GBS HE Malta Limited
International House
Mdina Road
Mriehel BKR3000
Malta

GBS HE Malta Limited
Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Standards Manual

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Related policies
▪ Academic Appeals policy ▪ Academic Misconduct Policy ▪ Assessment Regulations ▪ Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy ▪ Complaints Policy ▪ Recruitment and Admissions policy ▪ Conflict of Interest Policy ▪ Equal Opportunities Policy ▪ Extenuating Circumstances ▪ Health and Safety Policy ▪ Internal Verification Policy and Procedure ▪ Learner Recruitment, Registration and Certification Policy ▪ Leaner Support Policy ▪ Recognition of Prior Learning ▪ Record Management and Retention Policy ▪ Safeguarding Policy ▪ Special Considerations and Reasonable Adjustments Policy ▪ Student Protection Plan ▪ Access and Participation Statement ▪ GBS HE Malta Committee Handbook Academic Year 2021 ▪ Staff Recruitment Policy ▪ Staff Learning and Development Policy ▪ Fit and Proper Person Test: Self-Declaration Form
External Reference
1. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Access to webpage using this link: *https://www.qaa.ac.uk/*. 2. The Office for Students (OfS) Access to webpage using this link: *https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/* 3. Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (The MFHEA) Access to webpage using this link: *https://mfhea.mt/* 4. National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) Access to webpage using this link: *https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Pages/default.aspx* 5. UNIT 4 Access to webpage using this link: *https://www.unit4.com/* 6. Bath Spa University Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes: Accessed online at: https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/media/bathspaacuk/about-us/policies/academic-and-student/Academic-Regulations-2.3-September-2021-(1).pdf 7. Office of the Independent Adjudicator Access to webpage using this link: *https://www.oiahe.org.uk/* 8. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Access to webpage using this link: *https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/competition-and-markets-authority* 9. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) Access to webpage using this link: *https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual* 10. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) Access to webpage using this link: *https://ccea.org.uk/*

11. Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA), Access to webpage using this link: https://www.mccaa.org.mt/

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GBS HE Malta Limited
Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Standards Manual

1. Introduction

1.1 The Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) is an independent, transparent, and international authority. The MFHEA was officially launched on the 8th of January 2021 and is legislated by the revised Education Act which came into force on the 1st of January 2021. MFHEA tagline is 'Quality Education for Confident Futures.' The MFHEA mission statement is:

> *"'To foster the development and achievement of excellence in further and higher education in Malta through research, effective licensing, accreditation, quality assurance, and recognition of qualifications established under the Malta Qualifications Framework." (Source: Chapter 327, Education Act: https://mfhea.mt/legislation/).*

1.2 The MFHEA focuses on:
- Providing accreditation to further and higher educational institutions.
- Providing accreditation to programmes or courses of studies at further and higher education levels.
- Quality assurance of both educational institutions and programmes or courses.
- Recognition of obtained national or international qualifications as well as prospective qualifications.
- Validation of informal and non-formal learning
- Research and policy recommendation on issues related to further and higher education.

1.3 GBS HE Malta Limited (GBS) is based on the Quality Cycle which is the overarching principle of the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (2015). As per Figure 1: The Quality Cycle below, GBS HE Malta will ensure that through the Quality Cycle, we will review our own quality assurance processes and procedures in preparation for an External Quality Assurance audit.

Figure 1: The Quality Cycle

Source: National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (2015), NCFHE, Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta.

1.4 The Internal Quality Assurance Standards (IQA) Manual is designed in compliance with the 11 Standards of Quality Assurance as specified by MFHEA. These 11 Standards set by MFHEA include:

1. Policies and Practices
2. Institutional Probity
3. Design and approval of programmes
4. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
5. Student admission, progression, recognition, and certification
6. Competence of teaching staff
7. Learning resources and student support
8. Information management
9. Public information
10. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
11. Cyclical external quality assurance

1.5 GBS HE Malta's quality assurance system is underpinned by the above 11 standards. These standards are part of the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (2015) which was built upon the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015). GBS HE Malta considers these standards in a broader context that also includes the Malta Qualifications Framework and the use of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) learning credits as indicated in the Malta Referencing Report (2016).

1.6 Figure 2 below shows Malta's National Quality Culture. The National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education contributes to:

– Increased agency, satisfaction, and numbers of service users.
– An enhanced international profile and credibility of providers in Malta, and;
– The promotion of Malta as a regional provider of excellence in further and higher education.

Figure 2: Malta's National Quality Culture

Source: National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (2015), NCFHE, Ministry for Education and Employment, Malta.

2. Description of GBS HE Malta Limited

2.1 GBS HE Malta Limited is part of Global Education Holdings Limited which is registered in the United Kingdom (UK) and has grown since its original inception and has moved from offering students diploma qualifications to degree qualifications in partnership with degree Awarding Bodies. GBS HE Malta has undergone reviews carried out by the <u>Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)</u> who are responsible for safeguarding standards and improvement of the quality of UK higher education institutions wherever it is delivered around the world and are responsible for ensuring that students receive the Higher Education they are entitled to expect. At the time of the review visit in 2016 at Global Banking School Limited UK had 61 full time students on a range of programmes and has since grown to 6,500 full time students as of June 2021. The first cohorts started on the Buckinghamshire New University programme in September 2016 on the BA (Hons) Business and Management programme. Global Banking School currently works in partnership with four leading UK universities, Buckingham New University, Leeds Trinity University, University of Suffolk, and Canterbury Christ Church University, to deliver undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

3. Vision and Mission Statement

3.1 GBS HE Malta Ltd aims to help students thrive in today's competitive job market – offering excellent links to employers and a focus on one-to-one academic and career guidance in addition to our specialist programmes. We take an inclusive approach to recruiting students, with an aim to widening access to higher education among groups currently under-represented in the sector. In fact, this very idea is at the heart of who we are. The Mission of GBS is to provide applied global educational opportunities in Finance, Banking, Business, Healthcare and Hospitality Management, supported by the quality of its learning and teaching, research informed teaching and student engagement.

3.2 Our purpose is to attract and retain widening participation learners to ensure they achieve success, thereby fulfilling our aims as stated in our Access and Participation Statement and addressing social exclusion and contributing to economic growth. Our vision is to:

'*Change lives through education that makes a fundamental difference to living standards and access to learning.*'

3.3 We believe that education is transformational. It enables personal growth which can lead to better employment prospects. Our values are not just a set of words, they define who we are and what we strive to be as an organisation. We want to put our values at the heart of everything that we do, and we need our staff and students help to make this a success. Our core values are:

- Focusing on learners and learning
- Striving for excellence in learner achievement
- Supporting widening participation for students living in traditionally low areas of higher education participation
- Ensuring high aspirations and learner achievement
- Having committed and qualified staff
- Valuing opportunity, equality, and diversity

- Creating a dynamic and welcoming environment
- Working in effective teams and partnerships
- Developing and enhancing our strategic capability to ensure the long-term success of GBS to achieve our vision

3.4 **Face-to-face teaching, blended learning, and online provision**

3.5 GBS Malta intends to offer face-to-face teaching, blended learning, and online provision of Bath Spa University programmes. Blended learning may be considered as this will provide students with a combination of face-to-face learning and dynamic digital activities and content that facilitate anytime/anyplace learning. GBS HE Malta (if following the blended learning approach) will provide our students with content that will be accessible and engaging. These courses will be developed to provide our students with all the theory and knowledge they need in a format that offers flexibility and convenience. There are many benefits to the blended learning approach which include:

1) Blended Learning expands reach as content can be accessed by any student around the world.
2) Blended learning increases engagement as students use a variety of content types such as face-to-face training and interact with relevant and actionable video, audio, text, presentations, and other types of bite-sized content, they are more likely to engage, retain information, and apply what they learn to their job.

3.6 Our vision is embedded within our values which is illustrative as per Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Our Values

4. Standard 1: Policies and Practices

4.1 Organisation of Quality Assurance System

4.1.1 GBS HE Malta Strategic Plan (2021-24) sets out a framework of priorities for GBS for the next four years. Both students and staff have been consulted during the drafting of the plan who will be vital partners in the implementation of the Plan. The Strategic Plan defines five strategic goals and each of them specifies the key elements constituting successful achievement of the goal. The five strategic goals are the following Figure 4:

Figure 4: Strategic Plan (2021-24)

4.1.2 The Strategic Plan will be supported and underpinned by a number of more detailed strategies including the Learning and Teaching Strategy, Digital Learning Strategy, Student Retention and Progression Strategy, Employability Strategy, Student Experience Strategy, International Strategy, People Strategy and a Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy. GBS' Executive Board considers progression against the plan and any changes to the plan that may be required as a consequence of e.g., government policy changes, changes in partner policies.

### 4.2 Responsibilities: Departments, Leadership and Students

4.2.1 GBS HE Malta operates within a committee framework which ensures that the responsibilities for academic standards and quality assurance are appropriately discharged. Our academic standards are assured by:

- GBS policies and processes
- Committee structure
- Involvement of students' voice at all levels

– Annual review of our programmes

– Processes for recruitment of staff to assure the quality of learning and teaching.

4.2.2 GBS HE Malta Academic Governance Chart is shown below in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Academic Governance Chart
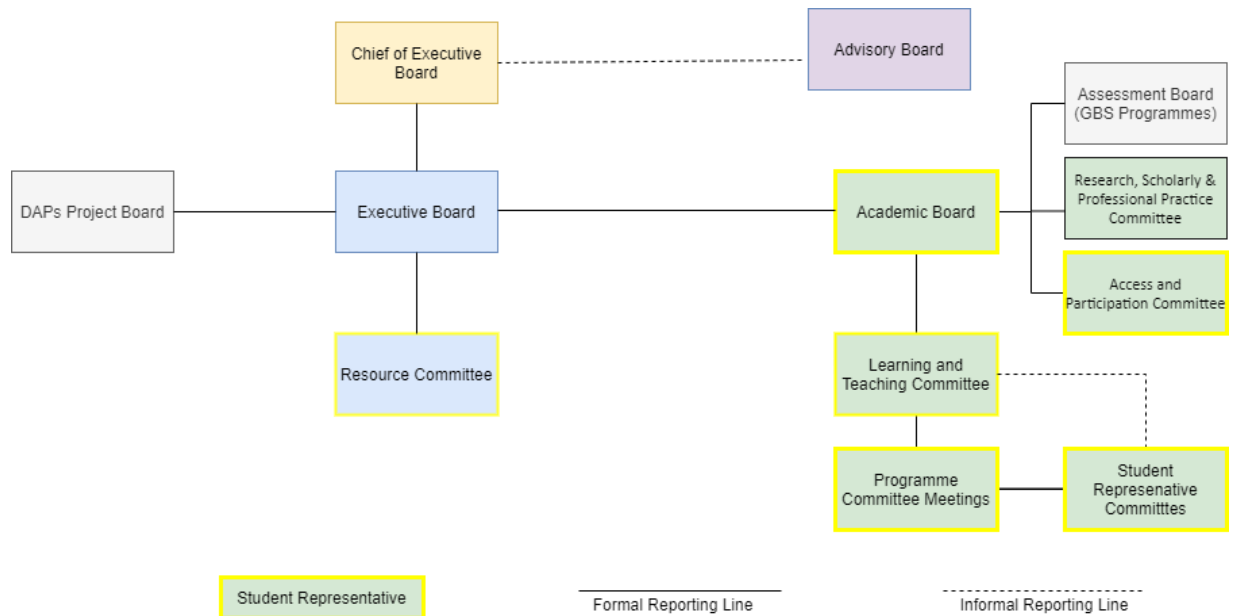
4.2.3 ***Board and Committee Schedule***

4.2.4 The below table demonstrates the name of the Boards/Committees and the number of times they convene each year. All Board and Committees are given full secretarial support and are minuted. Please follow this link to view our GBS HE Malta Committee Handbook Academic Year 2021-22.

