



MUV

Quality Manual

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Revision History

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1 Standards for Internal Quality Assurance

MUV shall publish on its website this Quality Manual, which constitutes the core document of its internal quality assurance (IQA) policy, together with its Quality Policy Statement (PS/001).

The College shall implement a quality management system covering all of its educational activities. All organisational policies, systems, programmes, procedures and instructions are documented to ensure consistent quality, and the documentation shall be reviewed at least once every three years. The system shall be fully communicated and cascaded as appropriate, and it shall be audited periodically to ensure that documentation is understood and implemented by the relevant personnel (OP/001, OP/004).

MUV's quality documentation is organised in a hierarchical system started from the present top level Quality Manual, through to the various policies, procedures, work instructions, and records (OP/001, OP/003, OP/004, OP/020).

The College shall appoint a Quality Assurance Officer to be responsible for ensuring that high quality standards are maintained in all MUV programmes and other aspects of the educational experience provided to students. Every member of staff is equally responsible for quality by adhering to procedures and pointing out any nonconformities or opportunities for improvement. The Academic Council shall set the quality objectives and lay down guidelines for the various units and roles within MUV (OP/001).

The Quality Assurance Officer shall oversee all internal policies and procedures related to the quality of the educational experience offered, in order to ensure that the appropriate academic standards and integrity are consistently being maintained and improved. He/she shall ascertain that internal systems are well defined, that all envisaged academic and organisational units are set up and functioning, and that the expectations of the students and stakeholders are regularly being met (OP/001).

Ongoing programmes shall also be reviewed and revised at least every three years, in order to assess their relevance in the respective sectors, thereby keeping the students' educational and training experience as current as possible. Programme reviews shall take into account research results, feedback from students and staff, as well as the latest industry practices (OP/020).

IQA audits shall review the College's procedures on teaching and academic activities, including academic integrity and freedom (OP/007, OP/014), dealing with academic fraud (OP/012), ensuring the integrity and reliability of the technological infrastructure (OP/015), verifying the identity of students (OP/017, PL/001), guarding against intolerance, discrimination and unethical behaviour (OP/007, OP/011), involving external stakeholders in quality assurance (OP/001), and ascertaining the qualitative level of activities that are subcontracted to third parties (OP/014, OP/020).

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2 Institutional probity

MUV's Board of Directors shall appoint the management on the basis of the skills and experience required to achieve the College's objectives. All directors and officers occupying key roles at MUV are expected to show the highest levels of integrity and accountability in their actions (OP/002).

The Board of Directors shall safeguard the assets of the College and shall ensure that all corporate legal requirements and institutional obligations are being duly fulfilled. It shall draw up yearly budget plans and shall engage an independent auditor to carry out annual financial audits of the company's accounts (OP/005).

Every year, the Board shall allocate sufficient funds to cover the resources generally needed by the College, and particularly to guarantee the completion of the full cycle of academic years of all programmes of study to which students have been admitted (OP/005).

3 Design and approval of programmes

MUV's Academic Council shall design and oversee all study programmes offered by the College, according to its mission statement and educational philosophy combining theoretical and practical teaching, and in compliance with the requirements set by the national educational authorities (OP/006).

For each new programme, the Academic Council shall identify a team to develop course content, define the teaching methods, didactic tools and technical requirements, as well as other resources needed to support students. Programme development shall include adequate consultation with industry players and stakeholders, in order to render the resulting course as relevant as possible to the needs of the industry. It shall also require input from students, particularly whenever the course is being reviewed (OP/006, OP/020).

For every programme, the Academic Council shall determine target audience, the minimum requirements needed of lecturers, in terms of qualifications, academic and industry experience and skills (OP/006), as well as the rules for student progression (OP/018).

Every programme shall be introduced by a brief overall description, list of entry requirements, expected learning outcomes, qualifications awarded and corresponding European/Maltese Qualifications Framework (EQF/MQF) level, course structure and organisation, duration, specialisations available, as well as all the basic details of its curriculum, core and elective study-units. In turn, each study-unit shall contain an outline of the topic, teaching method, mode of assessment, reading list and other useful resources, approximate breakdown of the hours of learning, number of ECTS credits assigned, and an indication of the knowledge, skills and competences that are expected to be learnt upon unit completion (OP/006, OP/016).

