFT-Malta directors collectively agree otherwise. If any of the professional development activities fall in the same day or days of tutors duty IFT-Malta commits itself to find an alternative replacement to cover the director or tutor on duty.

d. IFT-Malta In-Service Training and Development Opportunities

IFT-Malta offers opportunities including seminars, conferences, courses and programs designed to meet the diverse knowledge and skill or competency needs of IFT-Malta directors and hired staff. As a general policy, such courses and programs are paid for by IFT-Malta. Directors and staff may also take part in Professional Development activities IFT-Malta organises for the professional community from time to time.

e. Criteria for Determining Financial Support

The Chairperson, in consultation with the directors shall determine whether, and the degree to which, a director's or hired staff's participation in a professional development activity shall be supported by the Institute. In making this determination, IFT-Malta Chairperson shall consider:

- The director's or hired staff's need for development as reflected in the professional involvement of that particular staff member.
- The needs and resources of the Institute.
- The advantages one type of professional development activity has over the other types available.
- The different definitions and standards of the respective bodies like EFTA, the Psychotherapy Profession Board and NCFHE as per staff involvement with the Institute of Family Therapy – Malta

f. Reimbursement

IFT-Malta may reimburse staff for all, or part of, expenses incurred for approved employee developmental activities. These expenses will be paid from appropriate IFT-Malta funds. A written application for reimbursement has to be completed and submitted by the beneficiary. It is to be stated that only original receipts are accepted

with the application for reimbursement. Invoices are not accepted unless they are marked as 'Paid' by the outlet issuing them. In case of items purchased online, a receipt and proof of payment by debit/credit card, must be produced (Bank Statement).

g. Procedures

A — The director or hired staff and the Chairperson should jointly and collaboratively discuss professional development goals, review available opportunities, and determine applicable benefits identified by the Chairperson.

B — Discussions about professional development goals may occur at any time during directors meetings and at any time during the performance review cycle and should occur as part of the annual performance appraisal.

C — The Institute will maintain records of the Tutors' annual self-assessment report which the Quality Assurance Officer will appraise and generate data which will be included in the annual internal audit report. Feedback from this process is collected and used in tutors' seminars to support and enhance their teaching practice. Tutors also complete a self-evaluation form after each block and course coordinators are expected to receive them and process them. They are fed back to the tutors and individually and as a group during the regular tutors meeting.

D — IFT-Malta will not reimburse professional development activities pursued on the directors' or engaged staff personal initiative without consultation with the Chairperson.

LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

7.1 Learning Resources

IFT–Malta students and staff shall have access to the following learning resources;

- A library comprising of books, articles, journals and teaching videos.
- International subscription to an e–library (EBSCO).
- Online access to various articles on www.ift-malta.com.
- Multimedia teaching equipment.
- In the case of online learning, adequate online facilities for teaching and interacting with students.

7.2 Mentoring Support

IFT–Malta students avail themselves of the following mentoring support;

- Regular meetings with the year coordinator
- Ad hoc tutorials set up according to need (e.g. During Covid Pandemic)
- Evaluation meetings
- Ad hoc meetings as required addressing specific students needs
- Student representation in Course Committee Board Meeting held quarterly, on 1st Wednesday of the month due.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

IFT–Malta ensures that it collects, analyses and uses relevant information for the effective management of its programmes of study and other activities. All information about students, tutors and employees, are stored in two forms, hard and soft copies. Hard copies are stored in a lock file cabinet at the office and are accessed only by the administrator and the Chair. Soft copies of information are password protected and stored in a central computer and backed up on the cloud. They can only be accessed by the administrator and the Chair.

8.1 GDPR

GDPR is a framework which ensures the correct management of printed and saved documented information. It also outlines guidelines for the management and handling of personal and sensitive data. IFT–Malta has a GDPR policy which formalizes a procedure that identifies the nature and extent of data kept, method of secure storage and the length of storage as outlined by the law. The full policy can be accessed and downloaded from the IFT–Malta website.