Boards and Committee Name:	Number of meetings per year:
DAPs Project Board	Six times a year
Executive Board	Six times a year
Resource Committee	Three times a year
Advisory Board	Once a year
Academic Board	Three times a year
Assessment Board (GBS Programmes)	Three times a year
Research, Scholarly & Professional Practice Committee	Three times a year
Access and Participation Committee	Three times a year
Learning and Teaching Committee	Three times a year
Programme Committee Meetings	Three times a year
Student Representative Committee	Three times a year

4.2.5 ***Executive Board***

4.2.6 The Executive Board is the primary governing body of GBS, which is collectively responsible for overseeing the institution's activities, determining its future direction, and fostering an environment in which the institutional mission is achieved, whilst ensuring the potential of all students is maximised. With many operational aspects of the business delegated to a variety of sub-Board/Committees, the Executive Board monitors the performance of the business by means of periodic reviews, seeking to ensure the business meets set goals on a sustainable basis, while also seeking to efficiently allocate the resources needed to meet student need, protect their interests and achieve the highest quality and standards.

4.2.7 *Advisory Board*

4.2.8 The Advisory Board is the highest body of GBS constituted of external members representing a wide range of expertise to support the further development of GBS and members of GBS senior management.

4.2.9 *Resource Committee*

4.2.10 The Resource Committee advises the Executive Board on resource issues across all campuses of Global Banking School. The Committee also receives advice from Academic Board on resources needed for the development and sustainability of academic activities of GBS.

4.2.11 *Academic Board*

4.2.12 The Academic Board is the highest academic authority and guardian of the academic standards and quality at GBS. With delegated responsibility on behalf of the Executive Board, the Academic Board oversees the development, management, monitoring and quality of all education programmes across GBS.

4.2.13 The Academic Board maintains leadership, direction, and oversight of GBS's quality assurance and enhancement activities to ensure that enhancements and improvements are driven by GBS academic quality indicators. It advises the Executive Board and Chief Executive Officer of GBS.

4.2.14 *Learning and Teaching Committee*

4.2.15 The Learning and Teaching Committee is responsible for setting and maintaining academic standards, as appropriate, reflecting partnership arrangements. The Committee is also responsible for the development, monitoring and review of learning and teaching to ensure the maintenance of academic standards, the quality of the student learning experience and meaningful opportunities for student engagement.

4.2.16 *Programme Committee*

4.2.17 The Programme Committees are responsible for maintaining academic standards of the programmes for which the committees are responsible and the quality of the students' learning experience to enable students to achieve their academic and professional outcomes the programmes are designed to deliver. The Committee also

ensures that the awarding body and partner organisations' reporting requirements relating to academic standards and programme quality are met at all times. It also monitors the academic performance of students and identify areas for enhancement and good practice for wider dissemination across GBS.

4.2.18 *Student Representative Committee*

4.2.19 The purpose of the Committee is to consider matters to do with the general learning experience and opportunities for academic and professional development whilst a student at GBS HE Malta. Separate Student Representative Committees operate for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, taking account of different learning styles and awarding body requirements.

4.3 Organisational Chart

4.3.1 GBS HE Malta organisational structure demonstrates each department and their responsibilities as per Figure 6:

Figure 6: Organisational Chart
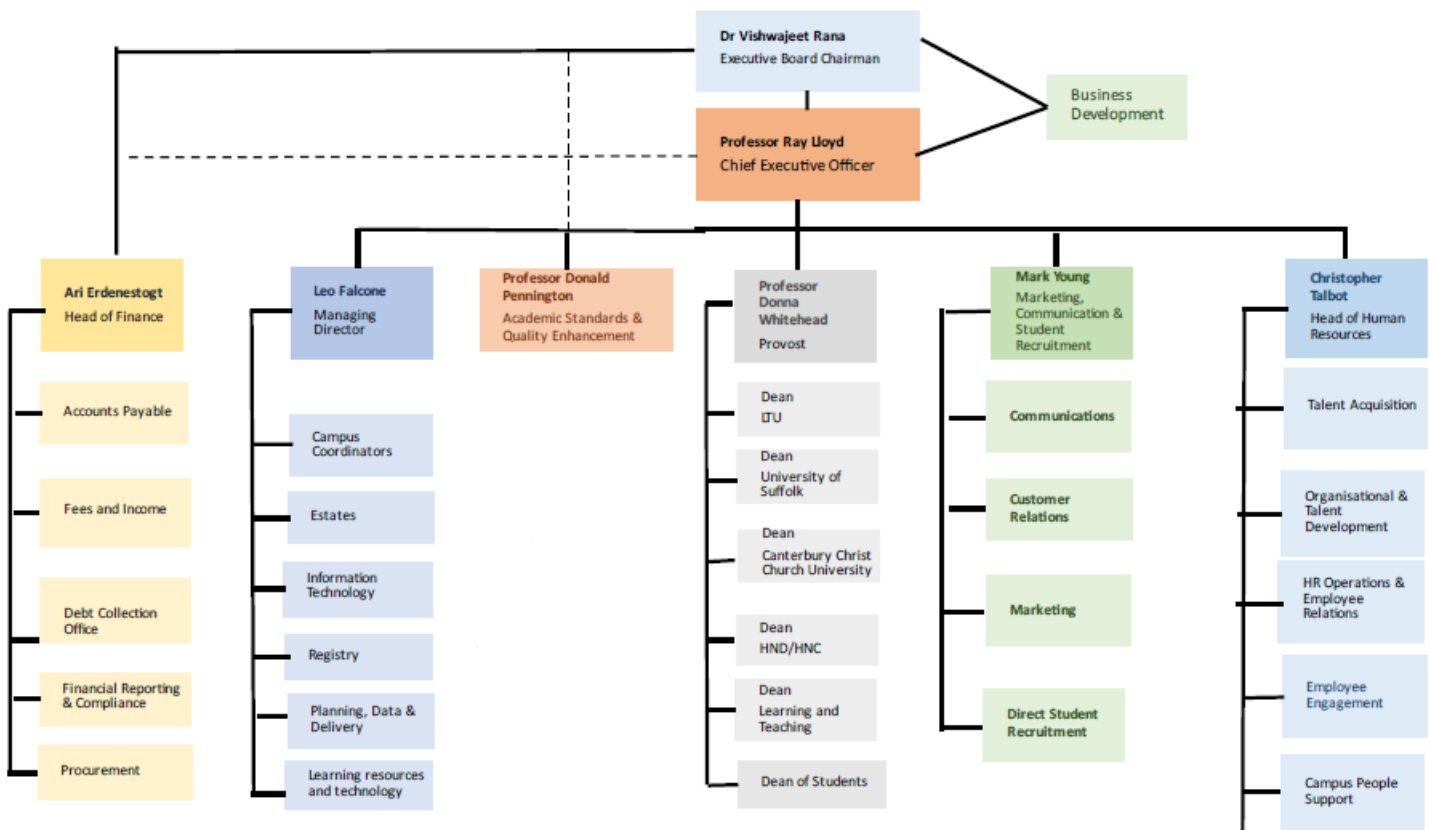
4.3.2 The Chairman of the Executive Board is Dr Vishwajeet Rana.

4.3.3 Professor. Ray Lloyd is the Chief Executive Officer. He joined GBS in September 2020.

4.3.4   For partnership arrangements with our awarding bodies, academic decisions and executive functions are carried out by the Deans and Associate Deans. They are also responsible for the oversight of the students' academic journey and experience.

4.4   Relationship between Research, Teaching and Learning

4.4.1   GBS HE Malta study programmes should optimally prepare our students for their future careers. As active contributors to our collaborative, inclusive and diverse academic community, GBS students will gain skills that prepare them to succeed in the modern world and that equip them to be future leaders. At GBS, we place our students at the centre of the learning experience that we provide and operate equivalently across all campuses, programmes and GBS partnerships. We aim to provide high level context for learning and teaching with a commitment to continuous quality enhancement of the student learning experience. We aim that our graduates will:

- Demonstrate deep conceptual understanding of their chosen discipline
- Work effectively in multi-cultural teams and across disciplinary boundaries
- Approach challenges with curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity
- Apply their skills to tackling complex real-world problems
- Understand and value different cultures and perspectives
- Have developed into independent learners
- Display a strong sense of personal and professional identity

4.4.2   GBS recognises that the changing context for higher education poses challenges and demands new capabilities of both staff and students. Our Learning and Teaching Strategy sets out how these challenges will be addressed over the next few years. We must continue to evidence a commitment to enhancement in course development, inspirational teaching, and well-managed assessment for learning. We will need to ensure our courses continue to support intellectual development and academic achievement whilst also meeting the diverse needs of students, employers, and society in relation to student employability and creativity.

4.4.3   This will mean greater emphasis for both staff and students on professional development, participation, and engagement, as well as working in partnership to effectively develop, manage and enhance courses and learning experiences. Our academic programmes are designed to stretch and challenge our students. Our widening participation community of students and staff provides a dynamic and stimulating environments for all key stakeholders. We are already well-placed to act ambitiously and collaboratively to invest in the creation of new partnerships and maintain educational excellence.

4.5 Academic Integrity and Freedom

4.5.1   GBS will ensure allegations of academic misconduct are investigated and resolved before the relevant Assessment Board takes place. GBS Good Academic Practice and Academic Misconduct Policy and Process describe how we detect and investigate suspected academic misconduct. In essence, the first markers are

responsible for identifying possible academic misconduct (by using plagiarism detection software-Turnitin) and bringing it to the attention of the Module and Programme Leader who may then convene a hearing.

4.5.2 To ensure assessment is fair for all students, GBS briefs students on good academic practice (referencing, citations, acknowledging other people's work, etc) and on the various categories constituting academic misconduct, including plagiarism and the dangers of using external academic writing companies or ghosting. Student Handbooks provide some guidance on this which is backed up by our internal policies and procedures. Tutors regularly brief students on academic good practice and the dangers of academic misconduct when discussing assignment briefs and whilst students are preparing their summative assessments.

4.6 Procedures for Ensuring Against Academic Fraud

4.6.1 GBS HE Malta has an [Academic Good Practice and Academic Misconduct Policy](#) which ensures every GBS student is expected to act with academic integrity in relation to the production and presentation of their academic work. Academic integrity is central to academic and professional life and requires that students be honest and responsible in acknowledging the contributions of others in their work. In all assessed work, students should take care to ensure that the work presented is their own and that it fully acknowledges the work and opinions of others. It is also the responsibility of students to ensure that they do not undertake any form of cheating (plagiarism) or attempt to gain unfair advantage in any other way.

4.6.2 **Notifying the Student on Good Academic Practice**

4.6.3 Students are made aware of good academic practice at enrolment, prior to receiving unconditional offer of acceptance and at the start of their induction programme. GBS induction programmes provide students with detailed guidance to ensure they are supported throughout their time at GBS. Induction for new students will cover the breadth of the student experience including an academic induction that addresses the skills required to be successful in their chosen programme of study and ensure students fully understand the procedures GBS has for preventing academic fraud.

4.6.4 The academic induction will introduce students to their new academic community of practice and identify the level of commitment and standards expected of them. The induction will also address subject-specific IT skills workshops, study skills, methods of learning and teaching in the subject, the roles of formative and summative assessment, and the use of assessment feedback to improve their academic performance. Students will be provided with initial guidance on the level of writing, communication, and study skills that they will be expected to develop in their chosen subject area(s).

4.6.5 Information on good academic practice is readily available on our GBS website, terms and conditions, enrolment guides, module/course handbooks, module/programme specifications, policies, and procedures which students are encouraged to read. Our website refers to:

4.6.6 **Student Support**

'We want all our students to have the best possible experience while studying at GBS. To achieve this, we provide a range of academic and pastoral support services to help you successfully navigate your way through your chosen course. Whether you need help writing essays or making presentations, or support and advice on personal issues, we are with you every step of the way'.

4.6.7 Academic Support

'Our Academic Support team are here to help you with all academic aspects of your studies – essay writing, presentations, referencing, and much more. If you need help in these areas, you can contact your Programme or Module leader, or the Academic Support team directly. Or simply speak to your tutor after class!'

