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Periodic Programme Review Policy and Procedure

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Contents

Contents.....	4
1. Aim.....	5
2. Scope.....	5
3. Definitions.....	5
4. Acronyms	5
5. Periodic Programme Review Policy	6
5.1 Purpose.....	6
5.2 Policy.....	6
6. Cyclical Review Process.....	7
6.1 Cyclical Review Proposal Report.....	7
6.2 Scenarios: Types of Change.....	8
6.3 Programme/Modules Review.....	8
6.4 Accreditation/Approval Process.....	9
7. Dissemination.....	9
8. Timeline for the processing of cyclical review.....	10
9. Appendix: Process of Periodic Programme Review Tasks.....	11

1. Aim

The purpose of this document is to provide detailed description on IDEA Academy policy concerning the academic programme reviews.

2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to IDEA Academy study programmes which are accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), as well as to those programmes which in addition to MFHEA accreditation are also subject to a professional regulatory body.

3. Definitions

Expert	A reviewer(s) recruited to provide a critical appraisal of the study programme and propose required amendments.
Professional Regulatory Body	External bodies which formally set standards for, and regulate entry into, particular professions.

4. Acronyms

ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
KSCs	Knowledge, Skills and Competences
MFHEA	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority
MQF	Malta Qualification Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

5. Periodic Programme Review Policy

5.1 Purpose

The Periodic Programme Review is central to IDEA Academy's quality policy and is an ongoing process as part of its quality assurance mechanism. The purpose of undertaking a programme review is to:

- a. Ensure that the programmes remain relevant and valid in the light of:
 - i. Changes in the national standards and legislations;
 - ii. Developments in the academic disciplinary fields;
 - iii. Developments in the application of technical aspects;
 - iv. Results obtained from monitoring the progress of the student learning experience;
 - v. Results obtained from monitoring trends in student demands; and
 - vi. Feedback from internal and external stakeholders.
- b. Develop a process of collecting data, including feedback from stakeholders (students, lecturers and industry experts) and analysing conclusions as a mechanism aimed towards the continuous enhancement of IDEA Academy's quality curriculum.
- c. Consider relevance and coherence in IDEA Academy's teaching and learning strategy.
- d. Recognise and disseminate areas of good practice.
- e. Identify and address areas needing improvement.

5.2 Policy

Thus, it is the policy of IDEA Academy that:

- 5.2.1 Accredited programmes are reviewed to ensure that the study programmes are aligned with IDEA Academy's strategic objectives and goals.
- 5.2.2 Accredited programmes are to be reviewed regularly and systematically to ensure that the objectives and learning outcomes of the programme are relevant and responsive to the needs of the diverse stakeholders.
- 5.2.3 Periodical monitoring and review of IDEA Academy's accredited programmes gives significant value to the feedback from internal and external stakeholders ensuring that the level, content, delivery and assessment remains relevant and appropriate.
- 5.2.4 The IDEA Academy calendar for cyclical reviews is followed.
- 5.2.5 The cyclical reviews are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the MFHEA QA Framework, Internal Quality Assurance Standards, as well as professional regulatory standards where applicable.

6. Cyclical Review Process

6.1 Cyclical Review Proposal Report

6.1.1 Cyclical review of an accredited programme is to be conducted:

1. At the end of the first programme cycle;
2. Systematically at a frequency of at least once every 3 years, or
3. When the need arises (unscheduled) where the length of time between reviews is no more than five years.

6.1.2 The responsibility of a periodic review of programme hosted by IDEA Academy lies within the Academy's Quality Assurance Office.

6.1.3 The cyclical review process needs to take into account feedback received from internal and external stakeholders during the previous three years of programme delivery. The stakeholders include:

- a) Students;
- b) Field experts (when major changes are proposed);
- c) Academy staff and Lecturers.
- d) Internal and external academic reports/reviews, student results, drop-outs, complaints, appeals etc.

6.1.4 At the end of each calendar year (November), the Curriculum Office shall compile the list of programmes that are due for the 3-year cyclical review.

6.1.5 Based on the feedback from internal and external stakeholders (refer to paragraph 5.1.3), the QA Office shall determine which programmes are eligible for:

- a) cyclical review (structural, minor, major, re-write refer to Table 1),
- b) no changes

6.1.6 The IDEA QA Office shall compile a 'Cyclical Review Proposal Report' which will typically cover the following areas:

- a) Summary of feedback from internal and external stakeholders (could include emails, reports etc.);
- b) Rational of changes being proposed;
- c) List of modules that require cyclical review;
- d) The extent of review required (minor, major, re-write, withdrawal, no changes) - Refer to Table 1 - Scenarios below.

6.1.7 The Cyclical Review Proposal Report is to be approved by the Principal.

6.2 Scenarios: Types of Change

Table 1

Scenario	Type of change	Nature of change
1	Structural changes	Changes to the overall structure, level of qualification, workload, change in the list of modules, changes in the mode of delivery
2	Minor changes	Changes that are related to the content, (updates to keep the relevance in view of new developments in the area of study) or some assessment criteria. Minor changes exclude (changes) to the overall title, course rationale, learning outcomes, level of study or workload (ECTS/ECVETs), reading list.
	Major changes	Substantial changes to the extent that it would not be possible to ensure parity for any student retaking the programme in a subsequent year. This includes changes to LO's hence also requiring changes to content, and a major change to assessment criteria to accommodate the changes to the LOs.
	Re-write of module	Major changes to LO's, title and content, assessment criteria, assessment strategy.
3	No changes recommended	

6.3 Programme/Modules Review

6.3.1 Subject to the approval of the Cyclical Review Proposal Report by the Principal for Scenario 1 and 2 in Table 1, the QA Office will identify expert/s to undertake the cyclical review of the programme/modules.