8.2 Student Progression and Success Rate

Records of students' data are kept and filed appropriately. This includes students' original application form and copies of their CV and certificates. Both a soft and a hard copy of all the students' grades and assessments marks is kept at IFT–Malta, to monitor students' progression and success rate across cohorts. Statistical information can be provided on demand to relevant entities including the National Statistics Office.

8.3 Completion Rate of Courses

Students who express the wish to discontinue a training programme are invited to meet up with one of the directors of their choice to discuss their discontinuation. Details of such meetings are processed during directors meeting and noted in the minutes. Students who discontinue their training are kept on record as 'discontinued' together with all their relevant data including marks and grades, assessment feedback forms and attendance record.

8.4 Employability of Graduates

The Institute of Family Therapy – Malta ensures that the training programmes delivered are within the standards required by NCFHE. IFT–Malta also ensures that its Training

Programmes meets the relevant criteria for registration or warranting of professionals with the respective bodies, for example the Psychotherapy Profession Board.

8.5 Students' Satisfaction with their Programmes

Bi-annual evaluation forms are completed anonymously by each student eliciting feedback on the course content, course syllabus, as well as the physical environment of the institute. The course committee board meets regularly with the students' representatives to collect amongst other matters students feedback on the course. During the final study block for both the end of year as well as for the end of the students' programme, time is allocated for students to reflect on their learning throughout the past year and share their feedback with their fellow students and tutors.

8.6 Effectiveness of the Tutors

Tutors' effectiveness is assessed through the regular student's feedback and through tutors' self assessment. A foreign consultant visits IFT-Malta annually for team supervision. Tutors are randomly visited by IFT-Malta's Chair to observe and feedback on their teaching so that teaching remains in line with IFT-Malta's philosophy. All tutors abide by the ethics code of practice of their different professions which dictate that its members should be dedicated to lifelong learning and have to attend CPD training to keep themselves updating. Tutors at IFT-Malta meet regularly for peer supervision and attend individual supervision.

8.7 Comparison of IFT-Malta courses with the Further and Higher Education Sector

Courses are designed according to the respective profession's requirements. Our Family Therapy and Systemic courses meet the criteria of the European Family Therapy Association's Blue Book of Training Standards and meet the requirements of the Psychotherapy Profession Board. Each IFT-Malta course is also assessed and accredited by MFHEA, thus training programmes and courses compare well with other courses offered locally and abroad.

8.8 Destination of Students on Completion of their Studies

Being a relatively small institute, IFT-Malta could keep in touch with its graduates through biannually social events that brings past graduates and current students

together. Thus, it has been able to remain in touch with its graduates and with their professional progress in an informal manner. Now that the number of students are growing, IFT–Malta plans a formal way to trace its graduates, by inviting all its graduates through a questionnaire to update the Institute on their professional progress.

8.9 Management of Documented Information

Staff is responsible to manage the documentation of the activities within their remit. When forms are updated the Chair informs and disseminates to relevant staff. Staff must ensure that students receive the last updated version of the documents. Course coordinators are responsible to manage feedback and assessment forms related to the above processes and keep records of them. At the end of each course, all documents are collected and kept by the administrator at the office.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

IFT–Malta has its own website www.ift-malta.com and its own Facebook Page on which all relevant information about its activities and events is published. IFT–Malta advertises the different training courses and the activities it holds via various media including newspaper adverts, email shots and social media adverts. IFT–Malta website is user friendly and readily accessible. Information available includes information on the courses offered, the entry requirements, information on ECTS learning credits and MQF/EQF level. The chair and the secretary are responsible for such information to be kept updated. The secretary promptly responds to inquiries made through email to info@ift-malta.com or through mobile phone and delivers more detailed information about courses, accreditation and admission criteria to any interested individuals or institutions. Prospective students are asked to give feedback on IFT–Malta website, on whether the information available was sufficiently useful for them.