4.6.8 Welfare Team Support

'We want all our students to have a happy and rewarding experience with us. However, we know that during your time at GBS, you may face circumstances that could adversely affect your studies. These could be personal issues, or mental or physical health problems. Whatever the issue may be, we want you to know that we're here to help and will make sure you receive all the support you need. If you're experiencing any issues, you feel will negatively affect your studies, please contact the Welfare Team who will be there to help you. We'll always listen with empathy and without judgment, and will direct you to emotional support, counselling, or practical advice organisations.'

4.6.9 Throughout their academic journey, GBS academic staff (lecturers) take an active role in reminding students of their responsibilities and the academic regulations when assessing their work. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they read official information and guidance about good academic practice and are aware of the regulations which set out GBS/Bath Spa University academic expectations when engaging in their studies.

4.6.10 Students are also trained to use Turnitin at the start of their studies. Turnitin is an internet-based tool that is used when students submit work electronically. Its primary use is to support students' academic development and enhance good academic practice, for example through planned discussion with their GBS lecturer about accurate and thorough citation of other people's work. However, it is also used to detect plagiarism and can safeguard students' academic integrity. In addition to the above, students have the opportunity to request one-to-one support from teaching staff for assistance on their formative and summative assessments to ensure they maintain academic integrity in their work.

4.6.11 In order to assure GBS that assessed work is that of the student and that the work and opinions of others have been properly and fully acknowledged, students must take care to follow the appropriate standards to ensure good academic practice. This includes:

- Providing full citation of all sources (books, articles, web sites, newspapers, images, artefacts, data sources, programme code etc.) which have been drawn on in the preparation of an assignment. Normally this will be done in the reference/bibliography section which must be included with the assignment.

– Properly referencing the sources of the arguments and ideas in an assignment using a recognised referencing system (as specified in programme and module guidelines). It is not only quotations that must be referenced but also paraphrasing of the arguments of others and the use of their ideas, even if explained in the student's own words.

– Following other guidelines for preparing and presenting coursework as defined in the relevant programme handbooks, module guides and assignment briefs.

– Using mechanisms provided by GBS for checking a student's own work, including Turnitin text-matching software, and support and advice given by teaching staff.

4.6.12 Proof-reading entails the identification of grammatical, spelling or punctuation mistakes in text, etc. The use of a proof-reading service may constitute academic misconduct if the service includes any editorial activity which entails re-writing or re-wording the student's original work. It is best not to use any external service of this sort to ensure academic integrity. Work that does not meet appropriate standards of academic practice will be graded/marked at a lower level than work that does meet appropriate academic standards and may leave the student open to further action under this policy and procedure.

4.7 Procedures for Ensuring Against Intolerance and Discrimination

4.7.1 GBS HE Malta' Equality Opportunities Policy makes the following statement:

'GBS is committed to supporting, developing, and promoting equality and diversity in all of its practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based upon the values of dignity, courtesy and respect. GBS will support and develop its staff through providing all with access to facilities, personal and career development opportunities, and employment based on equality. GBS is committed to creating and sustaining a positive, supportive, and excellent teaching and learning environment for its students. GBS is committed to providing fair, equitable and mutually supportive learning and working environment for both our students and our staff.'

4.7.2 In the context of our learning and teaching enhancement strategy, this means that students can expected to be taught, assessed, and supported in their learning in an environment at GBS which is inclusive and free from any form of discrimination.

4.7.3 GBS HE Malta' Anti-Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy makes the following statement:

'GBS as part of its commitment to equality and diversity, is committed to providing an environment in which all students and members of staff are enabled to study and work in an environment which supports and encourages harmonious relationships. Our aims are to enact and sustain behavioural and cultural change, inspire, and educate staff and students, support staff and students to ensure GBS is meeting its legal compliance, and to embed inclusivity cooperatively and cohesively across our campuses. This includes fostering good relations and a culture of respect as well as eliminating any circumstances in which bullying, sexual misconduct, harassment and

hate crime may occur.

Any allegations of harassment and bullying will be treated very seriously and could result in disciplinary action being taken against the perpetrator. GBS will ensure that any student or member of staff raising a genuine concern in relation to this policy will not be victimised. All allegations of bullying, harassment, or victimisation, whether informal or formal, will be regarded as a serious matter and will be dealt with in a sensitive, objective manner, respecting the rights of all parties involved. Any information received will be handled with an appropriate level of confidentiality. Where personal information is shared or released, it will only be done for the purposes of ensuring compliance with this policy and associated procedures.'

4.7.4   GBS HE Malta' has the following aims in respect of this policy and procedure:

(a) To promote a positive environment in which students and staff are treated fairly and with respect.
(b) Take a zero-tolerance approach to any forms of harassment and bullying.
(c) Ensure all members of GBS community, including all students, staff, and visitors, understand their responsibility to contribute to the creation and maintenance of an environment free from harassment and bullying.
(d) Provide a framework of support for students and staff and for both parties involved in any complaints and/or allegations.
(e) Provide a mechanism to resolve concerns and issues raised. Every effort will be made to encourage individuals to resolve the matter informally, or failing that, at the lowest possible level through the formal procedures.

4.7.5   All GBS staff, students and visitors are expected to:

(a) Not perpetrate any form of harassment, bullying sexual violence and/or misconduct.
(b) Seek consent when interacting with others.
(c) Act appropriately in the work/study environment.
(d) Be an active bystander.
(e) Respond in a thoughtful and supportive way to disclosures.

4.8 Involvement of External Stakeholders in Quality Assurance

4.8.1   GBS HE Malta Limited is committed to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance. GBS invites External Stakeholders Irene Ainsworth and Vitaly Voytenko who are our Independent Board Members who sit on Executive Board, Academic Board, Resource Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee meetings.

4.8.2   Our External Stakeholders opinion are instrumental in driving towards an enhancement of quality and can influence our direction, outcome, policies, and our internal quality assurance process. They provide us with perspectives, expectations and requirements that enrich the debate on quality at GBS and offer an invaluable contribution to ensuring we are continuously improving our quality and standards.

4.9 Quality Assurance Procedures of the Parent Provider

4.9.1   Global Education Holdings Limited (GBS) is also regulated by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). As well as meeting the quality requirements for the delivery of Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals, GBS must meet the quality and standards requirements of QAA) This is the independent body responsible for monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education, and this includes UK qualifications delivered outside the UK. As such, Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals must also be delivered by GBS in a way that satisfies the quality standards prescribed by the QAA.

4.9.2   The QAA has developed a Quality Code in liaison with the higher education sector and it is maintained and published on the sector's behalf, by the QAA. It sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet. The purpose of the Quality Code is to:

   −   Safeguard the academic standards of UK higher education.
   −   Assure the quality of the learning opportunities that UK higher education offers to students.
   −   Promote continuous and systematic improvement in UK higher education.
   −   Ensure that information about UK higher education is publicly available.

4.9.3   In 2018, the Quality Code underwent substantial revision, now comprising three elements that work together to provide a reference for effective quality assurance.

   −   Expectations that state how providers of higher education set and maintain standards and manage the quality of provision.

   −   Practices that enhance the student experience and underpin the delivery of the expectations.
       a. Core practices that must be demonstrated by all providers of higher education within the UK.
       b. Common practices that are demonstrated by providers of higher education in line with their missions, regulatory requirements, and students' needs. These practices underpin quality and are common across providers of higher education in the UK but are not regulatory requirements in England.

   −   Advice and guidance that helps all providers of higher education to develop and maintain effective quality assurance.

4.10 QAA Review Methods

4.10.1 The Quality Assurance Agency has a number of different review methods depending on the location and the type of higher education provider. Details of the various review methods can be found here.

4.10.2 The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and is a non-ministerial department. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

is the regulator for all qualifications in Northern Ireland.

4.10.3   The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) work to promote competition for the benefit of consumers, both within and outside the UK. Their aim is to make markets work well for consumers, businesses, and the economy. In terms of the delivery of Higher Education, it has an important function for students and providers of Higher Education. 'Higher Education Providers Consumer Law' applies to Higher Education through the relationship between providers of Higher Education and their students. Providers are required to provide information about courses, costs, terms and conditions and complaint handling prior to students starting courses. Information must be clear and transparent. If these obligations are not met, then providers could be in breach of consumer law and students may have the right to take legal action. Therefore, it is essential for providers to comply with these requirements. Further information can be found here.

4.10.4   Office for Students (OfS) under the Higher Education & Research Act 2017, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) ceased to operate on 31 March 2018. On 1 April 2018, the majority of HEFCE's functions, combined with the work of the Office of Fair Access, combined to form the Office for Students (OfS). The new public body, the Office for Students, is the government-approved regulator and competition authority for higher education in England. The Office for Students' mandate is to ensure that students:

- Can access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.
- Receive a high-quality academic experience.
- Have their interests protected during study
- Can progress to employment or further study.
- Receive value for money

4.10.5   The Office for Students is also responsible for administering the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Register of Higher Education Providers and will allocate public funds from the Government to higher education providers in England each year. More information can be found at the Office for Students (OfS). GBS is registered with the Office for Students as a higher education provider in England

4.10.6   The Government introduced the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to recognise and reward excellent teaching in UK higher education institutions by rating them as gold, silver or bronze. The ratings are judged by an independent panel of students, academics, and other experts. Participation in TEF is voluntary, although English providers of higher education with more than 500 students are required to take part in TEF assessments. The TEF uses quantitative and qualitative data to assess the quality of teaching and learning including:

- Results from the National Student Survey (NSS)
- Progression data
- Evidence of teaching quality, for example rigour and stretch, assessment feedback
- Evidence of a high-quality learning environment, for example scholarship, research and professional practice and personalised

learning.

4.10.7 GBS also provides a Summary of the Annual Quality Monitoring Report (AQMR) which is an important part of the academic cycle and ensures that GBS maintains oversight of its higher education provision both in terms of academic standards and quality perspectives. The report summarises the key developments and growth of GBS' higher education provision.

4.10.8 The AQMR contains detailed updates on the action plan from the previous years. All actions have made considerable progress, including improved consistency in marking, enhanced communication with partners, improved student progression rates, and increased student engagement across programmes. The annual monitoring process has also been enhanced as a result. It also includes areas of good practice, areas for enhancement, assessment, quality, and standards, enabling student development, achievement, and continuous monitoring.

5. Standard 2: Institutional Probity

5.1.1 GBS HE Malta Limited has appropriate measures and procedures in place to ensure financial probity. GBS understands financial probity is an essential and vital requirement for an efficient and effective system of transparency that enhance our values. GBS has a dedicated finance team who provides our regulators with yearly audited accounts and regular budget plans alongside yearly financial statements and regular budget plans as and when required. Our Board Members, Legal Representative and Head of Institution are fit and proper persons who are highly experienced in delivering higher education programmes. As required by Malta National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education Authority, we have appointed a Legal Representative who resides in Malta.

5.1.2 **Senior Management Recruitment**

5.1.3 GBS HE Malta Limited ensures that the Legal Representative and persons occupying Headship positions are fit to oversee the delivery of further and higher education courses by employing people with the right skills, experience, qualities, and capacity who:

- understand the purpose of academic governance and have all the necessary skills, as outlined in our values.
- have the ability to provide visionary strategic leadership.
- provide sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable robust decision making.
- are recruited through robust and transparent processes against a clear articulation of required skills, which are set out in a role specification and job description.
- use active succession planning to ensure GBS HE Malta Limited continues to have the people and leadership it needs to remain effective.

5.1.4 Our Human Resources department is responsible for designing the recruitment procedure contained in our GBS Staff Recruitment Policy which states:

'GBS HE Malta Limited (GBS) recognises that we rely on the skills, competencies, and contribution of all our staff to deliver high outcome for our students. An effective

recruitment and selection process is, therefore, fundamental in underpinning our strategic ambition to appoint the highest calibre of staff at all levels and to enable us to deliver our strategic plan by 'changing lives through education'. GBS is committed to ensuring that our recruitment and selection processes are fair, consistent, and in accordance with legislative obligations and recognised best practice guidelines.

