

Programme Design and Development Policy and Procedures

[Version 2.2]

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1 Principles

- 1.1 All accredited programmes offered by the Institute for Education (IfE) are pegged to the national [Malta Qualifications Framework](#) (MQF) and are accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA).
- 1.2 The workload for each course is in ECTS. All programmes are learning outcome based and each course description includes specific and defined knowledge, skills and competences that the course participant would gain after the successful completion of the course.
- 1.3 The adoption of an outcomes-based approach focuses the activity on the course participant and away from the lecturer. Consequently, course participants should be actively involved in the planning and management of their own learning and take more autonomous responsibility for this as they progressively develop as independent learners. This produces an automatic focus on how learners learn and the design of effective learning environments.
- 1.4 All accredited programmes are to be constructively aligned; whereby, intended learning outcomes are supported by appropriate teaching activities and suitable assessment techniques to ensure learning is achieved.
- 1.5 In designing a programme, the IfE is committed to:
 - 1.5.1 Ensure that the expected student workload in terms of ECTS or ECVET learning credits is defined and attainable;
 - 1.5.2 Ensure that the target audience and the minimum eligibility and selection criteria is indicated;
 - 1.5.3 Outline the clear, specific aims and intended learning outcomes, distinguishing between knowledge, skills and competences;
 - 1.5.4 Ensure that aims and outcomes are aligned and measurable through appropriate assessment methods;
 - 1.5.5 Establish the level of the programme in line with external reference points, particularly the [Malta Referencing Report 2016](#), the [Malta Qualifications Framework](#) (MQF) and the [National Quality Assurance Framework for Malta](#);
 - 1.5.6 Ensure the programme aligns with the IfE's [Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures](#) and relevant other policies;
 - 1.5.7 Ensure that equality and diversity issues have been considered;
 - 1.5.8 Involve stakeholders in the design and development of the programme;

- 1.5.9 Ensure that there is an appropriate balance in the programme in terms of academic and practical elements as well as breadth and depth in the curriculum;
- 1.5.10 Establish the coherence of the programme to ensure that the overall course participant learning experience has a logical progression and an intellectual integrity that are related to clearly defined purposes;
- 1.5.11 Ensure the award/qualification title reflects the intended learning outcomes of the programme;
- 1.5.12 Ensure that the learning and assessment of modules, and in particular the module intended learning outcomes, align with those of the programme;
- 1.5.13 Ensure assessment offers all course participants equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning;
- 1.5.14 Consider the variety of assessment tasks to cater for a variety of learners;
- 1.5.15 Embed opportunities to practise learning in the curriculum through formative assessment;
- 1.5.16 Ensure that the necessary resources are available to support the programme;
- 1.5.17 Ensure that it reflects professionalism, values and learning dispositions;
- 1.5.18 Consider the potential for innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

2 Establishing Training Needs and Programme Design

- 2.1 The IfE develops its qualifications and programmes as a result of ongoing meetings and discussions held with various stakeholders involved in State, Church and Independent Schools, Training Needs Analysis, School Development Plans. Moreover, collaboration with the [Quality Assurance Department](#), [Colleges](#) and [Education Officers](#) within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education within the Ministry for Education, Youth and Research is highly valued by the IfE and is taken into consideration when designing qualifications, short courses as well as Continuing Professional Development sessions for all educators and sectorial stakeholders.

3 Procedures for Programme Development

- 3.1 The following procedures are adopted when developing a programme/module:

- 3.1.1 After conducting an informal training needs analysis in liaison with various internal and external stakeholders regarding the training needs of educators and other needs of the education sector, the Programmes Department develops a programme outline mapped to identified needs;
- 3.1.2 Following the development of the programme outline, the Programmes Department refer the proposed programme to the Academic Board for approval or otherwise;
- 3.1.3 Once approval is given, programme development may commence, the key areas of the field of study are identified and the allocation of developers commences;
- 3.1.4 If expertise in the area of study is found internally, the Programmes Department allocates the development of the programme/module to an internal lecturer who will write and develop its learning outcomes;
- 3.1.5 Should internal expertise not be available, an Expression of Interest for Learning Programme Development Experts (LPDEs) to develop the modules in the course is created and issued in liaison with the Human Resources Department;
- 3.1.6 Once LPDEs have been identified and allocated modules, programme developers are invited to a short online training session whereby the Programmes Department goes through the programme objectives, the training needs of the potential course participants and the Maltese education context; how to write modules based on learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) that are measurable, specific and align to appropriate assessment methods. An additional area covered in this session is the teaching, learning and assessment methods adopted by the IfE with a particular attention given to the online/blended-learning pedagogy promoted and embedded across programmes.
- 3.1.7 Following this training session, LPDEs are sent a resource pack developed by the Programmes Department consisting of step-by-step guidelines of how to fill in the [MFHEA application form](#), a list of verbs to assist in developing learning outcomes and the latest Referencing Report as issued by the MFHEA. The work is supervised by the Head of Programmes and the Senior Manager Programme Development and Review within the Programmes Department.
- 3.1.8 The programme developers are normally allocated thirty (30) days to develop the modules and submit them to the Programmes Department.
- 3.1.9 Once the modules are submitted to the IfE, the Programmes Department reviews each individual module to ensure that the learning outcomes, mode of teaching and assessment are well-suited for the level and type of qualification. Should any adjustments be recommended, this feedback is communicated to the programme developer to make further adjustments;

- 3.1.10 Once the full programme has been developed and compiled together, the Programmes Department conducts a final review to assure that the programme is cohesive and addresses the objectives of the overall programme.
- 3.1.11 Once the programme meets the expectations of the programmes department it is presented to MFHEA for accreditation.
- 3.1.12 When the Senior Manager Programme Development and Review receives the first evaluation by the MFHEA, this is reviewed internally and major requests for adjustments/amendments are sent to the programme developer to review the learning programme for further action. Following receipt of the adjustments by the LPDEs, the Senior Manager Programme Development and Review, or delegate then resubmits the learning programme for the second evaluation.
- 3.1.13 The same process cycle of feedback and adjustment may occur a second time in accordance with MFHEA accreditation operating procedures;
- 3.1.14 When accreditation is concluded from the MFHEA, the LPDEs are informed and remunerated for their services.
- 3.1.15 The outcomes of this new/re-accredited programme are also communicated by the Programmes Department to the Admissions, Quality Assurance and Coordination Departments for the programme to be implemented in the next academic year, or otherwise.

4 Relevant documents

- [Malta Referencing Report 2016](#)
- [Malta Qualifications Framework](#)
- [National Quality Assurance Framework for Malta](#)
- [MFHEA Application](#)
- [Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures](#)

5 Version history

Originator	Version	Date	Changes Done
QA Dept.	1.0	8/07/2019	Initial Release
Programmes Dept.	2.0	7/12/2022	Updated version with substantial changes articles 1, 2 and 3. Deletion of article 4. Internal Monitoring of Programmes.

QA Dept.	2.1	23/04/2024	Updated links
QA Dept.	2.2	16/01/2025	Updated in line with re-branding guidelines