IFT–Malta commits itself to disseminating information amongst the general public not only about its endeavour but also about systemic therapy and family life in general. To this effect IFT–Malta directors and tutors are regularly hosted on local TV and radio shows. Here they contribute their professional knowledge to talking about issues relevant to the Maltese family life, as well as promoting IFT–Malta.

A brochure has been developed which outlines IFT–Malta’s work but also discusses systemic therapy and its benefits to families who may be struggling with various difficulties. It has been written in vocabulary that appeals to the general public and not only professionals in the field. It has been distributed in settings such as pharmacies, local councils and other settings.

ONGOING MONITORING AND ONGOING REVIEW OF PROGRAMME

10.1 Planning, Development, and Decision Making related to Quality

Assurance

IFT–Malta capitalises on the resources of all staff and trainees in the planning, development, and decision making related to assuring quality in the training programmes it delivers.

Regular meetings between all IFT–Malta staff are held to discuss, plan and design new training programmes, and review ongoing ones. Minutes of meetings are taken and filed. Emerging training programme ideas are also discussed with the respective regulating bodies and associations to ensure they are in line with their training standards and warranting requirements.

IFT–Malta's current foreign consultant, Dr. Padraic Gibson and external examiner, Mr. Billy Hardy are also consulted from time to time to ensure that training decisions taken by IFT–Malta staff are in line with other European training institutions.

Students are represented by a student representative who meets staff regularly to give feedback about anything arising, including staff performance, training quality, teaching materials, class rooms and clinic facilities. Within each course, regular evaluations are held every six months. For this purpose, a questionnaire is completed by students. All information gathered through questionnaires and verbal feedback are minuted and processed by an appointed director and presented during the following staff meeting. Action is then taken to implement the changes necessary indicated in the feedback review.

Verbal feedback from students is encouraged and IFT–Malta directors are always available to listen to what students or staff have to say about their experience with IFT–Malta. All Students projects, assignments and dissertations are kept in file and grades and marks recorded and used for evaluation purpose. IFT–Malta students and graduates continue to give very positive feedback on our courses and on the way, they have been supported throughout their learning programme. The courses undertaken not only improve their work prospects but also promotes their personal growth. IFT–Malta student–focused approach, and the tutors', especially the course coordinators' availability to be there for the students' needs, helps to create an environment that makes learning and teaching fresh, interesting and enjoyable.

10.2 Utilisation of Acquired Skills at the Workplace

During the regular evaluation of training with students which takes place every three months, trainees are invited to discuss how skills being acquired during the training process are being implemented and utilised at the workplace.

All IFT–Malta tutors are themselves employed in the psychotherapeutic market and have first–hand experience of the needs of the labour market. When they come up, such labour market needs are discussed and minuted during the weekly directors meeting.

IFT–Malta is aware that its trainees have all been employed by local agencies based on their new qualification. Those who did not get employed applied for further study locally or abroad and where accepted on the basis of the acquired qualification. Other trainees get on–the–job promotions on the basis of their training with IFT–Malta.

10.3 Mechanisms to Identify Training Needs in the Labour Market

IFT–Malta chair and its directors often take the opportunity to discuss with government officials, entities and organisations the training needs of the labour market in relation to meeting the changing needs of local families and communities. Similar discussions are carried out with NGOs and private companies on ways to support their staff. Consultation and discussion take place with the general public through the media to educate the public on matters relating to family life, to provide information about IFT–Malta courses, and to encourage and educate people to seek help in times of difficulties.

IFT–Malta directors are committed to finding new ways to complement what is already being done in order to keep the delivery of programmes fresh and up to date with new practices and methods of teaching as explained earlier in this document. They strive to continue creating accredited home–grown courses that are career–oriented, thus giving prospective students more work opportunities in the helping professions.