The purpose of this staff recruitment policy is to establish the recruitment and onboarding processes that GBS will operate under; ensuring equality at all stages of the recruitment process is maintained. This policy defines the principles that GBS considers important. All candidates should have a positive experience, whether they are successful or not. The recruitment process should ensure that GBS attracts talented candidates and is presented in a positive manner that enhances its reputation.'

5.1.5 Furthermore, those persons occupying Headship positions are responsible for the internal management and control of GBS HE Malta Limited. It is their responsibility to implement the strategic framework established by the Executive Board. In order to satisfy GBS condition of employment and to verify their credentials, (if they are successful at the interview stages), the applicants must provide evidence of:

1. Original professional qualifications
2. References which include current and previous employers
3. Address history (if non-resident in the UK)
4. Complete internal mandatory training modules i.e., Data Protection compliance, Health and Safety etc. ahead of their start date (if necessary).
5. Submit a self-declaration form confirming they satisfy the 'Fit and Proper' test[1] *(Please follow this link to view [Fit and Proper Person Test: Self-Declaration Form](.))*
6. Once they have secured their role, they are provided with annual Managerial Training to ensure they are continuously developing their skills.
7. Probationary Period:
   – Academic staff are subject to a 12months probationary period prior to being offered a permanent contract.
   – Professional staff are subject to 6 months probationary period prior to being offered a permanent contract.

5.1.6 After all the above evidence has been satisfied and the candidate passes all stages of the interview process, an offer of employment is made, (although offer remains at the discretion of GBS HE Malta).

6. Standard 3: Design and Approval of Programmes

6.1.1 GBS HE Malta will use the principles in line with European Credit Transfer and

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[1] *Members of the Governing Body, Legal Representatives, Head of Institutions and those with Senior Management responsibilities, and individuals exercising control or significant influence over GBS HE Malta Limited must complete this Self-declaration form as a prerequisite.*

Accumulation System (ECTS)[2] which is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme, objectives specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competences to be required. ECTS is based on several principles:

- 60 credits measure the workload of a full-time student during one academic year. The student workload of a full-time study programme in Europe amounts in most cases to around 1500-1800 hours per year and in those cases one credit stands for around 25 to 30 working hours.

- Credits in ECTS can only be obtained after successful completion of the work required and appropriate assessment of the learning outcomes achieved. Learning outcomes are sets of competences, expressing what the student will know, understand or be able to do after completion of a process of learning, long or short.

- Student workload in ECTS consists of the time required to complete all planned learning activities such as attending lectures, seminars, independent and private study, placements, preparation of projects, examinations, and so forth.

- Credits are allocated to all educational components of a study programme (such as modules, courses, placements, dissertation work, etc.) and reflect the quantity of work each component requires to achieve its specific objectives or learning outcomes in relation to the total quantity of work necessary to complete a full year of study successfully.

6.1.2 When deciding on the student workload, GBS HE Malta will consider the following elements which are of relevance:

- The student has a fixed amount of time depending on the programme he/she is taking.
- The overall responsibility for the design of a programme of studies and the number of credits allocated to courses lies with the responsible legal body, e.g., faculty executive board, etc.
- The final responsibility for deciding on the teaching, learning and assessment activities for a particular amount of student time is delegated by faculty and higher education authorities to the teacher or the responsible team of staff.
- It is crucial that the teacher be aware of the specific learning outcomes to be achieved and the competences to be obtained.
- The teacher should reflect on which educational activities are more relevant to reach the learning outcomes of the module / course unit.
- The teacher should have a notion of the average student work time required for each of the activities selected for the module / course unit.
- The student has a crucial role in the monitoring process to determine whether the

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[2] A detailed description of the ECTS features can be found in the ECTS Users' Guide, which is available on the Europa Internet server of the European Commission: https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf?msclkid=d30e55c3c18211ec9910da643673b6cf

estimated student workload is realistic, although monitoring is also a responsibility of the teaching staff.

6.2 **Target Audience and Eligibility and Selection Criteria**

6.2.1   GBS HE Malta welcomes applications from a wide range of qualifications; we provide high quality information, guidance, and advice to applicants. Information on our admissions processes is available to applicants on our website, prospectus and in person. GBS' admissions processes are designed to identify those applicants who are best suited to the programme applied for, based on potential as well as prior achievements. We aim for admissions processes to be fair, transparent, and fit for purpose. All our applicants can apply through our website or through third party representatives. Applicants that meet our entry criteria are invited on campus to sit an invigilated written assessment and admissions interview. Depending on the programme and whether the applicant is applying though the standard and non-standard entry, we may require evidence of previous qualifications.

6.2.2   Our Recruitment and Admissions policy is committed to a fair admissions system. The recruitment and admission process refers to all the activity involved in promotion and marketing, identification and recruitment, selection, offer of a place on a programme of study, enrolment, and induction. GBS in collaboration with its qualification awarding partners manages the recruitment and admissions to all programmes. Where difference in admission procedure exists, the admission policy and procedure of awarding body/DAP overarches the GBS admission policy and procedure. GBS admission procedure is set within the spirit of admission policy and procedures of awarding body and specifically adheres to such terms as outlined in awarding body's operations manual.

6.2.3   GBS takes into consideration the requirement to admit applicants it believes have the potential to succeed. Underlying are three factors we believe are key to indicating the likely success of a student:

1. Ability at a certain level in thinking and learning
2. A foundation of skills from which to extend their study
3. Motivation and commitment

6.2.4   These factors, alongside with any previous formal/no formal qualification, will be assessed through a student's application, supervised written personal reflection statement and formal interview. Each application is assessed upon its own merits. Entry requirements are set by awarding body. GBS will advise applicants on the standard entry criteria and will support students in completing all application and admissions documentation.

6.2.5   All programmes are taught in English and applicants must have demonstrated sufficient English language ability to be able to succeed prior to enrolment on a programme. The level of English of an applicant is determined via written and oral English skills. Student applications will be assessed prior to admission using the following selection criteria:

- Evidence of meeting the course entry requirements.

– Interview & Supervised written personal reflection statement

6.3 Learning Outcomes

6.3.1 GBS HE Malta will follow the guidelines from the project 'Tuning Educational Structures in Europe'[3], which focuses on learning outcomes and general academic (generic) competences and subject related competences, has shown us that approaches to teaching, learning and assessment have an impact on the workload required to achieve the desired learning outcomes and, consequently, on credit allocation. Workload, teaching methods and learning outcomes are clearly related to each other. However, there are other relevant elements. In achieving the desired learning outcomes, many interrelated factors play a role. The diversity of traditions must be considered, as well as curriculum design and context, coherence of the curriculum, teaching organisation, ability, and diligence of the student. In other words, the time required to achieve the same learning outcomes may vary according to the context. The Tuning approach is based on the correlation of several decisive elements:

- The degree profile which indicates the place of the module in the overall programme of studies, as well as the competences to be developed in the module.
- The target group, the level of the module and any existing entrance requirements.
- The learning outcomes formulated for the module.
- The educational activities which best suit the learning outcomes to be achieved.
- The types of assessment that are considered most appropriate to the learning outcomes.
- The average work time (in hours), based on student workload, required to perform the educational activities which are necessary to achieve the learning outcomes.

6.3.2 Tuning offers two forms (which GBS HE Malta will consider) that can be helpful in making decisions on and adjustment of the student workload. The first form is for the teacher to plan the educational module and estimate the student working hours involved. The second is for the student to indicate the actual amount of time spent on the module, thus providing an opportunity to check whether the estimated workload corresponds to reality. Students are given the form completed by the teacher where only the estimated workload is not shown. By using these forms both teacher and students become aware of the learning outcomes, their relationship to the competences being developed and the average student time involved for each of the tasks.

6.4 Learning Dynamics and Tutor-Learner Interaction

6.4.1 GBS HE Malta aim is to inspire our students for life and to challenge them to reach their full potential through excellent, innovative courses, and by providing an

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[3] The webpage for 'Tuning Educational Structures in Europe' can be accessed online:
http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/

environment that supports learning in all its forms. Central to these aims is a commitment to be recognised through the Teaching Excellence Framework for providing an excellent educational experience for students. GBS defines an excellent educational experience as one in which students:

− Will experience courses that are inspiring and intellectually challenging.
− Are strongly motivated to become independent learners through carefully designed active, participative, and effective learning experiences.
− Interact with academic and professional staff who are committed to facilitating excellent, inclusive, learning support.
− Develop capabilities that impact upon their personal development, their current and future employment opportunities and their aspirations for further study and professional advancement.
− Are provided with regular, timely and constructive feedback and 'feed-forward' on their learning and progress.
− Study within an environment that makes effective use of learning technologies.
− Identify themselves as active members of GBS Student Community recognising and practising the values of ethical and social responsibility, active citizenship, and professionalism.
− Express high levels of satisfaction with their experience.

6.4.2   GBS will support academic progression and achievement by providing effective Personal Academic Tutoring and support systems that ensure high rates of student retention, progression, and achievement we will:

− Provide access to Academic Support classes and resources to all GBS students in addition to those offered by Partners on core modules.
− Enable students to reflect on, plan and review their own personal and academic skills, and to develop well supported and articulated claims to achievement through personal development planning processes (e.g., Personal Academic Plan and Welfare Support Plan).
− Ensure student induction is underpinned by GBS values, begins at pre-entry, and is re-visited on key student transition points (such as start of new academic year, preparation for work experience etc.).
− Continue enhancing and implementing the capacity for electronic management of assessment to meet student and staff needs for effective, timely and efficient feedback processes.
− Ensure teaching, learning and assessment practices are inclusive, (or where necessary make reasonable adjustments for disabled students) to support all students to achieve their academic potential.

6.5 Resources and Forms of Assessment

6.5.1   GBS HE Malta follows guidelines set out in Bath Spa University Academic Regulations[4] and all programmes are assessed against their assessment criteria.

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[4] Please use this link to access Bath Spa University Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes: Accessed online at: https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/media/bathspaacuk/about-us/policies/academic-and-student/Academic-Regulations-2.3-September-2021-(1).pdf

The academic regulations provided for on their website enable us to plan, record and track student activities and achievement.

6.6 **Teaching Staff Minimum Qualifications and Competencies**

6.6.1 GBS HE Malta goal is to provide excellence in teaching and student learning to ensure students benefit from inspirational, intellectually challenging, and inclusive teaching and learning underpinned by first rate learning environments and resources. We will:

- Encourage all academic staff and staff who support learning to gain appropriate professional recognition through achievement of Higher Education Academy Associate Fellowship/ Fellowship status as well as other relevant teacher training qualifications (e.g., Getting Ready to Teach Business/ Healthcare BTEC Higher Nationals training for HND teaching staff).
- Implement a revised process for teaching observations (including peer-observations) to share, promote and disseminate effective pedagogic practices.
- Expect all staff to have or develop skills in the effective use of basic digital technologies for learning and teaching.
- Align GBS staff recruitment, promotion, recognition, and reward systems to the GBS Objectives and Performance Targets in relation to teaching excellence.
- Ensure the development of learning spaces that provide excellent flexible technology-enabled facilities that support inclusive and interactive learning.

6.7 **Malta Referencing Report, 4th Revised Edition, February 2016[5]**

6.7.1 The Referencing Report is Malta's national document that references the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). It describes the Malta Qualifications Framework and the different levels of qualifications in Malta. It provides details of the parameters which need to be adhered to by any conferring awarding body in Malta in terms of the level of learning outcomes and number of credits. This report also describes the referencing process to other Qualifications Frameworks: The Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (QF/EHEA); and the Transnational Qualifications Framework of the Small states of the Commonwealth (TQF). This referencing process allows the recognition of national qualifications at a European level and the recognition of foreign qualifications from the European Union and beyond.

