



INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Vision Statement and Objectives

The vision of School of Business & Management (SBM) is: to offer affordable, quality, and recognized qualifications in Malta which could provide a steppingstone towards university.

The School of Business & Management trades under the name of World Learning Ltd. Besides possessing expertise and experience of over 20 years in the UK offering par excellence recognized education services, we have a team of professionals who possess not only the required qualifications but also industry experience.

This educational establishment currently offers MQF level 1 – 4 qualifications to Home, EU and International students at affordable rates. We aspire to grow our offering to offer qualifications at a higher level. These qualifications will be certified by the School of Business Management which are accredited by MFHEA,. This will further enhance the base of our motivation that English taught, and widely accredited qualifications should be made available to local students even after Brexit. This would allow a wider, professional, and work base horizon to these students. It will also further support the country's economy by attracting EU and International students and will further develop the education industry in Malta.

1.2 Overview

This SBM-Education Quality Framework (AQF) is a guide to quality assurance at SBM. In particular, the AQF provides easy-access guidance for staff, students and others concerned with the quality of the total learning experience of students on education programmes delivered by SBM. The AQF will be made public and available on the SBM Malta website. This Quality Handbook forms part of the AQF.

1.3 Quality Assurance Information

There are specific sources of information related to Quality Assurance and the confirmation of Education Standards for programmes, namely:

- a) The overarching Education Regulations and Quality Assurance requirements arising from collaborations with other awarding bodies, including MFHEA. These are mainly existing approved partners of SBM in the UK, and for home grown courses, the quality requirements in Malta.
- b) The internal SBM Quality Framework documentation. This is made up of: -

(1) The Quality Handbook provides a reference handbook and descriptive guidance for all internal and external stakeholders across all quality assurance areas related to the education and operational aspects of SBM. This includes the vision, governance, internal quality mechanisms, education standards matters, protocols and other appropriate areas. Furthermore, the Quality Handbook also contains key strategies, education policies, and related supporting documents.

These are applicable to all students, staff and is also relevant for all education programmes. The reference areas include: - education governance; educational programmes; educational management; the student experience; the learning environment; teaching faculty and support staff; information management; educational strategies, policies and SBM protocols.

(2) The SBM Education Regulations, application, and formal interpretation of the Quality Handbook and Quality Framework These are regulations used by all staff and students, and applied to all internal procedures, processes, mechanisms, and general arrangements as these relate to all internal Quality Assurance and Education Standards operations activities, requirements, management arrangements and protocols. These three components of the SBM Quality Framework are also supplemented by specific guidance notes, policies and strategy papers where required. In the event of uncertainty on any aspect of Quality Assurance and Enhancement or on Education Standards matters, the following guidelines apply for resolving conflicts and formally interpreting SBM quality regulations.

The SBM education Board in Malta is primarily responsible for the maintenance, development, and oversight of the Education Quality Framework. SBM Education Board has the ultimate responsibility for the content of the Quality Framework. Moreover, the Education Board is required to confirm and approve the educational strategies and policies which are developed, incorporated in, and implemented as a part of the SBM Quality Framework. The Quality Handbook will be updated from time to time, in accordance with requirements within the educational sector.

The Quality Handbook

1.1 Vision

The aims of SBM are student-centred, focused on an inclusive learning community offering a wide range of courses and disciplines that are steered to respond to the key segment of the region and the broader multicultural community. This will be achieved by engaging students in a unique experiential learning environment, producing skillful, innovative, and entrepreneurial graduates who possess global and technical competencies.

With over 20 years' experience in Education in various international markets, we have successfully extended our services to Malta. Our current courses offer a wide range of skill acquisition opportunities in the form of accredited courses from MQF level 1 to 4. Our student success rate is an impressive one (on average 92%) which is a factor which had propelled us to bring this success to Malta. In order for there to be more choice and to encourage student progression, we plan to extend the current offering to level MQF 5 and above.

Our present partnerships with UK awarding bodies such as Pearson, OTHM and MFHEA (Malta Further and Higher Education Authority), as well as renowned British universities is further proof of our commitment to offering standardized high-quality educational services. Courses on offer will include Business Management and Health & Social Care.

The members of the executive management team have been involved in helping a wide range of community members, both learners and mature students and we feel that our services are in line with Malta's Education Strategy (2014-2024), where equal opportunities are to be provided to those at risk of poverty as well as low socio-economic segments of society. Our vision is also based on firm foundations established in the UK which are designed to ensure that SBM will continue to develop further on a sound financial base.

1.2 Objectives

SBM aims to provide - within the environment of an independent educational establishment/alternative provider - quality focused and cost-effective Further Education programmes in the discipline fields and subject areas as below:

- Business Studies
- Business Administration
- Health & Social Care
- Accounting

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- Information Technology
- E-Commerce

These educational activities are based on established expertise and proven success in the delivery of internationally focused high-quality programmes and the educational commitment to, and belief in, the following:

- Educational discipline and subject areas are intrinsically international in their focus and multicultural in context and nature
- Education philosophy recognises and aims at respecting and responding to a variety of international cultures, learners and stakeholders and their respective needs
- In order to remain competitive and relevant to stakeholder requirements, programmes delivered by SBM are required to maintain their currency in terms of their curriculum content, pedagogic approaches, and responses to market and environmental circumstances

SBM's educational vision, objectives and commitment must therefore ensure:

- The inclusion of practical applications and culturally referenced teaching in learning and teaching practice (as appropriate)
- Rigour and critical relevance in scholarship; associated research activities; major project, case study and business development teaching; and their links to the education experience of our students
- Innovation in learning, teaching, stakeholder development and relationship developments

1.3 Planning and Implementation of the Education Vision and Strategy

The strategic planning process and the implementation of strategic plans is developed within a number of contexts and specific priorities. This includes the carefully considered establishment, firm consolidation, and successful continuous development of:

- An appropriate Further Education portfolio of education provision
- An appropriate Higher Education portfolio of education provision.
- A track record of providing a good quality educational experience for students

A cornerstone of SBM's vision and strategic plan is the objective of delivering high-quality career-related programmes. All education programmes provide a clear and detailed foundation of knowledge and experience in the principles and subject areas which make up the respective practice-focused disciplines and the provision within the portfolio is benchmarked against the expectations and the 11 Standards of the Malta Quality Assurance Framework.

Building on these principles, all teaching is designed to provide students with the knowledge and expertise necessary to develop their overall professional and career capability and by providing them with an opportunity to develop specialist expertise and career development directions. SBM's teaching philosophy and pedagogic vision therefore provides an educational experience with strong emphasis on the knowledge, skills and capabilities appropriate to the rapidly changing global, cultural, human, and technological business and organisational environment.

Our focus is primarily on quality standards within all programmes and with integrating both teaching experience and professional external world experience in teaching teams. Responsibility for the development of the SBM strategy lies with the Executive Management team advised and guided by the SBM Education Board, as appropriate.

This remains central to the quality principles which underpin the delivery of the curriculum and the teaching philosophy which leads programme developments. Programmes are designed to build on and reinforce strength in learning and teaching which develops the student's professional capabilities and their theoretical understanding which informs practice. Furthermore, SBM caters for an international educational market and students who enter programmes are able to build on their career experience to date within a high quality theoretical, practice focused and career intentioned learning experience.

a) Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy and Strategy

The Education Board, with membership drawn from the education and administrative teams responsible for the delivery of education programmes, provides the oversight for quality assurance and enhancement activity and the strategic development and implementation of the quality assurance policy. The goal of providing a quality focused education portfolio is to help achieve the vision and meet strategic business objectives through ensuring quality within the provision and stimulating enhancement in all aspects of the education portfolio.

