

IFT - MALTA

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Institute of Family Therapy – Malta
July 2022



INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The Institute of Family Therapy - Malta has a Quality Management System that contributes to the Institute's achievement of its strategic plans and to the academic success of its students. The system in place is guided by the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education and by 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 has developed a self-critical academic environment which assesses and enhances its quality assurance procedures to promote this culture.

Definition

Quality Assurance involves the practice of gathering feedback from internal and external stakeholders, which feeds into, and is documented as part of the cyclical review process so as to supplement current ad hoc good practice.

The Institute sees its Quality Assurance Management System as part of being a self-critical academic community. The maintenance and enhancement of the academic standards of the Institute depend primarily on the commitment of staff, students and other stakeholders to constantly evaluate and reflect on the quality of the educational experiences provided.

The Institute has well-established, comprehensive and rigorous arrangements for the approval, review, modification and annual monitoring of its academic provision. The key principles set out below, together with the policies and procedures published by the Institute, are guides to all staff, students and stakeholders, so as to promote accountability, and strive to achieve a high-quality experience for all beneficiaries of IFT-Malta.

Key Principles

The main principles underpinning the Institute's quality assurance policy are:

1. Quality assurance and growth are best achieved through adopting an ethos of critical self-reflection in partnership with course participants and other beneficiaries of the Institute;
2. External peer review and collaboration are vital means of identifying areas for improvement, and the exchange of best practice;
3. The benchmarking of its academic standards is at the heart of the Institute's procedures;

4. Course participants and other stakeholders are key contributors to the shaping of the Institute's policies and mechanisms in the area of quality and standards;
5. Employees and lecturers of the Institute are responsible for enhancing the quality of course participants' learning experience, whilst acknowledging that as adult learners, course participants are responsible for their own learning;
6. All policies and procedures developed by the Institute should be subject to regular review to ensure their ongoing fitness for purpose in a rapidly changing internal and external environment.

Policy

Quality Objectives are reviewed regularly during the different fora including Course Committee Meetings, 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. Objectives for each course are also communicated to students through the Student Handbook which is given to each student on commencement of each training course.

The Institute's Quality Assurance Officer is responsible for keeping IFT-Malta abreast with quality standards. This role also ensures the setting up of structures for the continued monitoring, development and improvement of good practices.

The IFT-Malta Chairperson is also the designated Document Manager & Quality Management Systems Coordinator. This entails liaising with the Quality Assurance Officer, tutors, students, and other beneficiaries and stakeholders to constantly maintain and improve the Quality Management System. The responsibilities include:

1. Reporting to the IFT-Malta Management Board on the performance of the Quality Management System with respect to the goals set by the Institute,
2. Promoting awareness of students' & tutors' requirements to the Institute.

The Quality Assurance Manual is available and can be viewed on the IFT-Malta website together with all policies developed by the Institute. The scope of application of the contents of this document covers the 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. The Quality Assurance Manual is an expression of IFT-Malta's commitment to develop and monitor a culture which recognises the importance of maintaining best practice and standards, in combination with a high quality course participant experience.

The Institute's Quality Assurance Manual is a comprehensive and detailed document which highlights IFT-Malta's dedication to its Quality Management System 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 Quality Management System and recognises the need for regulated and approved processes in order to achieve its goals. The Institute is also committed to regularly review and revise the standards and goals set out in the Quality Assurance Manual in line with the different feedback that may be received from its various stakeholders.

All staff, students, and stakeholders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Quality Assurance Manual and play an active role in its ongoing development. Procedures are viewed by the Institute as 'living' documents that need to be followed, maintained and updated to reflect current best practice. All beneficiaries of the Institute are encouraged to participate in the continuous development of IFT-Malta's Quality Assurance Management System and are invited to share suggestions or provide feedback to the Quality Assurance Officer and/or Chairperson.

Information Collection and Audits

As outlined in the Quality Assurance Manual, a number of measures have been implemented by the Institute in order to maintain an efficient Quality Assurance Management System which reflects the needs of all IFT-Malta's beneficiaries.

Information collected from various meetings, feedback forms (both for students and staff), external audits and recommendations made by both the external consultant and external examiner, is consolidated and compiled into an annual report which will be published by the Institute.

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 policies and procedures published by the Institute are guides to all staff, students and stakeholders to promote accountability, and strive to achieve a high quality experiences for all beneficiaries of IFT-Malta.

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, 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 to IFT-Malta students, staff and external collaborators.

The diagram below is a visual representation of the data collection process:

