

**IFT Malta**  
**Equality and Diversity Policy**

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**Institute of Family Therapy**

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## **INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE**

IFT Malta is committed to cultivating an inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment for all students. Our mission is to provide outstanding educational opportunities that are based on non-discrimination, inclusion, and equal access.

IFT-Malta aims to create a community where everyone can thrive, valued for their unique identities, experiences, and circumstances, and supported to reach their full potential. By fostering a culture of respect and understanding, we empower students to reach their full potential and achieve academic success.

## **KEY PRINCIPLES**

IFT-Malta is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable environment for individuals with diverse abilities. The priority is to ensure that all students and staff have a safe, valued, and supportive experience. By promoting equitable access to education and facilities, the objective is to cultivate a community where all members are afforded the opportunity to thrive and achieve their potential.

To uphold these principles, IFT-Malta provides reasonable learning accommodations for students and staff with disabilities, adhering to the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413, 2000) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). IFT-Malta will ensure that all staff have a reference guide outlining the necessary adaptations to accommodate students' diverse learning needs, as per the Institute's resources.

In IFT-Malta, the approach to education prioritises student-centred learning, accommodating diverse needs through flexible delivery methods and pedagogical strategies, in accordance with

the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) standards and the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) (MFHEA, 2015).

This approach enables and ensures the creation of an inclusive and adaptable learning environment that caters to a wide range of student needs.

IFT-Malta maintains a strong legislative and policy framework to promote inclusivity, equality, and non-discrimination, ensuring compliance with national and international standards as outlined in the National Inclusive Education Framework (Education Services, 2022). As part of IFT-Malta's commitment, we continually advocate for diversity, accessibility, and inclusion, aiming to create an environment where all individuals, regardless of their background, can thrive without prejudice.

## **POLICY**

- IFT-Malta ensures equal access to courses, resources, and assessments, offering alternative formats for materials and adapting delivery and assessment methods to meet diverse learning needs. This includes oral presentations, written exams, role-playing, assignments, and written work.
- As explained in Annexe 1, assessment access arrangements are provided in accordance with the Joint Council of Qualifications (JCQ) guidelines. The resources available at IFT-Malta determine the access arrangements whilst meeting the minimum requirements of Malta's National Inclusive Education Framework. This framework is designed to promote non-discrimination and inclusivity within the educational system, ensuring that all students receive equitable learning opportunities.
- IFT-Malta addresses diversity in learning by guaranteeing that students who need PowerPoint presentations or notes will receive them from the tutor to fulfil their

requirements. In these situations, IFT-Malta has the right to request that students adhere to copyright regulations and sign a document to ensure that the copyright for such materials remains with the lecturer and is not distributed to others.

- IFT-Malta will provide reasonable accommodations, such as extended time for exams and providing materials in alternative formats. IFT-Malta reserves the right not to acknowledge these access arrangements when a psychological assessment report or a recognised medical report is not presented. The psychological assessment should indicate the access arrangement the student needs during learning and assessments.
- Applications for access arrangements must be submitted to IFT-Malta at least four weeks before the course begins. This allows IFT-Malta enough time to review the application, evaluate the student's needs, and arrange the necessary support. Late submissions could cause delays or prevent the requested accommodations from being available at the start of the course trimester.
- Access arrangements may be implemented for the student following the psychological or medical report. The student can request an extension of time, which the IFT-Malta Board of Directors will assess based on the individual circumstances of the case. IFT-Malta will confirm that the extension evaluation takes into account the specific needs and requirements of the assessment.
- IFT-Malta has made arrangements in the learning environment to accommodate physical diversity in compliance with the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The IFT-Malta premises are a licensed institution that complies with the requirements of the CRPD.

- IFT-Malta is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion while adhering to the regulations set by the Psychotherapy Profession Board (PPB) (2018) and its amendments. The Psychotherapy Profession Board (PPB) oversees the profession, ensuring that practitioners meet the required qualifications and fitness-to-practice standards. Applicants whose mental health or disability may affect their ability to carry out essential therapeutic responsibilities will undergo a fair, individualised, and professionally guided assessment in line with professional standards and anti-discrimination laws. However, individuals deemed unable to obtain a warrant to practice will eventually not be admitted to courses leading to this qualification.

All measures to support diversity and individual needs will be implemented, provided they do not compromise the learning environment for all students and the professional standards requirements of the Psychotherapy Profession Board (PPB).

### **MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW**

- IFT-Malta will conduct annual policy reviews to ensure compliance with MFHEA and national disability standards.
- A structured student feedback mechanism is established to assess the effectiveness of accommodation and support services.
- IFT-Malta will collaborate with national disability organisations and student representatives to enhance accessibility initiatives and ensure continuous improvement.

## **Annex 1: Accessibility & Reasonable Accommodations Policy**

IFT-Malta is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment in compliance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the regulatory framework set by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA).

IFT-Malta recognises that students may have differing abilities and require reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to education.

All requests for accommodation will be assessed individually to ensure that support measures are appropriately tailored while maintaining academic integrity and professional standards by presenting a psychological or recognised medical report.

### **Cognitive, Neurodevelopmental & Learning Differences**

#### **Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)**

- Clear and structured communication of course and examination requirements.
- Minimised distractions during lectures and assessments.
- Additional 25% time for exams (including settling-in time, rest breaks, or movement breaks).
- Examination venues with reduced student numbers or individual spaces, where necessary.

#### **Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) (e.g., Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dysgraphia)**

- An additional 25% time for written examinations.
- Access to an examination venue with reduced student numbers or individual spaces, if required.
- Use assistive technology (e.g., word processors with spell-check for severe dyslexia).

## **Physical & Sensory Impairments**

### **Hearing Impairment**

- Additional 25% time for exams (including settling-in time, rest breaks, or movement breaks).
- Preferential seating in lectures and oral examinations to ensure optimal communication.

### **Physical and/or Mobility Impairment**

- Fully accessible lecture and examination venues.
- Use of assistive technology or a word processor for written assessments.
- An additional 25% time for exams if manual writing is affected.

### **Visual Impairment**

- Extended time allocation for written examinations (up to 50% additional time).
- Use of text-to-speech software or other assistive technologies.
- Access to digital or alternative format course materials.

## **Mental Health & Psychological Well-being**

### **Mental Health Difficulties**

- An individualised assessment will be conducted to determine support needs while ensuring alignment with professional, academic, and fitness-to-practice standards according to the regulations set by the Psychotherapy Profession Board (PPB) (2018).
- Recommendations for psychotherapeutic or mental health support services will be provided where appropriate.
- Alternative assessment arrangements may be considered, provided they uphold academic integrity and professional competence.



- Applicants seeking a warrant must demonstrate the ability to practice safely and effectively, as assessed by regulations set by the Psychotherapy Profession Board (PPB) (2018) and fitness-to-practice criteria.

IFT-Malta upholds the principle of reasonable accommodation, ensuring that all students receive the necessary support to achieve their full academic potential while maintaining professional competence. Each accommodation request will be individually assessed, balancing the student's needs with the programme's requirements and professional regulations.

### **Appeals and Complaints**

IFT-Malta acknowledges that students may not always agree with decisions regarding reasonable accommodations. A transparent appeals and complaints process is therefore in place, which can be accessed on the IFT-Malta website under the Appeals Policy.

## References

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