Moreover, SBM recognises the importance of engagement with external organisations in ensuring quality and promoting improvement. The formal process utilized is the OTHM Quality Handbook which ensures the involvement of external stakeholders, which is very comprehensive. Further details are available in Appendix 5

Engagement with organisations includes working closely with the following entities:

- Other educational partners who SBM might work with in the future.
- MFHEA, as the national accreditation and quality assurance body.
- The QAA (particularly in relation to education programmes and education standards and within the expectations of the 11 standards of the Malta Quality Assurance Framework.
- Appropriate relevant professional organisations (e.g., the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM); ACCA – as deemed appropriate)
- Once established, SBM will seek to widen its collaboration with other relevant Maltese organizations

b) The Quality Assurance Structures

Quality and quality enhancement are responsibilities for management, teaching staff and support staff across SBM. Furthermore, the development and operation of quality assurance at the programme level is primarily the responsibility of the Programme Leaders and the Senior Programme Leader. In these areas, the Head of Quality and appropriate staff based in Malta (e.g., the Registrar/senior administrative staff), provide general and specific advice as well as

reporting to SBM Education Board and advising the executive and senior management team, as appropriate. Presently, we have a Quality Head, and are building our staff complement to enable us to grow the role to that of Quality Manager.

SBM Education Board responsibilities include the following:

- Development of quality policies and strategies including those for education standards, quality assurance and enhancement processes and supporting procedures
- Monitoring of quality and the operation of quality policies, standards, and processes
- Providing a focus as a catalyst in quality improvement which enhances the student experience at the same time as supporting overall enhancement activity.

Across all areas, the SBM Education Board promotes the sharing of good practice and provides a focus for enhancement based on critical self-appraisal. In doing this, key Education Board operating principles include the following:

- Transparency – quality processes and enhancement activities are able to demonstrate the maintenance of education standards and assurance of quality to those not directly engaged with the specific or particular programme.
- Simplicity – quality processes and enhancement developments are ‘fit for purpose’ and integrated with the normal education and programme activity whenever practical and feasible.
- Focus on participants and outcomes – quality activities are driven by the desire to deliver high quality educational programmes to students as well as meeting vision aims.

In relation to education programmes, the achievement of education standards is monitored within quality processes at programme level through the following:

- The confirmation of education standards by External Examiners and at Progression-interim-Finals / Examinations Boards/Awards Boards
- Regular annual and periodic review monitoring undertaken by the Education Board; education and administrative support staff; the Head of Quality; the respective education programme team; the Senior Programme Leader and the collaborating awarding bodies.
- Regular formal reporting mechanisms: e.g., required regular reporting to the Education Board and oversight by Senior Education Staff; Programme Leaders; Head of Quality; Registrar; and the Executive and Senior Management Team.

Where appropriate, SBM will also make use of external experts and consultants in ongoing enhancement activities. External experts and consultants may be engaged on the Advisory Board or on Review Panels, as appropriate and as necessary.

Review Panels are set up regularly and will include SBM staff, representatives of the student-staff liaison committee, external experts, and consultations, as necessary and as required. Such review panels might be set up for specific programmes or per subject area.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) is a standing committee which includes representatives of students and staff and aims to act as a formal feedback mechanism.

Each member of the teaching faculty and support staff is responsible for the quality delivered to

the students and the programme with which they are engaged. They are, in turn, fully accountable to programme leaders for their work.

c) Quality Assurance and Feedback Channels

Quality is assured through regular use of **feedback channels**. These include: -

- Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) which provides formal feedback from student representatives
- Student feedback is given formally (through questionnaires) on the quality of their learning experience. All students will have the opportunity to complete student satisfaction surveys anonymously at key times during their programme, usually after enrolment and induction and then later in the year.
- Teaching faculty feedback on module and programme matter. There will be periodic meetings within each team, with their academic manager, where they will discuss issues that they encounter and how they can proceed. This will also be supported with any training that may be required. The academic manager will take note of feedback and revert to the individual teachers. There will be also the possibility of further discussions which will be held in yearly reviews.
- Students provide feedback on the programme through questionnaires and at school committees – the Student-Staff Liaison Committee, Programme Management Committees and Education Board. Module review results are circulated to individual teaching staff and teams (as required) with issues discussed in programme committee meetings and team meetings where, if needed, corrective actions are initiated.
- Students are also able to provide feedback at the student-staff liaison committee, and at programme management committee meetings where individual comment is invited and encouraged on any aspect of the programme. All programmes are required to use these mechanisms which are designed to provide regular, systematic feedback to which all students may contribute. Programme committee meetings and other documentation provide records of feedback that ensure audit trail transparency.
- Student feedback given at Programme Management Committee meetings is reviewed by the Programme Leader/Senior Programme Leader who provide a feedback report to Education Board. Actions and responses to student feedback may be actioned at the Programme Management Committee, or at the Education Board, as required.
- Module performance analysis related to the evaluation and monitoring of education standards reached in each module and each programme
- External Examiners' feedback via External Examiners Reports and Programme Team responses to these reports
- External review and monitoring of programmes through regular partner processes and procedures. Collaborative feedback through Moderators' Reports/Link Tutor reports, and within Annual Review procedures and Periodic Review procedures and requirements (as required)
- Overall monitoring and evaluation of programme performance, peer observation and review of teaching
- Use of mentoring and appraisal systems. These mechanisms, combined with the initiative and substantial experience of teaching and support staff, contribute equally to the ongoing enhancement of programmes and the learning environment as well as supporting the maintenance standards achieved by students.

SBM is committed to meeting Maltese and UK quality standards at all times, since the programmes are delivered both in Malta and in the UK. This includes meeting all the requirements of the MFHEA, the FHEQ: the UK Quality Code for Higher Education; Subject Benchmark Statements and the present and future requirements of the respective collaborating universities and awarding bodies, and national accreditation bodies (as appropriate). SBM is already licensed and accredited by the OTHM and full compliance will follow under their instructions. Moreover, SBM will also comply under MFHEA guided instructions to fulfil compliance. The quality assurance approach towards its education programmes reflects in matters of detail SBM's distinctive strategy and strength rather than seeking to simply copy and imitate approaches used. SBM seeks to encourage and engage its teaching staff with a range of external activities and professional bodies in order to gain from the breadth of experience.

1.4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The learning, teaching and assessment strategy reflects SBM's vision which is focused on good quality education delivered in a cost-effective and competitive manner, while encouraging and enabling students to gain the competences that will enable them to excel in employment or in business anywhere in the world.

The strategy also embraces delivery through collaborating relationships which are fundamental to the business model operated by SBM. This strategy also responds to the 11 standards outlined in the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education, the 11 standards outlined in the MFHEA Quality Assurance Framework, the UK Quality Code, and the components of the OTHM for education programmes, module design, learning outcomes, and criteria referenced assessment as well as for validation and approval, monitoring and review, and student assessment, and learning environment.