6.3.2 The Expert(s)

6.3.2.1 An expert(s) is/are recruited to review and provide a critical appraisal of the study programme and propose required amendments.

6.3.2.2 The expert/s is to ensure compliance with MFHEA standards, and where applicable compliance with the professional regulatory body.

6.3.2.3 The Quality Office will liaise with the selected expert(s) during the reviewing process to plan and manage the activities leading to the review.

6.3.2.4 During the quarter the expert(s) shall submit a draft 'Cyclical Programme Review Report' together with the amended module specifications to the QA Office.

6.3.2.5 Feedback on the first draft is provided by the QA Office and is made available to the expert for submission of a final report.

6.3.2.6 The expert shall submit the final 'Cyclical Programme Review Report' to the QA Office by the agreed deadline (this will be agreed upon commissioning of review task).

6.4 Accreditation/Approval Process

- 6.4.1 Upon receipt of the 'Cyclical Programme Review Report' from the Expert(s) the QA Office shall proceed with the internal checks of the modules and the submission for re-accreditation by MFHEA.

*In case of Professional Regulated Programmes approval will be sought prior to the submission of the application for re-accreditation by MFHEA.

- 6.4.2 Subsequent to the necessary iterations between the QA Office and MFHEA the module specification/s or new units are accredited by MFHEA the QA Office shall update the version of the module/programme of studies in the information system.

7. Dissemination

The QA Office shall disseminate approved and accredited revised programme by:

- a) Uploading the revised programme/modules on the information system.
- b) Notifying the Registrar's Office and Directors of Study about the updates.
- c) Roll out to lecturers.
- d) Update the IDEA Academy website.

8. Timeline for the processing of cyclical review

Nov	Dec-Jan	Dec-Jan	March-April	May	May onwards depending on the length and timeliness of process with MFHEA / Professional Regulatory Bodies				
Issue list of programmes that are due for cyclical review	Identify which programmes/modules require cyclical review on the basis of stakeholder's feedback obtained during the previous 2-3 years of delivery	Appoint Experts	Experts conduct the required changes and enhancements	Send application for re-accreditation by MFHEA	Go through the iteration process and finalise with MFHEA	Update version of modules/ programmes	Upload new documents on the information system	Inform Registrar and Directors of Study with the updates	Roll out to lecturers

9. Appendix: Process of Periodic Programme Review Tasks

Stage 1 - INPUTS: Collection of Data

1. Status of Accredited Programmes, to include approval from professional regulatory bodies, where applicable.
2. Experts' inputs: Developments in:
 - a. The academic fields and
 - b. The technical aspects.
3. Results: Study of monitoring of student progress:
 - a. Rates of Admissions
 - b. Rates of Completion,
 - c. Rates of Progression and
 - d. Rates of Retention.
4. Results: Study of monitoring of student demands – Applicants' Profiles
5. Feedback from Stakeholders:
 - a. Students
 - b. Academic Staff
 - c. Administrative Staff
 - d. Experts
 - e. Partners
 - f. Industry
 - g. Alumni
 - h. Professional Bodies
6. Tracer studies
7. Complaints and Appeals

Stage 2 - ANALYSIS

1. Findings of collected data
2. Key areas which need to be reviewed
3. Recommendations for improvement
4. Compilation of report: 'Cyclical Review Proposal Report'

Stage 3 - REVIEWING A PROGRAMME

1. Identification, recruiting a Reviewer
 2. Establishing a Procedure Template for Reviewing a Programme to focus on 2 aspects:
 - A. Programme Features
 - B. Aligning with Standards
- A. Programme Features:
- * *Programme Structure: Entry Requirements, Exit Points, Pre-Requisites, RPL, Foreign Qualifications, Progression and Certification, ECTS,*
 - * *Content*
 - * *Relevance*

- * Curriculum Design: Programme Learning Outcomes, Level of Competences as per MQF, Incorporating Transferable Skills and Graduate Attributes*
- * Delivery: Evaluation of Delivery Modes (face-to-face, blended, online), Balance in Delivery Modes, Duration of Delivery per Module/Credit,*
- * Assessment: Evaluation of Assessment Methods, Balance of Formative and Summative Assessment*
- * Learning Resources: Library (physical and online), VLE*
- * Qualifications and Experience of Academic Staff*

B. Aligning with Standards:

- a. National Standards and Legislations*
- b. Comparison with International Standards - Benchmarking*
- c. IDEA Academy Policies and Procedures*
- d. KSCs as providing opportunities for:*
 - i. further studies;*
 - ii. employment mobility*

3. Reviewer's Report
4. Approval process by QA and the Principal.

Stage 4 – OUTPUT: ACCREDITATION PROCESS with MFHEA and PROFESSIONAL REGULATORY BODY, where applicable

OVERALL QA RESPONSIBILITIES: MONITORING PROCESSES

COMPONENTS

1. Documentation of the steps of all the processes from collection of data, the reviewing to the approval and accreditation of the revised programme.
2. Actions being taken following approval and accreditation.
3. Documentation of actions taken.
4. Dissemination of approved and accredited revised programme

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