



The National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education



The National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education



What is Quality Assurance?

The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) is the competent authority in Malta for licensing, accreditation and quality assurance of providers and programmes. Quality assurance aims to safeguard the quality of further and higher education within the economic, social and cultural context, on a national, European and international level. It also ensures the use of appropriate measures as a means of improving the quality of teaching, learning, training and research. The outcome of such findings is in turn communicated within

an internal and external framework of accountability (Chapter 327, Education Act, Laws of Malta).

By virtue of Subsidiary Legislation 327.433, the NCFHE has the remit to make and publish guidelines and criteria for the **Internal Quality Assurance System** (IQA) required by providers. It is also responsible for making guidelines containing the criteria and procedures to be used in accreditation and **External Quality Assurance** (EQA) activities undertaken by it.

The National Quality Assurance Framework for Malta

The National Quality Assurance Framework provides guidance to educational institutions that embark on the processes of Internal and External Quality Assurance in order to enhance the learning outcomes provided through their educational programmes.

It is underpinned by the following six principles.

1. The Framework is based on European Standards and Guidelines and enriched by the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) which has subsequently been adapted to the Maltese context.
2. It contributes towards a national quality culture leading to increased satisfaction and number of service users, an enhanced international profile and credibility for local providers operating in Malta and promotes Malta as a regional provider of excellence in further and higher education.
3. Internal quality assurance should be designed to be fit for purpose according to the courses provided and service users.
4. The External Quality Assurance process shall serve as a tool for development and accountability for all stakeholders,





The Quality Cycle

including learners and employers.

5. The Framework shall revolve around the learning outcomes-based Quality Cycle.
6. The NCFHE shall act with integrity and impartiality in its External Quality Assurance function through autonomous

Internal Quality Assurance Standards

The aim of Internal Quality Assurance Standards is to provide guidance to educational institutions, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in further, higher and adult formal education.



The educational institutions licensed by NCFHE adhere to the following principles:

- set up a policy for internal quality assurance;
- ensure the appropriate measures and procedures to guarantee financial probity;
- self-accrediting entities shall have processes for the design and approval of their programmes; other entities accredited by the NCFHE shall follow the programme accreditation procedure of the Commission;
- programmes are to be delivered in a way that encourage students in taking an active role in creating the learning process;
- consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering student admission, progression, recognition and certification;
- assure competence of teaching staff;
- appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities;
- ensure collection, analysis and use relevant information for the effective management of programmes and other activities;
- publish clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible information about activities, including courses/programmes;
- on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes to ensure objectives are met and respond to the needs of students and society;
- cyclical external quality assurance once every five years.

Scope of External Quality Assurance

The External Quality Assurance shall be conducted by applying the relevant European and international standards, guidelines and criteria for external quality assurance and respect for international treaties and agreements relevant to further and higher education provision as ratified or endorsed by Malta. The NCFHE offers its full support to educational institutions in following this process as per below:

- examine the fitness for purpose and effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes;
- examine compliance regulatory compliance of educational institutions;
- ensure appropriate investigatory mechanisms to guarantee financial probity.

The National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education is a key deliverable of ESF Project 1.227 'Making Quality Visible'. The project partners were:

- The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE)
- The University of Malta (UOM)
- The Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST)
- The Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS)
- The Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLLL)
- The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)
- ACQUIN, the transnational partner of the project and an established cross-border Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency based in Germany.

**National Commission for
Further and Higher Education**

T: +356 2381 0000
W: www.ncfhe.org.mt
E: qa.ncfhe@gov.mt



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
Project part-financed by the European Union
European Social Fund (ESF)

Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds



Investing in your future