Moreover, SBM is mindful of its responsibilities for promoting equality and diversity, and the development, promotion, and adoption of an inclusive approach to learning and teaching. The SBM seeks to support student learning and success through: -

- Provision of continuously enhanced, high-quality, practice-informed and practice focused teaching
- Providing timely support for students, through the provision of an excellent learning infrastructure implementing effective formative and summative assessment practices within a supportive student focused learning environment

This implies the following:

- The programme portfolio is regularly reviewed (subject also to collaborating partnership requirements)

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- Teaching faculty are expected, and required, to regularly update the curriculum and the currency of their teaching
- Teaching faculty and support teams introduce and prepare students effectively in making use of educational experiences using best available educational technologies
- Learning and teaching approaches encourage participation; active and relational development; problem-identification and problem-based development; transformational activity, inquiry related activity, practice focused and applied learning
- That student education achievement and performance is subject to authentic assessment, and that student performance is measured on evidence of their understanding of programme content and practical application and against the defined learning outcomes for the module, and programme.

a) Learning Strategy

The learning strategy is driven by the recognition that effective learning results from collaboration between students and faculty members, using expected learning outcomes to motivate growth and measure competence development.

The learning environment supports the effectiveness of learning and teaching while making learning resources available to students in a variety of formats and encouraging information literacy and learning skills development. Students are encouraged to learn from each other, as well as from faculty members and learning strategy is underpinned by an awareness that teaching and learning processes are not identical, and that faculty members should design educational experiences that facilitate effective, career- relevant learning, on a continuing basis.

Consequently, SBM faculty members:

- Are encouraged to provide experiences for their students that enable them to progressively develop new understandings of subject content and engage students in articulating their learning in specific and concrete ways that impact upon their colleagues and appropriate contexts.
- Encourage students to make systematic use of their own prior professional experiences, where applicable, in their class participation.
- Collaborate to ensure the ready availability of learning materials relevant to each class and make full use of the on-line facility provided by the SBM Student Portal.
- Work closely with their students to ensure the attainment of educational outcomes and learning outcomes that are consistent with the Malta MFHEA Quality Framework, the QAA UK Quality Framework for Higher Education and national UK/collaborating OTHM Education and Regulatory Frameworks and the Malta accreditation body.

b) Teaching Strategy

SBM have provided programmes at MQF Levels 1, 2,3 & 4. This will now progress to Level 5 courses and above. In the case of Level 4 teaching and above, faculty benchmark their teaching, assessment requirements and indicative module teaching content.

Learning Outcomes: Where required, and subject to the location of delivery SBM courses also benchmarks its strategy against the appropriate national accreditation body requirements. In Malta, the teaching will be guided by the learning outcomes as set out by the Malta Qualifications framework and in line with the UK Subject Benchmark Statements, UK OTHM Level Characteristics Statements; UK Learning Outcome descriptors and UK Education Level qualification descriptors. The teaching aims to encourage students to develop a systematic understanding of key aspects of the body of knowledge and subjects which make up their discipline and field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline.

Learning Outcome matrices are used in each programme validation/approval document to indicate the requirements of the programme and of individual modules.

c) Assessment Strategy

SBM faculty makes use of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment methods, providing feedback on assignments in an accessible way, based upon an agreed timeframe. The assessment and the assessment strategy are linked to learning and teaching strategies, and to the required education level of learning outcomes, descriptors and assessment criteria. The balance between assessment of, and assessment for, learning is a key element of assessment.

The School promotes good practice in assessment by:

- Minimising opportunities for plagiarism, please refer to section 'Education fraud' below d)
- Aligning assessment criteria with learning outcomes and education level descriptors
- Providing regular feedback to students, this is given on the management platform and students have access to it.

SBM recognises the strong correlation between the assessment strategy and the facilitation and support of student learning. Assessment processes reflect this through a variety of measures including:

- Use of formative feedback to students
- Summative assessment

d) Education fraud

SBM adopts a zero-tolerance approach to any **education dishonesty**. Education dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating in a written assessment, and committing plagiarism. Cheating in a written assessment includes, but is not limited to, sharing answers for an exam, or receiving help from someone else during an exam. Any student caught cheating, plagiarizing, or engaging in any other form of education dishonesty will be subject to immediate dismissal from SBM. Moreover, if any learner helps another learner to cheat or plagiarize, then this learner will also be subject to being dismissed immediately from SBM. The School's zero tolerance policy on education dishonesty protects the integrity of the professional training that learners receive at the School.

e) Staff Development and Learning, Teaching and Assessment

SBM recognises that the success of the learning experience enjoyed by its students is directly linked to the quality of teaching. It also recognises the key role that staff play given the model of programme delivery adopted by the School, and the need to encourage scholarship-informed teaching.

The approach builds on the high-quality teaching and support staff in place, and their particular expertise as educators and administrators with other institutions or as practitioners in the field. SBM uses a wide interpretation of scholarship and reflection on teaching and learning, which ranges from subject focused enhancement activity through to practitioner informed development and reflection on personal development and achievement. There are two major strands to staff development in these areas: -

- (a) Firstly, the approach to promoting good practice as part of the enhancement agenda and ensuring that good ideas are encouraged to be implemented more widely.
- (b) Secondly, the development of the education framework of the School, the refinement of procedures and processes and the response to national developments. Other inputs to the staff review process arise from the annual monitoring process, where the reports may identify areas for developments or opportunities for advancing innovative ideas or simply securing and improving existing provision.

This policy and strategy paper sets out the scholarship and the aim of supporting, developing, and disseminating appropriate activities. The overall aims of the policy are to:

- 1. Create intellectual capital for the benefit of the School and its students and staff
- 2. Promote teaching excellence
- 3. Promote the excellence of the students learning experience
- 4. Promote programme currency in content, curriculum, and relevance
- 5. Create networking and developmental opportunities for the benefit of the programmes, the students, external client contributors, and external networks (as appropriate)
- 6. Promote opportunities for student project development, student career and professional development.

Scholarship and research policy and their strategic development are firmly related to the overarching educational ethos of the School. The role of scholarship and research policy and strategy is concerned with:

1.5 Scholarship and Research which Underpin Teaching

SBM promotes the exploration of research development opportunities in project work for students and in external networking opportunities with appropriate professional bodies, regional bodies, and governmental agencies.

These activities are seen as contributing to the following:

- Dissemination and enhancement of intellectual capital across the education programme portfolio and within the curriculum and programme content
- Building into all education programmes a currency and relevancy which is required in today's fast changing professional and career environment
- Building of programme brand awareness in the highly competitive education market and the creation of new business opportunities
- Consistent development of best practice in learning and teaching and the assurance of high standards of teaching quality.

a) Established Experience, Competency and Creative Development

SBM teaching staff are encouraged to interpret and apply in the teaching to problem identification/problem solving approaches in learning, practical application, and practice focused learning. Applied critical thinking to real world situations is central to the scholarship and research policy.

This approach supports the career and professional development of SBM's students and enables them to contribute effectively to the performance of those organisations which employ them or who will employ them in the future. Future employers of SBM alumni will also be included in the list of SBM stakeholders and be referred to for review purposes.