6.7.2 The Recommendation of the Council and the European Parliament of 2008 established the European Qualifications Framework. It included a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes relevant to qualifications at that level in any system

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[5] Referencing the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area(QF/EHEA) can be accessed online using this link:
https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Referencing%20Report/Referencing%20Report%202016.pdf#:~:text=The%20fourth%20edition%20of%20the%20Referencing%20Report%20has,that%20has%20been%20built%20in%20Malta%20since%202012.

of qualifications across Europe. The same recommendation invited EU Member states 'to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF by referencing their national qualifications levels to the relevant levels of the EQF, and where appropriate, develop national Qualifications Frameworks in accordance with national legislation and practice'. [6]

6.7.3 GBS HE Malta will follow the Referencing Report when designing courses to ensure that the level descriptors for different MQF levels, as well as the number of credits that need to be assigned to be able to confer qualifications and awards, are respected. GBS will understand difference between Qualifications and Awards as well as be familiar with the different MQF levels. The Referencing Report will act as the reference document which we will consult to understand the types of qualification that applicants possess during the recruitment process, as well as making a sound investment when further supporting our employees.

6.8 **Training Programmes and Involvement of External Stakeholders**

6.8.1 GBS HE Malta have a Learning and Development team that creates and manages learning content. As part of the People Strategy, the [Staff Learning and Development Policy](#) is an important milestone in achieving our Strategic Plan. It is our intention to build staff capabilities at all levels through several development programmes within onboarding, performance, and leadership, which will align to the delivery of the Strategic Plan. The purpose of Organisation and Talent Development (OTD) is to ensure that all our staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences to deliver its vision. It also supports our commitment to all our values, in particular, "We always want to learn and improve".

6.8.2 At GBS we are committed to continuing to raise the standard of our academic and non-academic teams, aligned to the industry sector and with the aspiration of being known for the quality of our staff development. We believe that effective learning and development (L&D) plays a vital part in achieving this and in the achievement of our strategic plan. GBS will:

- Use performance consulting to ensure that any solutions developed focus on improving performance overall and look beyond L&D solutions.
- Where an L&D solution is identified, recommend the most effective L&D solution for the need identified.
- Validate the effectiveness of the L&D work using operational performance measures e.g., Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Register.
- Recognise staff need to engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Place continuous improvement at the core of our policy.
- Provide continuous improvement by reviewing every 12 months as part of the performance management cycle, the training needs of staff and will schedule the improvement areas within the preceding calendar of events using a

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[6] Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning in Official Journal of the European Union 2008/C 111/01. Accessible from: *https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32013R0110*

variety of methods including, but not limited to:
- e-learning or webinar sessions
- external training sessions
- internal training sessions
- mentoring
- shadowing or on-the-job training

6.9 Employment Oriented Programmes and Stakeholders from the World of Work

6.9.1   GBS HE Malta goal is to have employable graduates and to equip students to fulfil their potential and become lifelong learners, with capabilities for employability, enterprise creation and continuing professional development that enable them to be successful we will:

- Ensure all courses have an explicit strategy for developing student employability, enterprise, and entrepreneurship (where applicable), which takes account of the development of relevant professional and transferable skills and attributes.

- Provide all undergraduate students with the opportunity to experience work-based learning or learning from work within the curriculum and significantly increase the number of students who take up work-based learning opportunities.

- Develop external employer and/or alumni links and have processes in place whereby employers and professional bodies can contribute to the review and development of course content.

6.9.2   GBS employs certain roles to satisfy internal quality assurance standard under our Internal Verification Procedure and Policy, these include:

6.9.3   Quality nominee is the main point of contact for information related to quality assurance and all aspects of delivery. They are the initial point of contact for the EE and Quality Reviewer and will ensure that Standards Verification can take place. There is a dedicated Partnership Quality Department at Bath Spa University who support and oversee Quality Nominees work in undertaking their role(s) throughout the academic year. Their responsibilities include:

- At the start of the course, they must check the programme approvals and programme expiry dates on EOL. Check programme and QA updates.
- Semester One: Check new students are registered and act as the point of contact for External Examiner (EE).
- Semesters Two and Three: Organise EE process (visits/postal) and acts on and responds to EE reports.
- End of academic year: Programme Review and Evaluation Acts on and responds to EE reports.

6.9.4   Programme Leader has overall responsibility for the effective delivery and assessment of the qualifications. They also ensure assessment records and student work are retained for sampling and will work with the External Examiner to ensure

that appropriate sampling takes place. Their responsibilities include:

- At the start of the course: Sign off assessment plans, check assignment briefs for whole course, check resources and train team.
- Semester One: Check progress against Assessment Plan, sign off resubmissions, Manage EE sampling / visit, Act on EE feedback.
- Semesters Two and Three: Sign off resubmissions, Support EE sampling and visit, Act on EE feedback.
- End of academic year: Programme Review and Evaluation and Manage appeals process.

6.9.5 Internal Verifier ensures that assessment decisions are consistent across the programme by checking that assignments are fit for purpose, standardising assessors, and sampling assessment decisions. They ensure that assessors take appropriate action based on their feedback. Anyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme can be an Internal Verifier, but you can't internally verify your own assessment. A large centre may have a Lead Internal Verifier to standardise and co-ordinate IV team activities. Their responsibilities include:

- At the start of the course: Agree Assessment Plans, internally verify (IV) assignment briefs and Standardise assessors.
- Semester One: Sample and IV assessment decisions, Prepare EE samples and Act on EE feedback.
- Semesters Two and Three: Sample and IV assessment decisions, Prepare EE samples and Act on EE feedback.
- End of academic year: Programme Review and Evaluation and Attend updates and training.

6.10 **Student Involvement in Design and Review**

6.10.1 GBS HE Malta considers students as partners in learning and courses are designed to ensure efficient student progression, retention, and assessment rates. Our aim is to engage students as partners in planning, managing, and enhancing learning experiences, and in so doing, support them to develop professional and ethical behaviours consistent with GBS values. This will be achieved through:

- Actively promote a culture of student engagement with, and responsibility for, learning at the module level (not limited to credit-bearing modules).
- Ensure all students have an opportunity to present their views on their learning experience known through systems of representation and student feedback and evaluation, at module, course, partnership levels as appropriate.
- Further develop the effectiveness of the Student/ Class Representatives system.
- Continue to engage students in Assessment Planning Schedule and Course Content (where applicable for validated programmes).

6.10.2 GBS HE Malta considers it of great importance that students are fully engaged with the various process of quality assurance and quality enhancement that operate here.

Students will have the opportunity to put themselves forward to be elected by their student peers to become a Student Representative. Student Representatives are very important points of contact and engagement between staff and students at GBS. Student Representatives are full members of their respective Programme Committee, attend meetings of the Student Representative Committee to provide feedback on their learning experience at GBS.

6.10.3 Additionally, Student Representatives are elected to be members of the GBS Teaching and Learning Committee, and Academic Board. Being a Student Representative will give students a very good understanding of the operation of GBS. They are also responsible for contributing to an annual Student Review report about GBS. This report is discussed at the Student Representative Committee, shared with all students on the GBS Online Learning Environment (OLE), considered by the Teaching and Learning Committee and the GBS Executive Board. This annual student review report is regarded as good practice by external agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and our higher education partners. Students will have the opportunity to provide feedback on a range of aspects of their learning experience at GBS. There are Student focus groups dedicated to reviewing new programme documents and Student Representatives on the panel have the opportunity to review programme documents for validation.

6.11 Formal Institutional Approval Process

6.11.1 GBS HE Malta ensures that all our courses must have a formal institutional approval process and therefore courses must meet appropriate academic standards, provide current and coherent curricula, and offer a high-quality student learning experience and positive student outcomes The course approval process encompasses strategic and quality approval of courses. In addition to this we produce Programme Review and Approval Documents and Validation events conducted by our Awarding Partners/Bodies.

7. Standard 4: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

7.1 Teaching and Learning

7.1.1 Diversity of Students and Flexible Learning Path

7.1.2 GBS HE Malta recognises that the changing context for higher education poses challenges and demands new capabilities of both staff and students. We must continue to evidence a commitment to enhancement in course development, inspirational teaching, and well-managed assessment for learning. We will need to ensure our courses continue to support intellectual development and academic achievement whilst also meeting the diverse needs of students, employers, and society in relation to student employability and creativity. This will mean greater emphasis for both staff and students on professional development, participation, and engagement, as well as working in partnership to effectively develop, manage and enhance courses and learning experiences. Our academic programmes are designed to stretch and challenge our students. Our widening participation community of students and staff provides a dynamic and stimulating environments for all key stakeholders. We are already well-placed to act ambitiously and

collaboratively to invest in the creation of new partnerships and maintain educational excellence.

7.1.3 GBS foundations for building a positive change include:

- We have a talented and diverse population of students that can bring in their experience and initiatives to improving education culture at GBS.
- Our dedicated and talented educators are committed to their own professional teaching development by engaging in several research and CPD activities.
- Our network of support staff is experienced in supporting students in their professional and personal development.
- We have the knowledge and innovative spirit to take our teaching to the next level in quality, by developing existing evidence of best practice, making it our own and implementing it across GBS.
- We are committed to working in partnership with our engaged and talented students
- We share an ambition to build a community that is supportive, inclusive, and diverse

7.2 Use of Different Modes of Delivery

7.2.1 Collaborative teaching as part of theory of collaboration in academic context may have a plethora of meanings. Having carried out extensive research and for the purpose of introducing a collaborative teaching as a new pedagogical initiative at GBS we take the approach by Hartnett et al (2013) as a basis for the proposed model. We argue that collaborative teaching is equivalent of co-teaching (or team teaching) which is division of labour, often between educators to work together to plan, organise, instruct, and make assessments on the same group of students. It is appropriate to stresses the collaborative teaching would be seen generally in a common classroom.

7.2.2 There at least five reasons how a typical HE institution can benefit from collaboration between teaching staff and student support instructors:

1. Co-teaching provides a greater opportunity to capitalise on the unique, diverse, and specialised knowledge of each instructor.
2. With multiple instructors there is increased flexibility in grouping and scheduling, thus making it possible for students to experience less wait time for instructor attention and increased time on task and academic productivity.
3. Academic staff who co-teach can structure their classes to use more effectively the research-proven and peer-reviewed strategies required.
4. Co-teaching is a vehicle for bringing together people with diverse backgrounds and interests to share knowledge and skills to generate novel methods to individualise learning.

7.2.3 In summary, when academic staff collaborate on their planning and teaching, they are better able to meet the needs of diverse students and contribute to enhanced student learning at institutional level. The initiative also helps in reinforcing academic staff development practices at institutional level and fulfil its legal responsibilities combined with student demographics and fair access to education and participation.

7.3 **Use of Different Modes of Delivery**

7.3.1 There are several models of co-teaching that have been adapted for Learning and Teaching. A simple Likert scale to assess each model is used to identify the most suitable method for the GBS given its context, the current provision of offer and the prevailing teaching, learning and assessment policies as per Figure 7: Proposed Strategies.

Figure 7: Proposed Strategies

Type of Co-teaching Model	Description	Relevance to GBS on scale 1 to 5 (1 – irrelevant, 5 – highly relevant)
One Teach, One Support:	One teacher leads instruction, while the other provides support to students who need additional help or enrichment (e.g. in use of library resources, study skills support, referencing, dealing with special needs or areas of difficulty) and/or gathers observation data, or provides classroom management.	5
Parallel Teaching:	Each teacher, or teacher and student teacher, plan jointly but each teaches the same information to different halves of the classroom at the same time.	3
Alternative Teaching:	One teacher manages most of the class while the other teacher works with a small group inside or outside of the common classroom. The small group does not have to integrate with the current lesson.	2
Station Teaching:	Both teachers divide the instructional content, and each takes responsibility for planning and teaching part of it. In station teaching, the classroom is divided into various teaching centres. The teacher and student teacher are at particular stations; the other stations are run independently by the students or by a teacher's aide.	4
Team Teaching:	Both teachers are responsible for planning and share the instruction of all students. The lessons are taught by both teachers who actively engage in conversation, not lecture, to encourage discussion by students. Both teachers are actively involved in the management of the lesson and discipline.	5

7.3.2 The proposed model of a hybrid of One Teach, One Support and Team Teaching (with some elements of Station Teaching) are found the most appropriate for the GBS. Once the model is introduced for the delivery at the GBS, it is proposed to carry out a regular (annual) evaluation of the effectiveness of collaborative teaching using the Magiera-Simmons Quality Indicator Model of Co-Teaching.