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4 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

4.1 Learning and Teaching

MUV's educational philosophy (PS/002) places the student at the centre of the learning experience. While ensuring that the lecturing staff effectively guide the learners through the process, it encourages MUV students to nurture an inquisitive and enterprising spirit, freedom of thought and expression, and an ability to continue learning throughout life. The College shall strive to empower its students to think and analyse critically and conceptually, while channelling their creativity into productive and resourceful outcomes.

As this philosophy implies, the learning process is based on active teaching methods, where independent learning by the student, under the guidance of the lecturer, plays a significant role. MUV's programmes of study shall combine a vocational and practice-based approach to the theoretical, academic dimension of the discipline being taught. They are therefore to be designed in collaboration with leading partners in their respective sector, ensuring that such programmes remain relevant to the needs of the industry and the labour market, addressing the challenges of the new economy and the knowledge society. Whenever possible, traditional lectures are to alternate with case discussions, group work, practical training and presentations of different experiences taken from industry. Internships are to be integrated into the programmes, and student mobility shall be strongly encouraged.

MUV's teaching practices shall cultivate innovation as the cornerstone of the hands-on learning experience they aim to achieve (OP/014). They shall encourage interdisciplinarity between the arts and the sciences, complementing the quality and depth of the learning process with a drive to develop research and development activities and design transnational projects which students can benefit from (PS/002). MUV shall also facilitate interactivity between different schools it is in the process of setting up, while organising Continuous Professional Development (CPD) seminars to ensure that its teaching staff stays abreast of the latest developments in the industry (OP/014).

The College shall promote the widest possible student access to its educational programmes, which feature part-time and blended learning options to meet the needs of a diverse student population and enable flexible learning paths. Its approach shall reflect a strong commitment towards inclusion and non-discrimination, equal opportunities and lifelong learning, welcoming admissions from different ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds, while celebrating diversity (PS/002).

Intolerance, bullying, harassment, discrimination or other forms of improper behaviour in the relationship between students, staff and administration shall not be tolerated. MUV shall appoint an Ethics Officer to guard against such actions, and to promote a healthy mutual respect within the MUV community (OP/011).

A rigorous quality assurance system shall be implemented by the College to ensure that its educational policies and desired standards are being maintained. Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) audits and Programme Review procedures (see Standards 10 and 11 below) shall verify

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that pedagogical methods are being regularly evaluated and adjusted as necessary, and that students are receiving adequate support from the lecturing staff.

4.2 Assessment

MUV's assessment procedure shall reflect the learning experience promoted by the College's educational philosophy and ethos. It shall ensure that evaluations are conducted in a fair, transparent, consistent, rigorous and reliable manner, and that they do indicate the extent to which the learning outcomes of the study-unit or programme have been achieved by the student. Assessments shall also serve to allow the examiners to give feedback and advice to students, in order to improve their learning experience (OP/008).

MUV lecturers shall select the most appropriate assessment method for their study-units, according to the guidelines drawn up by the College (GL/002). They shall consider the different abilities of disadvantaged students when deciding on such options, and they shall make allowances for particular mitigating circumstances which would have affected an individual during or prior to an assessment (OP/008).

MUV shall ensure that the methods of assessment and marking criteria for each unit are clearly defined and explained to students, with the relevant details published on the website at the start of the term. Generally, assessments shall be carried out by the lecturer of the unit and reviewed by a second examiner from the faculty, but the College shall also occasionally appoint external examiners (OP/008).

Students shall have the right to request a revision of the paper in the case of written exams or tests, or a review of their projects, portfolios or assignments submitted for evaluation (OP/008). MUV shall appoint a board to address appeals made by students, following any complaints lodged or penalties imposed through the normal channels (OP/007, OP/011, OP/012).

MUV shall not tolerate any form of cheating and shall take all necessary actions to prevent it and penalise whoever engages in academic fraud (OP/012). It shall take measures to verify the identity of students carrying out an assessment, particularly in the case of courses delivered through eLearning (PL/001).

Records of assessment, grades and academic progress for each student shall be archived electronically on the MUV server, while those to be held in paper format shall be kept within the MUV campus facilities (OP/017).

5 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

All policies, procedures and regulations on the academic activities conducted by MUV shall be published on the College's intranet and applied consistently throughout.

5.1 Admission

MUV's Academic Council shall oversee the student admissions process handled by the Admissions Officer, to ensure a fair treatment of all applicants. Sufficient information for

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prospective students to make informed choices before enrolling shall be posted online and kept regularly updated. The outcome of the selection process shall be notified to all applicants by email, according to established procedures (OP/013).

After enrolling, students will have access to an online handbook containing information about their course and other related matters. The College shall organise induction programmes and events for new students to help them settle in (OP/013).

5.2 Progression

MUV's Academic Council shall ensure that the academic progression rules applicable to the different study programmes are being applied fairly and transparently in every course. At the end of each academic year, the Programme Director shall submit a student progression report on all students of the course, for the Council to endorse the enrolment in the subsequent year of the programme for all students who achieve the required level of academic performance (OP/018).

5.3 Recognition of Prior Learning

MUV shall consider applications from individuals to obtain recognition for their prior learning (RPL), acquired through formal, non-formal and informal settings (other than the mainstream certification accredited by the NCFHE). The RPL process aims to identify and assess, document and award academic credit for such knowledge and skills, irrespective of how these were acquired, allowing students to gain credits, or mature individuals to satisfy the entry requirements to a study programme. A committee set up to evaluate requests for RPL will carry out an assessment of the candidate and the relationship with the learning outcomes of the study programme, but the Academic Council shall maintain overall centralised control to ensure consistency and quality assurance. MUV shall inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the RPL process (OP/019).

5.4 Certification

MUV shall issue certificates to students reflecting their academic progress. The final documentation released upon the successful completion of the course will include a certificate and diploma supplement containing all the relevant details of the programme, such as Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) level, number of ECTS credits and learning outcomes achieved, as well as the list of study-units taken by the student, as required by the NCFHE regulations (OP/007).

6 Teaching staff

Recruitment of lecturing staff and other academic positions within MUV shall follow a fair and transparent process, ensuring that the best candidates are selected (OP/014). The conditions of employment shall eventually be broadly comparable to similar positions in the Maltese higher education sector. The MUV management shall review such conditions in order to ensure equity of treatment and to allow for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of the faculty (OP/014).

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All MUV teaching staff shall be in possession of appropriate qualifications and experience, according to the minimum criteria approved by NCFHE upon course accreditation (OP/014).

In line with its educational philosophy, MUV shall strive to promote innovation as a cornerstone of the College’s activities, including in the teaching methods of its staff (OP/014, PS/002). Its CPD seminars shall be held to ensure that lecturers stay abreast of the latest developments in the industry (OP/007).

All academic members of staff shall be encouraged to carry out research, community outreach and other activities of benefit to the College and its stakeholders (OP/014). MUV’s Academic Council ensures that all lecturers and students enjoy academic freedom in their respective roles, within the framework of the educational standards and QA policy adopted by the College (OP/007).

External parties contributing to the College’s academic programme, whether visiting lecturers or companies hosting students on internships, are to follow the College’s QA policies and procedures (OP/014).

7 Learning resources and student support

7.1 Resources

MUV’s Board of Directors shall raise the investment needed for the College’s educational activities and business growth. It shall allocate sufficient funds to provide the resources required by the school, and to ensure that the full cycle of academic years of each of its study programmes to which students have been admitted may be completed (OP/005). It shall provide well-equipped facilities, studios and a cultural incubator to complement the traditional amenities – from a range of hardware to a canteen – located on campus. Students shall also have access to online resources, like a virtual library and an archive of European projects implemented by MUV’s partners, together with an array of digital technologies to boost their learning experience (PS/002).

MUV shall maintain its data management system regularly updated and shall have adequate digital archiving and back-up facilities. It shall take measures to ensure proper data security and data protection, maintaining a fault tolerant and redundant server computing infrastructure in the interest of business continuity, disaster recovery and backup. Server mirroring will allow an exact replica of the eLearning server to be continuously created on run time. Duplication of the entire contents of the server on another server in a remote location allows data to be restored if the primary server fails. Backup software will be installed on the backup server and the server to be mirrored. The software routinely synchronizes and backs up data from the primary server over a secure Internet connection or VPN to the backup server (OP/015).

7.2 Student Support

Apart from tutors and the respective Programme Director to advise students on academic matters, MUV shall also appoint and train a Students Support Officer to see to other practical

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needs of the students. In particular, this officer shall assist students considered to be vulnerable, those on international exchange visits, and others having physical accessibility difficulties or cultural orientation issues. Furthermore, MUV shall offer technical support on the use of ICT equipment. All support services available to students shall be listed on the MUV website (OP/010).

8 Information management

MUV staff involved in the collection, processing, storing and disposal of student records shall follow the Student Records Management Policy (PS/004) and Operating Procedure (OP/017). Officers who need to handle student records must undertake mandatory information security induction and refresher training (OP/017).

MUV shall adopt the most suitable system for the collection of data required to satisfy the various needs of each organisational unit, in order to elaborate the information needed. It shall also collect data to satisfy the requests made by the national educational authorities. It shall each year produce a profile of the student population, highlighting specific characteristics like nationality and prevalence of groups considered vulnerable. Both quantitative – course participation, retention and success rates – and qualitative data – students’ satisfaction and evaluation of different aspects of each study-unit – shall provide the statistics and objective values needed for the analysis of each programme offered (OP/015).

When analysing and following up on the data collected, MUV shall whenever possible involve and discuss results with students, staff and external stakeholders. The College shall periodically conduct tracer studies, through appropriate surveys, to collect information on employment rates and career paths of graduates. It shall publish the relevant statistics, in ways which respect data protection regulations, on its website (OP/015).

With regards to the retention of records, MUV shall follow the Student Records Retention and Disposal Schedule SC/002. It shall ensure proper paper and electronic file management in order to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and accessibility of all student data. These will include provisions for electronic student files, case files or service records about identifiable students and personal data to be held on restricted access, password protected shared drives or information management systems. Academic records shall be maintained electronically on the MUV server. Paper-based records, student files and supporting documents shall be stored in secure locked cabinets managed by the MUV administration (OP/017).

MUV shall ensure that all data being kept by the College complies with the requirements established by the national data protection legislation (OP/015). Student files containing personal and contact details, as well as information about academic progress and degrees or awards completed shall be retained permanently (SC/002). Generic data collected for statistical purposes – including (a) information about admissions and assessments, (b) profile of the student population and prevalence of vulnerable groups, (c) course participation, retention and success rates, (d) students’ satisfaction with their programme, and (e) employment rates and career paths – shall be retained for at least forty years (OP/015, OP/017). Other records shall be

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retained only as long as necessary, and shall be erased or destroyed confidentially at the end of the stipulated retention period. Paper or electronic records that have been selected for permanent preservation for their historical or evidential value shall be kept in separate physical or virtual locations, or 'archives' (OP/017).

With regards to data from the eLearning environment, such as access information and test results, as well as other supplementary or supporting documents that must be kept for each student, MUV shall retain such records in paper and/or electronic files for every single student. Individual files containing the comprehensive student record of progress and attainment shall be held locally on the MUV campus (OP/017).

9 Public information

MUV shall keep the content of its web and social media sites regularly updated, in order to allow the public to obtain accurate information on its study programmes, including admission requirements, qualifications awarded – with details of their EQF/MQF level and ECTS credits, expected learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods adopted, as well as duration, specialisations, and further learning opportunities available. The website shall also contain information about potential career pathways for students who complete a specific course, details of academic activities and student support services offered, and eventually, of the relative pass rates (OP/016).

10 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

MUV shall review its study programmes at least once every three years (OP/020). It shall also conduct internal quality assurance audits of all its academic activities within a three-year quality cycle (OP/004). Such exercises are aimed to ensure that the quality standards set by MUV are being achieved, and to ascertain that the programme maintains its relevance, both in terms of the latest research and industrial practice, as well as in view of the needs of society and the students themselves. Such reviews are to be conducted according to the procedures set out in OP/001, OP/004, OP/006 and OP/020.

11 Cyclical external quality assurance

Apart from its regular QA monitoring, MUV shall commission External Quality Assurance (EQA) audits at least every five years, to review the IQA results. These audits provide the College with both a developmental and an accountability perspective. Before embarking on an EQA audit, MUV shall seek the approval of the NCFHE to ensure that it is in line with the national authority's guidelines on QA matters (OP/020).