The SBM approach centres on understanding, reflecting on and explaining ideas and concepts which enable students to be more effective in their career, to understand the professional contexts in which they work, and to have a professional standard of performance which is immediately recognisable to employers. School teaching strength is founded on the ability to create added value for students through teaching approaches. Added value for an employer is gained by effectively incorporating practice based and focused thinking alongside rigorous education curriculum requirements.

b) Scholarship and Research Policy

The established experience of SBM in the UK is based on solid teaching-led foundations. Opportunities exist within this experience to contribute to the collective knowledge and to enhance the strategic advantage of the School. There are also important options which support the School in reinforcing competitive strengths, enhancing credibility among education peers, and enabling the School to focus on areas of good and best practice in association with partners. The consideration of strengths and existing models for the definition of research provides a framework for understanding different approaches to generating intellectual capital, scholarship, and research activity.

Moreover, the purpose of the scholarship and research framework is to provide a clear

explanation of the type of research and scholarship-led activities which SBM wishes to recognise, encourage, support, develop and reward.

In broad terms, there are three levels of research that contribute to the generation of intellectual capital and teaching excellence.

- Keeping in touch with developments in one's subject area.
- Developing new teaching and learning materials-and teaching content.
- Undertaking applied scholarship and research which relates to practical issues, and which is useful to the School and students and may contribute to networking development or to the gaining of additional qualifications.

External Benchmarking Scholarship and research policies fall within four categories of activity:

1. Education research and scholarship – which has been defined as “the production and organisation of new knowledge, the development of new theory and the design of new methodologies within a particular discipline”
2. Practice-related research and scholarship – creation of new knowledge contributing to new practices. This is usually underpinned by methodologies based on in-depth and close observation of complex business situations, often by means of case studies, surveys, or the rationalisation of significant accumulated managerial or consulting experience.
3. Pedagogic Development and Innovation – involves the provision of innovative pedagogical methodologies, educational tools and learning materials in support of more effective learning.
4. Facilitating Dissemination and Communication – by identifying and promoting opportunities at education and practitioner conferences and in-house seminar-workshops; and providing help and advice for dissemination, publishing, and other similar activity.

c) The Implementation of the Scholarship and Research Policy and Strategy

There are three areas of focus for strategic development of the policy:

1. Identifying Funding Opportunities – the process of securing external funding would contribute to the programme of research and scholarship. This includes identifying live major projects which relate directly to external business sponsorship and commercial and industrial liaison
2. Building Partnerships – in order to learn from colleagues in the education and commercial communities. Once the license is issued, we will be able to build partnerships with employers and also other institutions.
3. Supporting teaching faculty – by organising internal seminars to foster research and scholarship activity; identifying training and development opportunities to enhance research and scholarship skills; and utilising experienced faculty as mentors to work alongside less experienced teaching faculty. This activity is supported and promoted within the Education Board and committee structures, in the networking activities of staff, and within the staff development policy and its implementation.

The focus of research and scholarship activities will reflect the interests and concerns of key audiences and stakeholders, who should all be involved in the QA process, including:

- Shareholders in SBM
- Current and future students
- Staff who design and deliver teaching and learning
- Future employers and networking partners/business sponsors/student sponsors
- Colleagues and employers in the professional community
- Awarding body collaborating partners

A key aspect of the research policy and strategy requires there to be explicitness and focus on the type of research and scholarship activity undertaken by teaching and support student and staff development and its contribution to SBM. There will be a regular review of research and scholarship activity undertaken by teaching staff and this will be matched to the requirements of the staff development policy and strategy.

Summary

The clear purpose of research and scholarship policy and strategy is to create intellectual capital and promote teaching excellence by supporting activities that meet the dual hurdle of education rigour and practical relevance.

Beyond the specific activities outlined above, the implementation of the research policy and strategy is integrated across the organisation in a number of ways:

SBM encourages applications from teaching staff. to undertake further studies and carry out research and scholarship activity as part of the faculty development process, even though our license is for further education only.

1.6 Staff Development Policy

The policy is summarised as follows:

“SBM encourages its staff and students to seek learning opportunities that will help in their future skills. A key objective is the development towards the job market opportunities.”

a) Strategic Overview

- Teaching staff are required to have a higher level than the taught programme. This experience may be gained from their prior employment within institutions or organisations where programmes are delivered, within colleges, universities, or similar institutions; or from their membership of professional bodies and/or from teaching or coaching or similar experience gained in their professional backgrounds. Teaching staff may also be required to meet the education levels of qualification required by partner universities prior to teaching on fully validated programmes.
- Administrative and support staff are required to have experience, or to be capable of developing relevant experience in appropriate administration or support areas. The general staff development policy and strategy is adopted within the constraints of available resources. Policy and the Strategy may be benchmarked against appropriate good practices which have been successfully used at other institutions or organisations delivering education programmes, including professional organisations, as appropriate.

b) Staff Development Aims

The staff development policy and strategy are broadly aimed at:

- Facilitating and supporting the first-class standard of the Learning Environment and the teaching and delivery of the education programmes
- Providing a coherent framework for the development of teaching faculty and support staff
Ensuring that methods of responding to student learning, teaching requirements and educational development are consistently based on best/good practice
- Supporting teaching and maintaining the currency of approaches towards Learning and Teaching and in programme delivery
- Supporting best/good practice approaches to the development of education programme content and its relevance to local and regional needs
- Encouraging and ensuring best pedagogic practice and philosophy
- Supporting the development of scholarship approaches which are pertinent to the vision of SBM and the aims and objectives of its education programmes

c) Compliance

SBM is well aware of the need to ensure that staff are appraised of Maltese Regulatory

requirements; equality and diversity; child protection act; health and safety; first aid; fire regulations; and freedom of information/data protection; and all staff are required to be fully cognizant with the School policies and their implications. SBM provides all this information to all staff when employed and will have it easily accessible to staff at all times.

d) Communication

On a day-to-day basis, all administrative and teaching staff are kept informed of current issues and matters arising through regular meetings and one-to-one sessions. These are supported by a regular schedule of Executive Management Team, Senior Management Team, full staff meetings (every quarter), Education Management meetings (Education Board, RDC), Programme Management Committee meetings, Student Staff Liaison Meetings, programme leader meetings, and extensive use of electronic communications.

e) Recruitment and Induction of Faculty Members

Faculty teaching members are recruited against defined criteria. Appointment to teaching posts typically involves consideration of:

- A required and relevant level of qualification in a specified and appropriate discipline which is related to the teaching to be undertaken by the member of staff
- Relevant and significant professional experience Teaching/ training development experience
- The ability to contribute to SBM's intellectual capital development.
- Preference is given to applicants with:
 - A post-graduate level education qualification
 - A continuing professional development and/or scholarship record of appropriate teaching experience
 - Excellent communication skills
 - Appropriate education and/ or professional experience

During the recruitment process, applicants for faculty teaching positions are evaluated for their current and potential ability in teaching and learning. This recruitment process has been finetuned in our other schools in the UK, for example the employment of teachers involves a micro teaching session of 15 minutes. If there are specific development needs for a new faculty member these may be identified at this stage. An induction to SBM, their facilities and policies, including health and safety and equal opportunities, is provided to all new members of staff. All new members of faculty receive professional advice and feedback on their progress during their early months of employment from programme leaders.

f) Faculty Curriculum Vitae

Teaching faculty are required to maintain an up-to-date curriculum vitae by informing the office of new developments. These are for office purposes only.