10.4 Schemes Used to Promote Better Access to IFT–Malta courses

Promotion is all funded by IFT–Malta, and no external funding has been used. Courses are promoted through IFT–Malta website, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and local media including newspapers, radio, and TV promotions. Emails are sent to all relevant organisations, associations and union representatives.

10.5 Internal Quality Assurance Policy

The Institute of Family Therapy – Malta has a Quality Management System that contributes to the Institute’s achievement of its strategic plans and the academic success of its students. The system in place is guided by the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education and other European standards ensuring best possible learning and teaching experiences.

IFT–Malta understands the importance of keeping abreast of external developments and best practices in the specialist teaching areas it addresses. The Institute had developed a self–critical academic environment which assesses and enhances its quality assurance procedures to promote this culture. The institute has developed and published an Internal Quality Assurance Policy which can be accessed from its website.

The QA officer is responsible to maintain the policy and procedure in place and perform the periodical internal audit. An audit strategy shall consist of an audit report comprising of the review of the data gathered from the various stakeholders involved on each course. This report is shared with the staff and students involved and corrective and preventive action taken. The QA officer together with the HOI is responsible for the designing and implementation of a policy and procedure to ensure that the practice of gathering feedback from internal and external stakeholders feeds into, and is documented as part of the cyclical review process to supplement current adhoc good practice.

10.6 Annual IFT–Malta Report

An annual report compiled of the various feedback received by IFT–Malta’s stakeholders will be compiled once a year. A timeline for the gathering of information that will feed into this report is outlined below:

End July

Student feedback reports to be collected from course coordinators

Annual Tutor feedback forms filled in by tutors

Any additional feedback from external collaborators/stakeholders gathered

End August

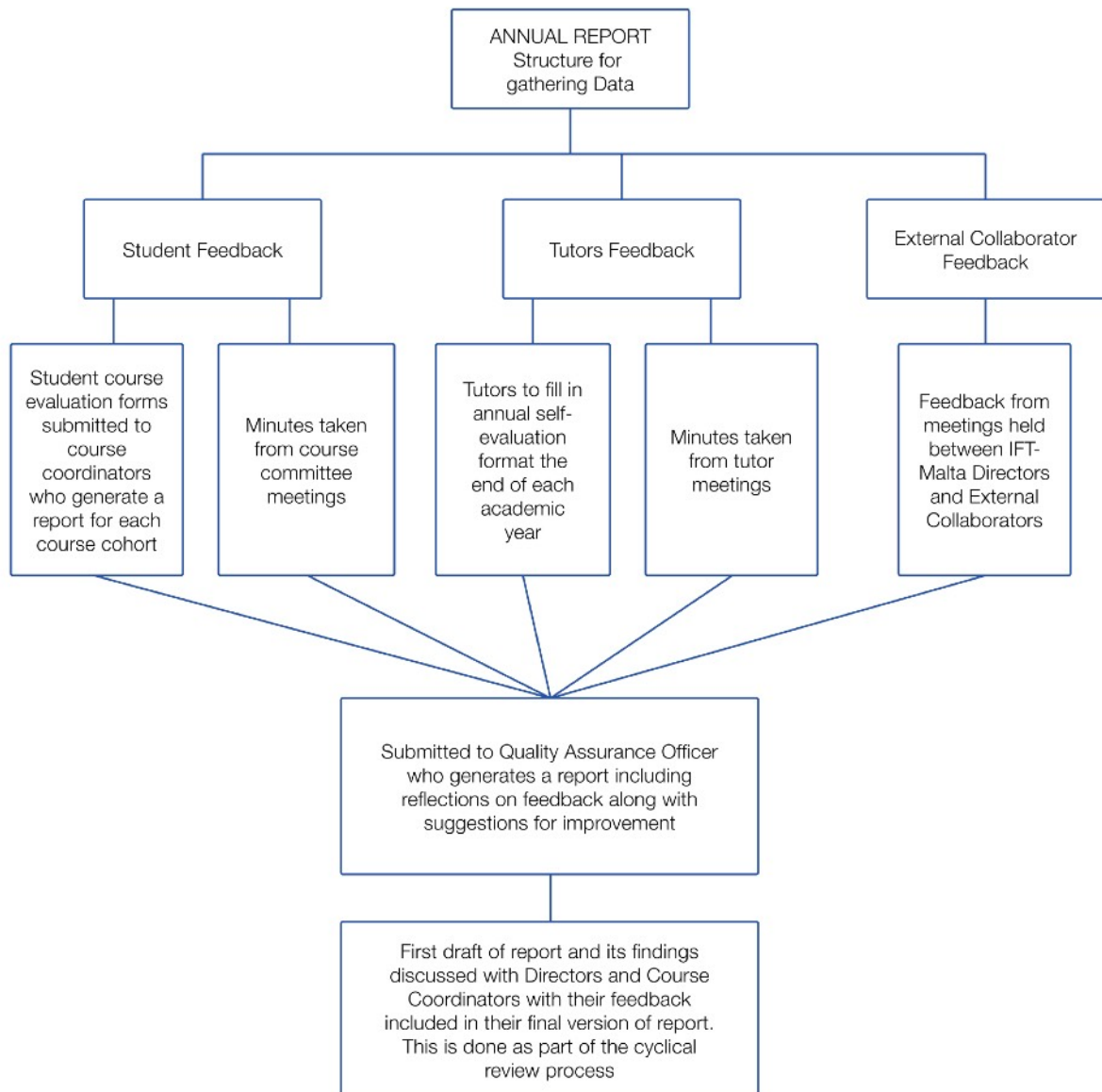
First draft of report is finalised

Early September

Meeting held between IFT–Malta directors, course coordinators and QA officer to discuss report and its implications for the way forward. Plans on how to improve and/or implement recommendations and feedback gathered through the data collected for the report are discussed and added to the final version of the report.

End September

Annual report is published and distributed among IFT students, staff and external collaborators.



10.7 Areas of Growth

There are always ways to improve on what is being done with more diligence. IFT–Malta through its Quality Assurance management system and guided by its philosophy for openness and transparency is constantly working towards growth and innovation. For example, discussions taking place, sometimes informally between tutors and directors, need to be more formally set with minute taking. A way to strengthen our academic level of teaching and learning is to encourage and support more tutors to take up PhD studies in their related area of expertise. At present, two of our tutors are reading for their PhD with Bedfordshire university in the UK.

The Quality Assurance Officer provides training to IFT–Malta teaching staff, on topics related to quality assurance awareness and requirements. This will ensure that all the staff at IFT–Malta appreciate more the importance of quality assurance and follow the policies and structures in place at the institute.

IFT–Malta is also committed to remaining abreast with society’s changing needs and adapting itself in ways that are aligned to its mission whilst also being open to feedback from wider networks. Hence the creation and ongoing development of an internal audit schedule, audit strategy, audit report, corrective and preventive action plan, and verification of institutional review process actions.

**CYCLICAL EXTERNAL
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

IFT–Malta will continue to undergo an external quality assurance audit by, or with the approval of, the MFHEA on a cyclical basis. According to the MFHEA guidelines, this will take place once every five years.

IFT–Malta is committed to the ongoing development of its Quality Assurance Management System, as part of being a self–critical academic community. The Institute has well–established, comprehensive and rigorous arrangements for the approval, review, modification and annual monitoring of its academic provision. The policies and procedures published by the Institute are guides to all staff, students and stakeholders which promote accountability, and strive to achieve a high quality experiences for all beneficiaries of IFT–Malta.

IFT–Malta will continue to work towards staying abreast of best–practice in preparation for upcoming external quality assurance audits, by continuously and consciously attending to its internal quality assurance policies and procedures.