7.3.3 The Magiera-Simmons model gives standard definitions for co-teaching skills through 25 quality indicators and a rating scale. Although initially applied to school education, the model may serve as a good starting point and will delineate a quality process to ensure that co-instructors collaborate successfully and achieve the best results for their students. Co-teaching is often evaluated on the amount of shared leadership present, the amount of co-planning time, honest communication between the two educators, and how much respect and trust is present in the relationship.

7.3.4 It is believed that the collaborative teaching practices in this way will further require all instructors to demonstrate subject matter competence in the subject areas they teach, encouraging the establishment of collaborative partnerships between highly qualified general educators (e.g. at a level of a senior lecturer), who have

demonstrated subject-area expertise, and other specialists (e.g. special educators, teachers of English, gifted and talented instructors), who have complementary expertise in specialised learning strategies and content.

7.4 Encourage Autonomy in the Learner

7.5 We aim to inspire our students for life and to challenge them to reach their full potential through excellent, innovative courses, and by providing an environment that supports learning in all its forms in line with our [Leaner Support Policy](). Central to these aims is a commitment to be recognised through the Teaching Excellence Framework for providing an excellent educational experience for students. GBS defines an excellent educational experience as one in which students:

- Will experience courses that are inspiring and intellectually challenging.
- are strongly motivated to become independent learners through carefully designed active, participative, and effective learning experiences.
- interact with academic and professional staff who are committed to facilitating excellent, inclusive, learning support.
- develop capabilities that impact upon their personal development, their current and future employment opportunities and their aspirations for further study and professional advancement.
- Are provided with regular, timely and constructive feedback and 'feed-forward' on their learning and progress.
- Study within an environment that makes effective use of learning technologies
- Identify themselves as active members of GBS Student Community recognising and practising the values of ethical and social responsibility, active citizenship, and professionalism.
- Express high levels of satisfaction with their experience.

7.6 Support from Teacher/Lecturer

7.6.1   There are several services available at GBS to support students in their studies in line with our [Leaner Support Policy](). Students who are identified as having difficulties with their learning or those who self-refer are offered the opportunity to take an online screening test organised by our Welfare Team. If students are struggling, the Welfare Team can discuss any difficulties that students are experiencing after which students might be referred to a specialist assessor for a full assessment.

7.6.2   In addition, our Academic Support Team offer one-to-one tutorials to help students to improve their academic writing, essay, research, and presentation skills. The Team can also provide individual learning support to help students take control of their learning and develop confidence. GBS recognises that some students require support that is additional to or different from, that received by the rest of the students. Therefore, the Team will support the development and implementation of both long-, and short-term personal learning plans or adjustments as required on individual basis. Learning plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that the support outlined meets the need of the student.

7.6.3   GBS aims to provide effective Personal Academic Tutoring and support systems that

ensure high rates of student retention, progression, and achievement. GBS will:

− Provide access to Academic Support classes and resources to all GBS students in addition to those offered by Partners on core modules.

− Enable students to reflect on, plan and review their own personal and academic skills, and to develop well supported and articulated claims to achievement through personal development planning processes (e.g., Personal Academic Plan and Welfare Support Plan).

− Ensure student induction is underpinned by GBS values, begins at pre-entry and is re-visited on key student transition points (such as start of new academic year, preparation for work experience etc.).

− Continue enhancing and implementing the capacity for electronic management of assessment to meet student and staff needs for effective, timely and efficient feedback processes.

− Ensure teaching, learning and assessment practices are inclusive, (or where necessary make reasonable adjustments for disabled students) to support all students to achieve their academic potential.

7.7 Promote Mutual Respect within the Learner-Teacher Relationship

7.7.1 GBS HE Malta has identified the following five key strategic goals which will shape the institution's approach to learning and teaching:

− To ensure students benefit from inspirational, intellectually challenging, and inclusive teaching and learning underpinned by high level learning environments and resources.

− To adopt a strategic and purposeful approach to the development of technology enhanced learning that will significantly impact on the digital capabilities of all GBS staff and students.

− To equip students to fulfil their potential and become lifelong learners, with capabilities for employability, enterprise creation and continuing professional development that enable them to be successful.

− To engage students as partners in planning, managing, and enhancing learning experiences, and in so doing, support them to develop professional and ethical behaviours consistent with GBS and Partner Institutions' values.

− To provide effective Personal Academic Tutoring and support systems ensuring high rates of student retention, progression, and achievement.

7.8 Processes for Assessment

7.8.1 Bath Spa University as the Awarding body oversees and provides GBS HE Malta with exemplars and templates which are readily available to ensure we create our assignments and that they are ready for our students. This includes:

- *Schemes of Work:* A scheme of work is an overview of what we must cover for each unit, broken down by topic, and how each topic meets the learning aims.

- *Example assessment briefs:* Assist us make the most of our planning time and give us the opportunity to add our own activities.

- *Building our Assessment Plan:* At the start of the course, we will create a timetable for how we will deliver and assess our programmes – which units we will teach and when we will teach them. It provides a calendar for delivery and means for our External Examiner (EE) can plan sampling to fit around our delivery.

- *Writing Assignments:* We ensure that the assignments are written to meet the learning aims set out for each unit and should be industry related.

7.8.2 GBS ensures that our assessors are familiar with testing and examination methods as they are responsible for the assessment of students and acts under the guidance of the Programme Leader, who will direct Assessors to appropriate training, support, and standardisation. Typically, Assessors will devise assignment briefs, deliver the programme of study, and assess the evidence produced by students against the assessment criteria in the programme specification.

7.8.3 Methods and criteria of assessment can be found in each of our student handbooks which is essential in terms of guiding our students through the course so that they are aware of course requirements, know what is expected of them and understand their rights as students. Our course content includes:

- General information about the centre
- Course-specific information (for example, course title HNC/HND, pathway, units available, mode of study, course dates)
- Progression opportunities
- Student rights
- Available resources, including HN Global
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Assessment and feedback
- Mitigating circumstances
- Late submissions
- Key contacts (such as tutors, administrators, technical support, pastoral support) Student support (information about where to go for different types of support, such as academic, health/wellbeing, and financial)
- Plagiarism and other types of malpractice (such as collusion and cheating)
- Referencing
- Student complaint and appeal procedure (including the role of Bath Spa University and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator)
- Student participation and feedback
- Annual Student Survey

7.8.4   GBS ensures that when assessment has taken place, it is important that formative feedback informs students what they are able to do to improve the quality of the outcomes for a particular assignment. Feedback is then recorded to clarify this, and a further deadline agreed leading to the summative assessment decision.

7.8.5   Assessment and Feedback in line with our Assessment Regulations Policy, tools on Moodle are also utilised for a range of assessment and feedback activities. For example, Turnitin software within Moodle is adopted for uploading draft and summative assessments. Feedback tools and rubrics are support mechanisms to assist staff with timely and constructive feedback. In line with the HN learning model, GBS programmes will create conditions in which our students will experience transformative learning, through participation and interaction with fellow students and staff, and building relationships in which all partners are valued contributors within the learning climate.

7.8.6   Assessment occurs in different ways throughout the course, and it must always be part of the learning process for the units of study and programme overall. This means that students will see a clear relationship between the learning outcomes in each unit descriptor (available on the VLE Moodle) and the assessment task that they are being asked to undertake for the unit. Assessment comes in two main forms:

1.   Formative assessment - this allows tutors to give students feedback which they can use to improve.
2.   Summative assessment in which they get a grade or mark, which counts towards their overall profile and final degree.

7.8.7   *Formative assessment* is where students receive a task or part of the assignment brief either in class or outside of class. The work for the formative assessment is designed to help them better understand the learning outcomes for the unit and, consequently, help them prepare for their assessed work in relation to the assignment brief. Their tutor will provide informal feedback on formative assessment tasks that the student has prepared.

7.8.8   For example, the student may be given a formative assessment research task to undertake. The tutor will ask to see their work and discuss the task with them and will often provide the student with some verbal or written feedback, however there is no formal grade for an exercise like this – it is designed to help students and the tutors assess how well they are learning, and to direct their efforts productively.

7.8.9   *Summative assessment* is the piece of assessed work that students produce in response to the assignment brief for a unit and which they must formally submit to the stated deadline. This assessment will be summatively assessed against the grade criteria and a grade (pass, merit, distinction, or referral) will be allocated. The grade given for their summatively assessed work will be formally recorded as part of the requirements for their HND qualification award.

7.8.10   *Grading of Assessment Work*: Each assignment brief contains the grade criteria students would need to meet to achieve either a pass, merit, or distinction grade for the assessed work they submit. There is also a referral grade which means that their

assessed work has not met some of the learning outcomes being assessed by the assignment brief. If students are referred in an assessment, they are entitled to make one re-submission which would be capped at a pass grade. The criteria for each grade in the grade criteria are as follows:

- *Pass Grade-* To achieve a Pass, a student must have satisfied all the Pass criteria for the learning outcomes, showing coverage of the unit content and therefore attainment at academic standard Level 4 or Level 5.

- *Merit Grade -*To achieve a Merit, a student must have satisfied all the Merit criteria (and therefore the Pass criteria) through high performance in each learning outcome.

- *Distinction Grade-*To achieve a Distinction, a student must have satisfied all the Distinction criteria (and therefore the Pass and Merit criteria) and demonstrated outstanding performance across the assessment.

- *Referral -*This grade means that the student's assessed work has not met all the learning outcomes specified in the assignment brief and hence cannot be awarded a pass.

7.9 Internal Verification

7.9.1   Assessed work is subjected to GBS' internal verification procedure. This involves taking a sample of assessed work which has been first marked and graded by tutors which is then checked by different tutors to ensure that academic standards and use of the marking criteria have been appropriately applied. This ensures that assessment is conducted fairly for all students and that academic standards have been consistently applied according to the level of the unit (HNC Level 4 or HND Level 5). Where required, adjustments may be made to grading.

7.9.2   The internal verification also checks on the feedback provided by the tutor first marking the assessment to ensure that feedback is of a high standard, identifying both strengths and areas where improvements could be made. Feedback provided is also checked to ensure that the grade given for the assessed work is informed by the marking criteria so that students can understand why they have been given the grade for their work.

7.10 Bath Spa University External Examiner

7.10.1 Bath Spa University appoints an External Examiner to check on the setting of assignment briefs by GBS tutors, standard of marking according to the marking criteria and adequacy of feedback provided to students on their assessed work. Normally, the Bath Spa University External Examiner visits GBS or conducts the external examining through online means once a year in May/June. The External Examiner also requests a meeting with students.

7.10.2 The outcome of the external examiner process is a report which provides information about the standard of marking and adequacy of feedback for units inspected. The External Examiner may identify areas where GBS could improve, and these

recommendations are put into an action plan by GBS. The action plan is monitored for progress at Assessment Board and Programme Committee meetings.

7.11 Feedback on Assessed Work

7.11.1 GBS aims to provide students with a provisional grade for their assessed work within four weeks of submission to the published deadline. If they submit work late then the provisional grade will be provided to them within four weeks of the date, they submitted their assessed work. It may not always be possible for us to achieve this four-week turnaround; however, we will do our best to meet this commitment. The grade provided within the four-week timescale from their submission is provisional only, as all student grades must be approved and confirmed by a meeting of the HND Assessment Board.

7.11.2 Alongside the grade for assessed work, students will also be provided with written feedback by their tutor who marks the work. The feedback is designed to help them identify the strengths of their work as well as areas where they could make improvements. Feedback will also identify where they have met the learning outcomes specified in the assignment brief and where they may have not met one or more learning outcomes. Where one or more learning outcomes have not been met, students will be provided with feedback to help them identify what needs to be addressed for the learning outcome(s) to be met. Students can attain further clarification of their feedback in more detail upon request.