1.7 Staff and Faculty Development

SBM is committed to the development of teaching faculty and all staff and provides encouragement and support for this. The staff development policy is summarised as follows:

Encouragement is given for internal training and development including:

- The enhancement of qualifications held by an individual
- Attendance at Further Education programmes
- Courses for membership of professional bodies
- External professional development courses and qualifications
- Internally organised training
- Other job-related training

Furthermore, encouragement is also given for:

- Participation in internal conference attendance
- Delivery of conference papers and speaking at conferences
- Attendance at discipline group, scholarship, teaching and learning networks or similar professional events
- Other training and development that benefits both the School and the individual member of staff.
- Additional formal encouragement for faculty education development related to developmental projects and individual initiatives is provided.

The SBM Education Board reviews staff development activity on a regular basis; identifies continuous improvement themes; prioritises each theme; identifies proposals for the development of themes; places these in the context of SBM's education and professional objectives and confirms which themes will provide the focus for a series of staff development workshops in the current and/or following education cycle.

Internal staff development also provides more formal opportunities for teaching and support staff to increase their levels of qualification and enhance their career development.

Peer teaching observation may be used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, as well as to share good practice. The teaching of each faculty member may be peer observed. This is undertaken on an individual, developmental basis with feedback from the peer observer to the member of teaching faculty observed. Peer observation is designed to enhance the quality of teaching and learning as well as to share good practice. The systematic collection of student and participant feedback is a further complementary process, enhancing the quality assurance process at SBM. Within its terms of reference, the SBM Education Board will also consider how Peer Review of Teaching, which involves classroom observation, is incorporated into faculty support and quality enhancement approaches.

1.8 Policy and Strategy Review

Staff development activity and outcomes are reviewed by the Education Board. Following review themes and identified targets for enhancement actions are identified and a calendar of activity for the following cycle is identified and confirmed.

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The SBM Education Regulations

1. Staff development review

SBM operates a process of individual staff development review which incorporates two areas of focus for confirmation of individual KPI activity in two specific staff development areas which are related to the mission of the School namely:

a) The Learning and Teaching Mission and Focus of the School

This includes staff development and updating activity which is associated with the delivery of the School and their mission as a teaching institution. This includes identification of and meeting with the individual goals and targets for:

- Teaching, Learning, Assessment, and programme/module delivery within required time scales and to satisfactory levels of achievement
- Reaching satisfactory levels of student progression and education standards in module assessments benchmarked against assessment criteria, module learning outcomes, external examiners reports, examinations board statistics
- Maintaining of curriculum and syllabus relevance within modules and/or at programme level
- Teaching and learning and approaches towards assessment activities have been maintained and enhancement activity has occurred in an identifiable aspect of teaching, learning and/or assessment and/or delivery within the programme and/or the modules for which the member of staff is responsible at SBM or, where appropriate and as demonstrated at other institutions or professional bodies with which the member of staff is associated and has been specifically responsible for the development

b) The Individual Development of the Member of Staff

In addition to the KPI targets for learning, teaching, assessment and associated activity, education members of staff are being requested to confirm which three (minimum) KPI's have been met in the previous annual period of activity, and which are to be identified for activity in the next annual period.

The annual report template and process for the review of staff development activity is intended to be used in three ways:

1. To provide a report on activity completed during the past annual period for the individual and within a corporate framework of reference which was originally negotiated with the education member of staff.
2. To provide a basis for discussion with individual members of staff at the time of their Peer

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Teaching Observation.

3. To provide a basis for discussion with members of staff at the time of their Peer Teaching Observation.

2. Faculty Teaching and Support Teams

Education leadership across the School is provided by the Senior Programme Leader and the team of education programme leaders, supported by the Head of Quality, Registrar and Executive Management team. The staff are all part of the School in Malta. All teaching members of staff are required to utilise their professional and education experience in their teaching delivery. This ensures that curriculum content incorporates an enriched mixture of theoretical, applied, and experiential teaching references which are relevant to the content of the module, the requirements of the module specification, and the “real world” contexts of module content.

a) Programme Teams

In Malta, there is a regular structure for the support and delivery of each SBM programme. Programme teams are made up of the Senior Programme Leader, Programme Leaders, students, Module Leaders and Programme Administrative Support staff. Cross-programme support is provided by centralised Library and IT support facilities with a dedicated Librarian and IT support staff.

Programme teams are supported by the Senior Programme Leader, Head of Quality, the Education Registrar, the Director of Operations, and the Directors of Marketing and international office staff. Programme teams meet regularly and there are scheduled programme management committee meetings (PMC) which are required to take place at least once each semester (a minimum of at least three each year). Programme progression-interim/examinations boards meet on a scheduled timetable. All teaching staff on a programme are members of the programme management committee and the progression- interim/examinations board.

b) Programme Leadership

Programmes are overseen by programme leaders after the above takes place, which involves student participation. The programme leaders have quality assurance and education standards responsibility for their programme areas and for all modules within their programme. Programme leaders meet frequently to consider matters of common concern and the sharing of good practice. This ensures that communication within the team of programme leaders is regular and that any operational matters, or quality assurance or education standards matters, may be identified, and responded to where required. All programme leaders form part of the extended Senior Management Team, which is comprised of the Executive Management Team, programme leaders, Senior Programme Leader, Head of Quality, Education Registrar. Additional members of staff, and/or external advisors, are invited to attend meetings of the Senior Management Team to provide internal advice or external consultancy advice and comment.

The Senior Management Team meets regularly with the members of the Executive Management Team. Programme leaders attend and are fully represented at the Education Board, and the Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings. Moreover, programme leaders are required to participate in all management functions at SBM. Programme Leaders work closely with the Director

of Operations, the Director of Marketing, Head of Quality; Registrar; and the Senior Programme Leader; examinations office staff; student services staff; marketing staff; programme administrators, and other staff to ensure that their programme is effectively and efficiently managed, and all quality assurance, programme, and student requirements are met.

c) Module Leadership

Module leaders are appointed for modules within programmes. These arrangements ensure that operational matters, as well as quality and standards matters are addressed at both a programme and module level. Module leaders are members of the programme team responsible for the delivery of the programme. They are responsible to the programme leader for the effective delivery of their module, and they participate in all management matters related to the delivery of the module. Module leaders attend programme boards and progression interim/examinations boards and programme team meetings. Module leaders are responsible for the quality and delivery of their module; for ensuring that module content is appropriate to the education level requirements for the module; that all assessment processes and procedures are carried out according to regulatory requirements: all other matters directly related to the delivery of their module(s)

Faculty Teaching Staff: In addition to full-time staff, faculty teams may be supplemented by full time teaching equivalent faculty (FTTE); proportional/fractional FTE teaching staff; contract staff that have a particular teaching specialism; teaching staff who provide specific support for the development of the research, taught Masters, or undergraduate level teaching; contract and proportional FTE teaching staff that are drawn from UK based lecturers and from an international pool.

Fractional staff are selected based on their specific areas of expertise and experience and may be recruited from the UK or from international sources. All members of teaching staff are required to maintain their personal Continuing Professional Development and scholarship activity.

3. International Student Recruitment

SBM recruits its students from over 120 different countries. This is part of a deliberate aim to create a truly multinational student body, rather than one which is dominated by one, or a small number of, nationalities. Many of these are themselves alumni. They are required to be fluent in their native language and in English, the minimum level of English required is IELTS 5.5 or equivalent. The Admissions team are responsible for the initial screening and interviewing of potential applicants.

This includes detailed checking of previous qualifications; benchmarking applications against both SBM and the Malta Regulations requirements; checking applicants' ability to meet regulations, entry and applications requirements, and financial commitment requirements, prior to formally receiving any offer of a place on a programme. The interviews are designed to confirm the applicant's suitability for entry to the programme to which they are seeking admission. Interviews include an evaluation of the applicant's education abilities and their professional experience and are designed to ensure that the candidate has the necessary ability and background to cope with the education demands of the programme. Interviews may be conducted on a face to face, or video link, or teleconference basis. These are then viewed in Malta in order to adhere to local rules and regulations. At the moment, no form of RPL is taken into account

The School has an identified process for the consideration of applications and their approval and progress to admission, entry and registration for a programme. All quality assurance matters related to recruitment, admissions, enrolment are benchmarked against the requirements of the Chapters of the OTHM UK ,any other relevant awarding bodies and Malta Quality Assurance Framework.

4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Integral to the development and future strategy of the School is the commitment to equal opportunities in all aspects of the work of the School. In achieving this aim the School seeks to ensure through formal policies and procedures, and in its operating practices, that no present or future student or programme participant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than any other on the grounds of any condition or status not directly affecting their study or work. In support of these objectives, SBM aims to provide an enabling and supportive working and learning environment, which encourages all students, participants, and employees to fully participate in all its educational opportunities and activities. Further details may be found in Appendix 2.

5. Governance and Business Management

a) The Council in the UK

The Council has responsibility for advising the Chief Executive in Malta on:

- Strategic direction and development
- Planning priorities and contexts
- The evaluation of risk, and ensuring that measures are in place to mitigate risk
- Annual strategy development
- The structure and content of the education portfolio

The organisation's discharging of its education and legal obligations Council receives and comments on minutes from the Education Board and may from time to time refer particular matters to Education Board or to the Executive Management Team for further discussion, action and report.

The membership of the Council includes individuals with broad senior-level experience in the fields of Finance; Further and Higher Education; politics; and the Public.

b) Student feedback

All full-time students will be allocated a personal tutor. Full-time students will be taught for 15-20 hours per week. Presently, we are not taking on board part-time students. Every personal tutor is requested to review learners' progress regularly against an Individual Learning Plan, which has details of qualifications on entry and personal targets for achievements.

Formal complaints by students will be made through the complaints/suggestion process as outlined in the Student Handbook.

All students will have the opportunity to complete student satisfaction surveys anonymously at key times during their programme usually after enrolment and induction and then later in the year.

Student representatives will be elected to both Education Board and the Corporation. Elections will be held yearly. Students will volunteer for the position and will be elected by their peers.

SBM will encourage the integration of students with disabilities into the School. Students with learning difficulties will be offered customised programmes of study to assist them where necessary, in line with the Equal Opportunities Policy of the School.

c) Powers Delegated to Education Board

The Education Board has a delegated education responsibility and authority from the Council and is charged with the effective and efficient development and operational implementation of the education strategies agreed by the Council. The Education Board is also required to operate within the overarching strategic plans set by the Executive Management team

The Education Board reports to the Council and is generally responsible for:

- Approving the content of the SBM Education and Quality Framework and all related SBM documentation.
- Approving the education strategies and policies contained in the SBM Quality Framework, as well as any major changes in its structure and content. The Education Board is the primary education authority of SBM and responsible for the development of education activities. The Education Board includes a mix of education and administrative staff as well as student representative(s) and/or co-opted members and normally meets 2-3 times within each calendar cycle. They will be part of the Programme Board, as mentioned above.

The majority of SBM staff (90%) employed will be from Malta, where practically possible, as our purpose is to create employment opportunities for locals. These will include the Centre Manager, Deputy Dean, Business Studies lecturers and Health & Social Care lecturers, Finance Officer, Front Desk & Administration and Support Staff.

d) Other Business Management Teams

There are a number of additional Business Management teams in the UK which contribute to the effective business and administrative management and delivery of the portfolio of activities in Malta. As the School is now established, we are able to employ relevant staff locally.

e) Student Services

Student services are coordinated by a nominated manager of student services and provides overall support for students prior to and at the point of entry to the School. The offer of a place is matched to discussion with the successful applicant on accommodation arrangements found in Malta, financial planning arrangements related to the successful undertaking and completion of the programme; social contacts and welfare arrangements including guidance on medical registration travel to study and other social activities. Student services staff are fully involved in student induction.

f) Additional Staff Team Meetings

A number of other staff groups meet and deal with operational matters on a regular basis. All meetings are minuted accordingly. There are regular meetings of the marketing and operational lead staff teams conducted by the Director of marketing or the Director of Operations. These team meetings cover as appropriate: - administration; business calendar; CAS; assessments and examinations; database and IT; hospitality; education and teaching; reception/registry/front of house; social and events; general student matters; student welfare; teaching timetables; and travel matters.

The CEO and Senior Management Team hold quarterly meetings with all staff present to maintain up to date communication on matters of overall strategic interest to the School.

g) Staff Communication

In addition to the above mechanisms there is extensive use of informal communications through electronic means which may lead to meetings being arranged which focus on specific matters requiring discussion.

6. Financial Planning, Budgets and Risk Management

Financial plans, income targets, margins, and overall expenditure and budgetary allocations are identified as a part of the annual planning cycle and are regularly monitored and reviewed throughout each annual period. The review of financial performance against target is undertaken on a monthly, quarterly and/or by exception basis, if required.

7. Education Management Education Board and its Sub-committees

The Education Board has overall strategic oversight and responsibility for SBM quality assurance; education standards; learning, teaching and assessment (subject to collaborating /OTHM and other awarding bodies, regulations, operations, and implementation requirements as appropriate for particular programmes); Continuing Professional Development; enhancement development; and associated scholarship and research activities within the School.

Moreover, the Board has the authority for reporting on a regular basis on the annual and periodic monitoring of programmes and the provision to collaborating with OTHM institutions and any other awarding bodies. The Education Board provides reports to the SBM Council. The Education Board discusses and formally approves reports required by collaborating universities or OTHM's as a part of their governance, quality assurance and education standards procedures and requirements.

Responsibility for the detailed and operational development of specific aspects of quality assurance; education standards; enhancement; and learning, teaching and assessment, resides with the Board or with subcommittees or groups which the Board identifies for these purposes.

The Education Board both directly or by virtue of its powers, establishes such committees or standing panels as it considers necessary to enable it to carry out its responsibilities and together

with these sub- committees and panels fulfils the responsibilities indicated below:

Overall responsibility for internal quality assurance and education standards, and learning teaching and assessment, across all education programmes delivered by SBM lies with the Education Board. These areas of responsibility are subject, where appropriate, to the Education Regulations of collaborating universities and OTHM's and the specific areas which are delegated to SBM by collaborative institutions and includes:

a) Quality Assurance:

Responsibility for the internal SBM overview of quality assurance, and devising and implementing appropriate procedures and processes for monitoring their effective and consistent implementation, including:

- Submissions to and internal management of all documentation and internal arrangements for collaborating universities/awarding bodies/OTHM's validation/approval of their education programmes and subsequent delivery at SBM
- Periodic review of education programmes; campus delivery; and SBM portfolio provision (as appropriate/required by a respective internal quality assessor which can be the dean of the school)
- Annual review of education programmes; campus delivery; and SBM portfolio provision (as appropriate/required by a respective education)
- Education regulations – SBM regulations and those of collaborating bodies
- Education complaints (Through the procedures agreed with the respective head of the programme)
- Education Appeals - please see below for the template

b) SBM Education Appeal Form

Important notes:

Students have the right to appeal if their application for enrollment in a course is rejected. You may only appeal on your own behalf, by sending the appeal by email to info@sbm.edu.mt. An appeal submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless accompanied by written authorisation from you.