7.12 Extenuating Circumstance

7.12.1 The Extenuating Circumstances Policy serves as a guide for students when requesting extensions and deferrals of assessment. Extenuating circumstances are genuine circumstances beyond a student's control or ability to foresee, which seriously impair their ability to undertake and complete an assessment task (coursework, presentation, project/dissertation, examination, etc.). If extenuating circumstances have a significant effect on their ability to complete an assessment task, they may be provided with an extension or additional opportunity to complete the task, without penalty, if they follow the procedures detailed in the policy.

7.12.2 Handing in a piece of coursework or attending an examination act as a declaration that the student considers themselves fit to make a valid attempt at the assessment. No claim of extenuating circumstances will subsequently be accepted by GBS. If students' hand in a piece of coursework (including a project or dissertation), or attempt an examination, after submitting a claim for deferral, the request for deferral will be disregarded, and their work will be marked in the usual way.

7.12.3 Extenuating circumstances do not excuse students from completing the assessment task. Students must demonstrate that they have achieved the required learning outcomes to pass the assessment and the unit overall and meet the programme requirements for progression or award. This must be done when extenuating circumstances no longer affects their performance.

7.13 Student Complaints

7.13.1 The Student Complaints Policy and Procedure provides information concerning how students can make a complaint. At all times students are urged to try to resolve any complaint informally before recourse to the formal complaint's procedure. There is a student guide to the GBS complaints policy and procedure. To make a formal complaint students must complete the Stage 2 Formal Complaint Form and submit it to their Student Success Tutor or their Programme Leader. There is a flow chart depicting the formal complaints procedure. If, after going through all the GBS complaints procedure, students are still not satisfied with the responses of GBS they can take their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

7.14 **Student Appeals**

7.14.1 The Academic Appeals Policy provides information concerning the procedure for making an appeal against a decision made by an Assessment Board and is concerned solely with student appeals arising from a request that an Assessment Board reconsider its decision. To make an Academic Appeal, students must use the Academic Appeals Form. The Academic Appeals flowchart summarises the procedure involved. An appeal against any decision made by an Assessment Board may only be made on the following grounds:

a) The assessment was not conducted in accordance with the current regulations for the programme, or a material administrative error or some other material irregularity relevant to the assessment has occurred.

b) The judgement of an examiner or examiners was improperly affected by personal bias.

c) Misleading information was provided about the assessment(s) and/or examinations.

d) For a student with a disability or additional needs, the assessment was not correctly carried out, or the support identified was not provided, or the agreed assessment procedures for that student were not properly implemented.

7.14.2 Disagreement with the academic judgement of an Assessment Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any assessment decision based on the marks, grades and other information relating to the candidate's performance, cannot constitute grounds for a request for reconsideration by a student. Such matters of academic judgement remain the exclusive prerogative of the Assessment Board.

8. **Standard 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification**

8.1.1 GBS has a Recruitment and Admissions policy which sets out the marketing approach, processes, and criteria (academic and professional) for the recruitment, selection, and admissions of students to higher education programmes. There are four stages to this which include:

8.1.2 **Stage 1: Pre-enrolment-** Students seeking admission to GBS must be at least 18 years old or meet entry requirement for under 21 years of age on the foundation programmes. On completion of the application, the lead is generated on Zoho as a new application. The Admission Officer will review the application and advise the

applicant about any missing documents or invite the applicant for an interview. For an interview an admission officer will inform a prospective student which original documents should be submitted for verification. Student applications will be assessed prior to admission using the selection criteria.

8.1.3 **Stage 2: Interview-** The Admission Officer conducts interviews following the written assessment where the interviewer would be completing an interview feedback sheet during the oral interview with prospective students to check and verify the capabilities of a candidate to complete the course, commitment to study and other situations of the candidate. It is here where a data consent form will also be completed by the student to enable GBS to contact relevant referees/awarding bodies if needed to verify students' qualifications.

8.1.4 **Stage 3: GBS Application Approval-** The applicant's file is then processed by another admission officer after which the relevant status is updated on Zoho. An automatic email is sent out via Zoho as the applicant's status is updated. The prospective student's file is verified and approved by the Admission Officer by completing a verification checklist.

8.1.5 **Stage 4: Application to Awarding body-** Authorised caseworker updates the university with the recommendation on the application where the final decision is made by the university.

8.1.5.1 **Conditional Offer and Unconditional Offer-**
- Candidate may receive an Offer email with conditions by the university. An unconditional offer will be issued if an applicant meets all conditions.

- Once an unconditional offer has been accepted, the applicant's status will be amended to offer accepted by student. An applicant will only change to 'Enrolled' once all financial and contractual terms have been met.

8.2 **Roles and responsibilities of staff associated with the selection, recruitment, and admission of students.**

8.2.1 Admission Officer is responsible for:
- Assessment of academic history, capability to complete the course and intension of studies.
- Conduct interview and assess candidates.
- Admission checklist is completed.
- Recommendation for progression of application.
- Submit all the documents for verification and approval

8.2.2 Awarding body is responsible for:
- Final decision on admission
- Application approval or disapproval

8.2.3 Enrolment Officer is responsible for:
- Confirming documentation and consultative process is finalised.
- Updating contact details of students regularly.

- Enrol student on GBS Moodle and GBS Amperea
- Prepare Induction Pack: Issue GBS Unique Learner Number, Student Handbook, Timetable, GBS Declaration form.

8.3 Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

8.3.1 *Complaints*- This section should be read in conjunction with GBS Complaints and Appeals policies. GBS receives a very considerable number of applications and as entry is competitive, it is regrettably unable to make every applicant an offer. GBS complaints policy and procedure may be used by prospective students if they are not satisfied with how GBS has dealt with their application.

8.3.2 *Feedback*- In the case of an internal GBS admission decision, the general feedback can be provided to unsuccessful applicants upon written request (by letter or e-mail). GBS will normally respond to requests for feedback within 30 days. Where an applicant received the final admission decision by the awarding body, the applicant must request the feedback by contacting the awarding body.

8.3.3 *Appeals*- If additional relevant information can be provided by a prospective student in support of their application, which was unavailable when the application was originally submitted, GBS will take this into consideration and may reconsider the application. In case of the final admission decision made by the awarding body, an applicant must make a request to the awarding body.

8.4 Institution and Programme Induction

8.4.1 The purpose of our induction programmes and welcome weeks are to ensure new students adjust and feel comfortable in the new environment and to help them build bonds with other students, academic staff and most importantly plan events which educate them on GBS' policies, processes, practices, culture and values and their mentors in their chosen programme of study. The areas covered in induction include:

- Welcome presentation, campus tours and introductions to the Academic Faculty members.
- Discuss funding and the type of support that is available to ensure their tuition fees are paid i.e., UK has Student Finance England.
- Health and Safety measures are covered.
- Data Protection and laws around GDPR
- Academic Jargon
- Introduction to Academic Writing
- Academic Integrity
- Student Welfare Support Team
- Attendance Policy and Code of conduct and any relevant policies
- IT usage and email monitoring

8.4.2 GBS HE Malta recognises that induction plays a critical role in shaping student perceptions of what we offer and our commitment to deliver high quality provision. We also recognise that induction often forms our students' first experience of our organisation.

8.5 **Information on Student Progression**

8.5.1 GBS HE Malta carries out Programme Performance Reports (PPR) to help provide oversight of the operation of higher education programmes, provide insight into the student learning experience, and identify good practice and actions that may lead to further enhancement of student learning. PPRs are required twice each academic year for each programme or group of related programmes of study offered at GBS. PPRs are required for March and September in any one academic year.

8.5.2 Programme Performance Reports is an important document that feed into GBS internal quality monitoring systems and, where appropriate to GBS' partner and/or awarding organisations. Each section of the PPR template is completed to a high standard and that quantitative and qualitative data is provided in a summary manner with commentary, reflection, and evaluation. Each report provides an update on progress and achievements with the action plan from the previous PPR and an action plan on enhancements for following up at the next PPR.

8.6 **Recognition of NCFHE Qualifications and Prior Learning**

8.6.1 GBS HE Malta will take into consideration relevant qualifications that are accredited or recognised by the NCFHE, and relevant periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. NCFHE is an affiliate member of ENQA, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. The Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (QRIC) within NCFHE also forms part of the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region (ENIC) and the National Recognition Information Centres in the European Union (NARIC). The Commission acts also as the National Contact Point for the European Qualifications Framework.

8.6.2 In light of the NCFHE requirements, GBS has a Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (RPL) where students demonstrate that they can meet the assessment criteria within a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess without undertaking an additional course of learning. It is an acknowledged assessment activity within nationally regulated qualifications. The purpose of the RPL Policy is to advise students of the process and procedures for recognising prior learning. The policy sets out information relating to the types of learning that can be recognised by GBS HE Malta Limited.

8.6.3 On successful course completion, students will receive documentation explaining the context, MQF level, amount of learning credit, content and status of the qualification gained, in line with NCFHE regulations.

9. Standard 6: Teaching Staff

9.1 **Recruitment of Teaching Staff**

9.1.1 GBS HE Malta quality assurance arrangements for selection of staff aims to recruit and retain high calibre staff to enable us to deliver our Strategic Plan. Recruitment and selection decisions are based on the ability of the applicant to meet the

requirements of the job description and our values. All applicants are treated fairly and in line with our Equality and Diversity policies. We are committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality. Requirements for our staff include Master's degree or PhD or professional qualification and experience of teaching at Higher Education level.

9.1.2 Our job descriptions are designed to identify the qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills/competencies, and personal qualities required of the successful candidate to ensure the job is carried out effectively. It is crucial to the recruitment process that it is clear and precise since it outlines the criteria by which candidates will be shortlisted and selected.

9.2 **Staff Development**

9.2.1 As part of the new Strategic Plan (2021-24) and its People Strategy, a [Staff Learning and Development Policy](#) has been developed. It is our intention to build staff capabilities at all levels through several development programmes within onboarding, performance, and leadership, which will align to the delivery of the Strategic Plan. The purpose of the Organisation and Talent Development (OTD) team within GBS HE Malta is to ensure that all our staff have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences to deliver its vision. It also supports our commitment to all our values, in particular, "We always want to learn and improve".

9.2.2 At GBS HE Malta we are committed to continuing to raise the standard of our academic and non-academic teams, aligned to the industry sector and with the aspiration of being known for the quality of our staff development. We believe that effective learning and development plays a vital part in the achieving this and in the achievement of our strategic plan. Our principles are the following:

- Recognise staff need to engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Place continuous improvement at the core of our policy
- Provide continuous improvement by reviewing every 12 months as part of the performance management cycle.

9.2.3 Learning needs are identified and determined by self-assessment, by line managers and by GBS HE Malta with the support of the OTD team. In addition, for our academic staff, as part of our Learning and Teaching Strategy 2021-24, we have introduced an opportunity to obtain/ upgrade Advance.

10. Standard 7: Learning Resources and Student Support

10.1 **Adequate and Accessible Learning Resources**

10.1.1 To adopt a strategic and purposeful approach to the development of technology enhanced learning that will significantly impact on the digital capabilities of all GBS staff and students. Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) has a key role to play in the achievement of GBS core objectives in relation to providing great educational experience for all students. To date GBS has not set out specific goals or priorities for the development of TEL, however, has encouraged developments where there has been demand from staff or students. However, student expectations for learning

are changing, and the learning landscape for higher education is rapidly becoming transformed using digital technologies, particularly with transition to blended learning model. GBS will focus its efforts on TEL around five themes:

1. Using technologies to enhance student engagement with learning
2. Developing digital fluency of staff
3. Developing the digital skills and capabilities of students
4. Electronic management of assessment
5. Facilitating course content design for online learning opportunities.