[Note: In the case of refusal to allow a student permission to take an examination on the grounds of unsatisfactory work and attendance, the appeal must be submitted within **10** working days of notification of the decision to allow sufficient time for the appeal to be considered.]

1 **About You**

Full Name:	
ID Number:	
Course:	
Year of Study:	
Address for correspondence:	
Tel no:	Mobile no:
E-mail:	

2 **About Your Appeal**

Please state the decision against which you are appealing (e.g. exclusion, resubmission of coursework, grades awarded etc):

Please state the date on which you were notified of the decision against which you are appealing and include a copy of the notification with this form (please note that you cannot appeal against provisional results):

Please mark the box(es) below to indicate on what grounds you are appealing: Note that an appeal which questions the education or professional judgement of those charged with the responsibility for assessing a student's education performance or professional competence will not be permitted. This means that you may not challenge marks or grades awarded unless you believe that they may have been affected by factors under (a) – (d) below.	
a) There exists or existed circumstances affecting the student's performance of which, for a credible and compelling reason, the Examination Board or equivalent body may not have been made aware when the decision was taken, and which might have had a material effect on the decision.	
b) There has been a material administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process or in putting into effect the regulations for the programme of study of such a nature as to cause significant doubt as to whether the decision might have been different if the error or irregularity had not occurred.	
c) There is evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners.	
d) The supervision or training in respect of research for a dissertation or thesis or equivalent work was unsatisfactory to the point that your performance was seriously affected. Note: if students wish to appeal on such grounds but the supervisory concerns arose significantly before the assessment result against which they are appealing, and without it having been raised in writing with the School before the appeal, the student must provide credible and compelling reasons for only raising these concerns at appeal	
Please give details of your appeal here along with your desired outcome (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	

Note: if you are appealing on ground (a) above, you MUST give credible and compelling reasons with supporting documentation explaining why this information was not made available prior to the decision being made

d) Please indicate what supporting documentation you are submitting that you wish to be considered in the appeal (e.g. medical certificate, emails and other correspondence etc) and include it with this form. Evidence should normally be contemporaneous, and capable of verification. All evidence should be written in English, or, if not, certifiably translated.

Declaration:

I declare that the information given in this form is true and that I have consulted the Procedure before completing the form.

Signed:

Date:

(An electronic signature is acceptable)

8. Exams

The office is responsible for securely receiving signed-off and approved examinations papers; for all security related to examinations papers and similar materials; for the effective organisation and carrying out of examinations procedures; for invigilation arrangements; for all matters related to the organisation of examination-based assessments on campus: distribution of scripts to markers; distribution of scripts to external examiners and all similar activity. The examinations office coordinates in the UK pre-examinations Boards, undertakes arrangements for final examinations boards and progression-interim boards; maintains the electronic and paper-based marking sheets, archives past papers and examinations scripts. The Examinations office staff work closely with Malta SBM and other collaborating bodies in ensuring that all/OTHM regulations and requirements are complied with at all stages in the examinations/assessments processes.

Standard 8 requires that Archives must give adequate assurance that their contents will be available for 40 years in Malta. Only students' names, surnames, and education records for the purpose of issuing education transcripts or certificates shall be kept for a period of 40 years. Data of Requirements b to e of the said standard 8 shall be kept in an anonymised manner following the retention period which is of 4 years from the date of graduation. This is in line with GDPR.

9. Student Induction

Registration takes place prior to the commencement of teaching in the semester. Students are given a welcome induction pack which includes the following, once registered as a student:

- The SBM generic handbook
- The respective programme handbook
- Timetable for semester
- Information about the school and its facilities
- General school rules and regulations
- Outline of requirements for submission of work for assessment, education referencing and plagiarism
- Fee details and payment plan for the programme
- Terms and Conditions of entry

Students attend a formal induction, during which they are introduced to School staff including an outline of their roles and job functions. This provides an outline of contacts within the School and identifies contacts that students may be required to meet if a need arises in a specific area.

On commencement of classes, students are given access to programme materials with details of:

- Programme syllabus and module specifications
- Lecture sequences
- Calendar of assessment dates

- Module requirements
- Bibliographies
- Sample assessments examples
- Details of module lecturer(s)

Students are also provided with information from the Examinations office staff on assessment requirements, minimum assessment requirements, procedures for education appeal and non-education complaints and contact persons. A student services and welfare member of staff provides a range of support, advice and guidance services tailored to the needs of international students.

The structure of the staged approach to learning ensures that the learning workload is evenly distributed through all programmes. This pedagogic ethos supports the development of a professional attitude to learning which enhances skills required within future careers.

The learning approach is designed to enhance necessary discipline expertise and transferable learning skills. Students also have supervisors with whom they can discuss education issues and problems they may be facing.

10.Student-Centred Learning

SBM teaching philosophy promotes a culture of student-centred learning culture which focuses on student needs and learning requirements which are fostered within:

- A learning environment which nurtures personal education growth
- Administrative procedures that help students to obtain a high-quality education
- Personal experience that leads to feeling "connected" to the School
- Learning opportunities that develop students as responsible citizens and skilled professionals

Teaching and delivery at the School is through a blend of lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshop/discussion sessions and other appropriate teaching modes which utilise a variety of learning and assessment methods. This includes the consideration of a variety of types and sources of case studies; individual and/or team presentation; joint class discussions; tutorial-support surgeries; and other appropriate learning methods. A summary of approaches is indicated below.

Students are expected to undertake: -

- Directed learning
- Self-managed independent learning

These strategies are designed to encourage the development of the student and to enable each student to have confidence in their own abilities while developing an enquiring mind.

11. Monitoring of Student Education Performance

Student education performance is monitored through each module and at the end of each module. Assessment outcomes are checked by the Examinations office and by the module and programme leader at the end of each module. These are reviewed with the student and in the event of unsatisfactory performance guidance is given by the programme leader or a nominated tutor on ways in which education performance may be improved. Student performance is also monitored on a semester basis; at the end of each examination date (which may be at the end of a semester); at the end of a cohort assessment year; and at other times where this involves resubmission or resit assessment reviewed by 2 assessors to ensure fairness in assessment.

In the event of unsatisfactory performance or the need for ameliorative action to take place the student is counselled by the Programme Leader, module tutor or nominated education member of staff as appropriate.

12. Attendance

Students are required to attend all lectures, seminars, and workshops for the modules for which they are registered. There are likely to be instances when absence due to illness or other reasons may arise. All absence is required to be covered by a medical or similar certificate and the school administration and registry is required to be informed.

In the case of absence due to illness, or to extenuating exceptional circumstances, e.g., bereavement, the school education and administrative management will be sympathetic, and staff will provide all possible guidance to enable students to maintain progress on their programme of study.