10.1.2 Using technologies to enhance student engagement with learning, we will:

– Make effective use of the GBS/ Partner virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning, through universal implementation of threshold standards for module content on the VLE.
– Raise awareness across GBS of digital fluency as a core learning attribute and a key staff competency.

10.1.3 Developing the digital fluency of staff, we will:

– Foster a culture of 'innovate, share and inspire' in technology enhanced learning through GBS staff development processes, e.g., peer supported review of learning, 'share and inspire' workshops, etc.

10.1.4 Developing the digital skills and capabilities of students, we will:

– Embed the development of digital and information literacies in the curriculum so that all students are enabled to make effective use of technologies for learning.
– Strengthen the induction of students in relation to digital learning, e.g., with reference to the use of the VLE, use of social media, library resources, etc.

10.1.5 Electronic Management of Assessment, we will:

– Integrate plagiarism detection software (Turn it in) with electronic submission systems and enable its use by students and staff for formative and summative purposes.
– Promote the use of plagiarism detection software to support students in understanding academic integrity and in the development and execution of the academic skills associated with referencing required in higher education

10.1.6 Facilitating course content design for online learning opportunities, we will:

– Provide training, guidance, and support for academic staff on designing, developing, and teaching courses online
– Make available standard e-learning software to support the delivery and development of online courses.

10.2 **Diversity of Students and Student-Centred Learning**

10.2.1 GBS understands the importance of teaching, diversity, and ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our community. The areas of access and participation GBS seeks to address are informed by the following principles:

- To provide an opportunity for those who have been out of education for a significant period and wish to return to study.
- To provide an opportunity for those who may not in the past have had the confidence to undertake studies at higher education level.
- To enhance each individual's personal confidence through success and achievement, underpinned by a supportive learning environment.
- To provide a welcoming and secure environment in which equality of opportunity, diversity of backgrounds and rich experiences are valued.
- To help each individual identify and realise their career aspirations through diverse means of employment and/or further study.

10.2.2 GBS aims to recruit and admit individuals to higher education from a wide range of different under-represented groups. These include the following:

- People from lower socio-economic groups or from a neighbourhood where higher education participation is low.
- People from low-income backgrounds.
- Ethnic groups from economically dis-advantaged backgrounds.
- Mature learners.

10.2.3 Our student profile over the past four years to whom we have been offering a range of higher education programmes shows that we have been highly successful in meeting our widening participation aims. GBS is committed to maintaining its success at access and participation and welcomes all individuals from under-represented groups in higher education. We will approach recruitment and selection for admission to higher education through contacts with and advertising in local communities. Furthermore, many of our students come to us through recommendations from our past and current students. Community based referrals have been and will continue to be a vital aspect of our strategic approach to reach out to the highly diverse and distinct communities that more conventional and traditional institutions of higher education find difficulty in contacting.

10.2.4 As student bodies become increasingly diverse, it is important for our academic staff to recognise the dynamics associated with diverse campuses and how diversity can provide a rich social environment that can promote students' learning and development. To provide a student-centred approach to learning our academics encourage student engagement and participation through:

- Building upon students' prior knowledge and experiences.
- Facilitate the learning environment so that the student plays an active and inquiring role in their own learning.
- Create a learning environment that stimulates and challenges learners and fosters critical thinking and the process of knowledge construction.
- Provide opportunities for knowledge to be constructed through authentic learning and links to real world situations.

- Promote opportunities for collaborative learning.
- Recognise individual differences in approaches to learning by offering learners a variety of choices in terms of learning activities and assessments.
- Encourage collaboration between students by having small group discussions and activities.
- Adopt inquiry based or problem-based learning using relatable characters/ scenarios/case studies.
- Include creative interactive exercises/use student response systems to capture student feedback.
- Ensure students are provided with 'fit for purposes' resources which will aid their learning and development.

11. Standard 8: Information Management

11.1 GBS HE Malta Limited is committed to the efficient management of our records in compliance with legislative, regulatory, and best-practice requirements. The principles outlined in our Records Management and Retention Policy have been developed to provide a consistent approach to managing records throughout their lifecycle and provides guidance on the retention and disposal of records held by GBS. Retaining records for the right length of time is necessary to support business requirements and to comply with legislation.

11.2 In addition to the above, GBS has invested in UNIT 4 which is a 'software company that designs and delivers enterprise software and Enterprise Resource Planning applications and related professional services for people in services organisations with a special focus on the professional services, education, public services, and non-profit sectors.' UNIT 4 system will be used to store admission records, student details, retaining proof of assessment and recognition information and archived contents will be available for 40 years as per Malta guidelines. To access their website please follow this link: https://www.unit4.com/.

11.3 Effective Records Management allows for fast, reliable, and secure access to records ensuring the timely destruction of redundant records as well as the secure identification and archiving of records considered worthy of permanent preservation. A key aim of our policy is to make clear the entire 'lifecycle' of record retention, from the point of creation, receipt, through the period of its active use, then into a period of inactive retention (such as archive files which may still be referred to occasionally) and finally either disposal or permanent preservation. This includes records relating to teaching and research activities, as well as commercial and administrative support functions as per Figure 1 – "Lifecycle" of a record.

Figure 1 – "Lifecycle" of a record
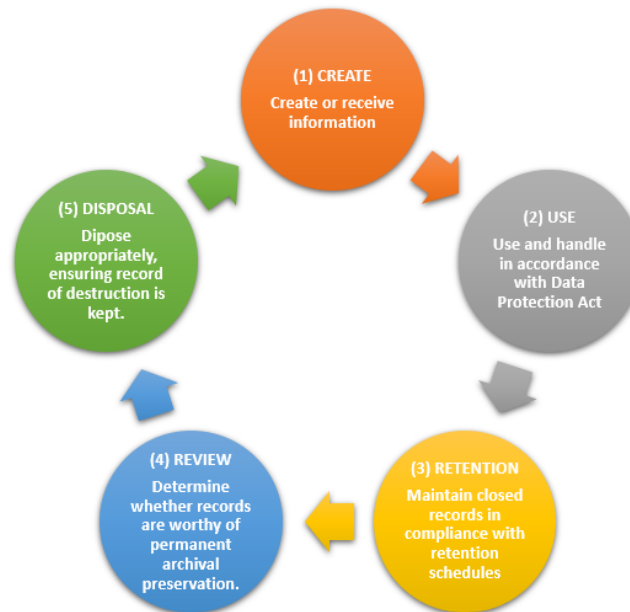
12. Standard 9: Public Information

12.1 The Marketing Department and the Academic Standards and Quality Office are responsible for the accuracy of the online presence of GBS. GBS has its own formal mechanism for the approval of public information and changes to existing information. Each department originating public information will follow a three-stage process for approval before publication as laid out below:

- Draft information circulated to key stakeholders for consideration and comment.
- Agreed information approved by relevant Head of Department/ Director.
- Approved version sent to university partner, or regulatory body for approval (if required).

12.2 The marketing team monitors all digital outlets including social media and networking sites. The Team also ensures that regular review and audit takes place on the publicly available information so that it is accurate, substantiated, and appropriate. A number of audits are normally undertaken through the course of the academic year. Such audits cover specified areas such as the prospectus, the website, VLE, social media sites to assess current content.

12.3 **Course Content**

12.4 In line with [Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA)](#) whose primary function is to 'safeguard consumers' interests and enhance their welfare', GBS HE Malta Limited will continue to publish information about our activities, including courses/programmes which provide students with:

- clear, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible information
- accurate and timely information that they need so they can make an informed decision about what and where to study.

- ensuring that their terms and conditions are fair
- accessible complaint handling processes

12.5 GBS will offer a range of courses and the below information (specific to each course) will be readily available on our GBS website and includes:

1. The selection criteria for the courses/programmes we offer
2. Their intended learning outcomes.
3. The qualifications they award, including information on the EQF/MQF level and ECTS/ECVET learning credits.
4. The teaching, learning and assessment procedures used.
5. The pass rates
6. The further learning opportunities available to our students.
7. Information on possible career pathways available as a result of taking a course.

12.6 GBS HE Malta Limited will ensure that the available information shall be sufficient for prospective applicants to be able to make an informed choice in terms of the knowledge, skills, and competences they are likely to acquire on successful completion of the programme advertised on our platforms. Please see below example of public information Figure 1: Six great reasons to join GBS:

Figure 1: Six great reasons to join GBS

Source: GBS UK Website https://globalbanking.ac.uk/

13. Standard 10: Ongoing Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

13.1 Student Involvement

13.1.1 GBS has operated an effective approach to student engagement, including the student representative system. There are a range of opportunities, both formal and informal, for students to engage in the quality assurance and enhancement systems that operate at GBS. The overall aim of GBS with respect to student engagement is:

'To engage students as partners in the quality assurance and enhancement of their learning experience primarily, but not exclusively through, an effective student representative system, formal feedback from surveys, an annual student-led written submission evaluating their educational experience, membership of stated committees, student representative committee and informal means of engagement and feedback.'

13.1.2 We continue to have student representatives on all programmes at all campuses and with each awarding body and they make effective and valuable contributions at Student Representative meetings, through membership of Programme Committees, Learning and Teaching Committees and Academic Board. Being a student representative is a very important role, important for GBS and all the students they represent. The student representatives act as a key link between GBS and their peers.

13.1.3 Student representatives are vital as they provide unlimited feedback on the experiences of students, act as powerful tool in promoting and securing positive change at GBS. Since student representatives themselves are students, fellow students are happy to seek assistance from them when they have concerns or opinions about their education and experience at GBS. By keeping the student view on the agenda, they become a vital link between students and staff of GBS and will help ensure that GBS is student driven.

13.1.4 Furthermore, students have several opportunities to provide feedback to GBS. For example, through Module Evaluation Surveys which are conducted on all modules across all years and final year students took part in the National Student Survey (NSS). Students can also provide early feedback at induction about the information they were given prior to their application, their overall experience during and after application, and how the induction to their programme was conducted.

13.2 Implementation of the Quality Cycle

13.2.1 Implementation of a Quality Cycle ensures that our policies and procedures of regulatory and awarding bodies (OfS, QAA, Pearson, Bath Spa University, partner universities/colleges) are fully and consistently implemented across all GBS campuses and programmes of study. GBS takes a pro-active role in quality enhancement of the student learning experience across all of GBS' campuses. We ensure quality assurance and enhancement at GBS supports a cycle of continuous improvement, leading the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of enhancements. GBS co-ordinates and undertakes internal quality audit tasks as appropriate to the needs of GBS and demands of awarding bodies/partner organisations.

14. Standard 11: Cyclical External Quality Assurance

14.1.1 GBS HE Malta is fully committed in line with the NCFHE requirements towards the adherence to, promotion and enhancement of a quality culture firstly through the submission of this Internal Quality Assurance document as per below Figure 1: Cyclical External Quality Assurance. Our second commitment towards the enhancement of quality is then through an NCFHE QA audit every 5 years.

Figure 1: Cyclical External Quality Assurance

Source: Step by step guide to Internal Quality Assurance, *National Commission for Further and Higher Education (2017), NCFHE, Malta.*

14.1.2 Following an audit by an independent group of peers, GBS understands that a report will be compiled on our entity which is then made public on the NCFHE website. GBS will follow the action plan to make improvements in the entity and the programmes in which we will be offering. The audit is carried out on the 11 standards (see Figure 2) and judged as follows:

- Exceeds Standards
- Meeting Standards
- Needs Improvement
- Does Not Meet Standards

14.1.3 Following this EQA audit, the action plan will form part of GBS HE Malta Limited's Strategic planning document for our Executive Board.

Figure 2: The 11 Standards of Quality Assurance

Standard 1	Policy for internal quality assurance
Standard 2	Institutional probity
Standard 3	Design and approval of programmes
Standard 4	Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
Standard 5	Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
Standard 6	Teaching staff
Standard 7	Learning resources and student support
Standard 8	Information management
Standard 9	Public information
Standard 10	Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes
Standard 11	Cyclical external quality assurance

Source: Step by step guide to Internal Quality Assurance, *National Commission for Further and Higher Education (2017), NCFHE, Malta.*