There is a specified attendance policy in place within SBM which is required to be complied with, and all students' attendance records are monitored on a daily basis. If attendance levels fall below the requirements set by the School it is the duty of the School to notify the relevant authorities. Attendance is monitored electronically, and the student record updated automatically in real time. Failure to attend will result in a requirement for the student to attend an interview with the Course Leader to discuss his/her education progress and/or may require the school to inform the local authorities should this be required by law. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that his/her attendance is noted at each lecture/seminar/workshop. If there are medical reasons for any absence, medical evidence (e.g., certificate from the GP or hospital) must be presented to the Course Leader, in Malta is the Deputy Dean. If the Education Board or the school management is of the opinion that the student's attendance has been consistently below the required levels for legal reasons or the School requirements, then it is entitled to terminate the registration of the student.

13. Education Progress

Students are required to take responsibility for their own education development. The expectation of the School is that students will undertake directed work and further study in their own time. Work undertaken throughout the programme will vary in accordance with the assignment load and the scheduling of assessments.

The assessment schedule is published in advance, so students will know what is expected and when. However, the programme leader and the structure of the staged approach to learning will ensure that the workload is evenly distributed. By utilising this ethos throughout the programme, students will be developing a professional attitude, which will be necessary during their future career. The discipline will also support the need for students to understand the nature of continuing professional development. Education staff monitor individual education progress through performance in seminars, tutorials, practical workshops, case studies and the guided preparation of major project work. Performance in formative and summative assessments provides further material for monitoring student progression.

Students have direct access to course administrators who can facilitate education or pastoral support, including referral to teaching assistants, education staff, or English language support. There is a student welfare officer and a student services manager who provide oversight of general pastoral care and student support requirements.

14. Student Welfare

Welfare support is available for all students. The nominated welfare officer has primary responsibility for welfare activities particularly for student social events, sporting activities and similar activities. Students may also be taken on visits/trips, to introduce them to a variety of cultural activities and to enable them to broaden their perspectives of life and business in Malta. Student activities are divided into sporting, cultural and recreational activities and there is an ongoing programme.

a) Student Accommodation

SBM undertakes to arrange student accommodation for its students in Malta where this is required. Student accommodation is handled by vetted and approved independent agency(s) and detailed care is taken to meet the requirements of all students. All accommodation is inspected and regularly monitored to ensure that the highest standards are maintained. Students are provided with choices of accommodation.

b) Student Feedback

Students will fill out feedback forms as mentioned earlier, and also, there will be 2 student representatives elected from each cohort of courses.

c) Career Development Support

Career development support takes place within the education syllabus and delivery of programmes and is particularly related to the education choices made by students in their planning of their eventual career and professional development direction. Students receive advice on continuing education study from Teaching Staff and Programme Leaders who are able to comment on further study.

Additional career advice is provided through guest lecturers, seminar discussions and similar events.

15. Teaching Staff

Teaching staff, through a public call, are selected on the basis of a strong teaching background, individual experience in respective professional and career areas, experience of delivery to international students, and the ability to teach at the appropriate level for the respective programme.

Teaching staff have broad research and scholarship records in consultancy, brand management, marketing, international business areas, finance, and scholarship and research.

Guest lecturers and speakers can be invited to contribute to seminars, workshops on programmes to ensure that an appropriate balance between theory and external practice is maintained.

Expertise from across the School is utilised to enhance the student learning experience. Guest lecturers can contribute their specialist knowledge on marketing, financial management, business ethics and project management to aid the development of student knowledge and skills.

16. Learning Environment and Learning Resources

All Learning Resources are provided and maintained at the highest level of specification and substantial investment has been maintained to ensure that the delivery of the programmes and the student experience of the provision is of the highest quality.

a) The Learning Environment

The learning environment is designed to encourage the attainment of high education standards by students and the development of career aspirations which are matched to the achievement of professional standards and personal career goals. The learning environment therefore is focused on:

- Providing an education and educational environment in which the pursuit of excellence and best practice in all learning and teaching; and in all programmes, is of primary importance
- Providing a learning experience which encourages and supports each student in their pursuit an achievement of their individual potential in their education studies,
- Providing a learning environment which supports students in identifying their career opportunities and enhances the development of relevant skills, career capability and professional capacity
- Ensuring that all education programmes are designed to provide a clear and detailed foundation of knowledge and experience in the principles and subject areas which make up the discipline and that these meet the demands of the contemporary world including facilitating and providing students with the skills required for successful entry to the employment market.

b) Virtual Platforms

In the delivery of a high-quality learning experience to its students, SBM makes substantial use of the Student Portal Learning Platforms, and it can operate fully online, if necessary. A fundamental part of a learning environment in which traditional lecture, seminar, and tutorial-based learning is supported through the use of on-line provision of lecture notes, interactive discussion, and virtual support packages of learning materials.

The Student Portal platform is used as a learning vehicle for all programmes. This is facilitated through the availability of Wi-Fi across the campus and the extensive provision of computer lab and open access computing stations at specific campus locations.

The Information Security Policy (Appendix 4) underpins the provision of IT support and student services of the school.

c) School campus

Resources will be available of the courses offered. These comprise books physically found in the Malta campus and reader databases.

17. Marketing Information

Website content – www.sbm.edu.mt

Website content is produced by a dedicated web designer/web developer. Where updating of the website is required, this is subject to a series of checks involving the Programme Leader for education content; the Head of Student Services for social and associated content; the Director of Marketing for oversight and compliance. Where updating is required, these are undertaken promptly. All updates are proof-read for accuracy. The team leaders undertake regular and scheduled periodic monitoring and updating of the website contents.

18. Student Records

SBM registry staff and examinations office staff are responsible to the collaborating universities/OTHM's, for the accuracy of all communications to students which are related to admission, registration, and progression of students from entering the programme to the completion of their programme and the conferment of the award to the student. Universities reserve the right to issue CAS information where required. Assessment details are entered into secure spreadsheets which in the first instance are collated by the Examinations office staff working, where required.

Assessment records are checked by both SBM and OTHM staff prior to their use at final examinations boards. (Subject to agreements with the respective students) Records are kept in both electronic and physical format where required for security and/or format purposes. Staff in the SBM registry, marketing, and the Examinations office manage the internal SBM student records and ensure that the following are securely held:

- Application and admission information
- Visa and sponsorship information
- Registration Information
- Attendance records
- Education Progression Information
- Records of Marks and Assessments and Examinations Results
- Records of Grades awarded, the conferment of exit awards, Final Education Awards made
- Disciplinary records
- Education Appeals records and Student Complaint records
- Student results, and related information

SBM has its own dedicated databases supported by a development team, which ensures that the records and registry systems are fit for purpose, and adapt to changes in programmes, customer service needs and the regulatory environment. The Examinations office, which handles all examinations, is located in a secure and separate suite of office accommodation. There is a dedicated examinations office team which ensures the secure and effective handling of all

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assessment and examinations requirements within programmes delivered at SBM.

19.Version Control and Updating

Version controls for all documentation are in place and subject to authoring access control, editing control, and level of confidentiality control.

20.Documentation Responsibilities

Responsibility for authoring, editing, generating documentation is identified and confirmed and resides with the functional responsibilities and roles of specific individuals within the School.

21.Programme Documentation

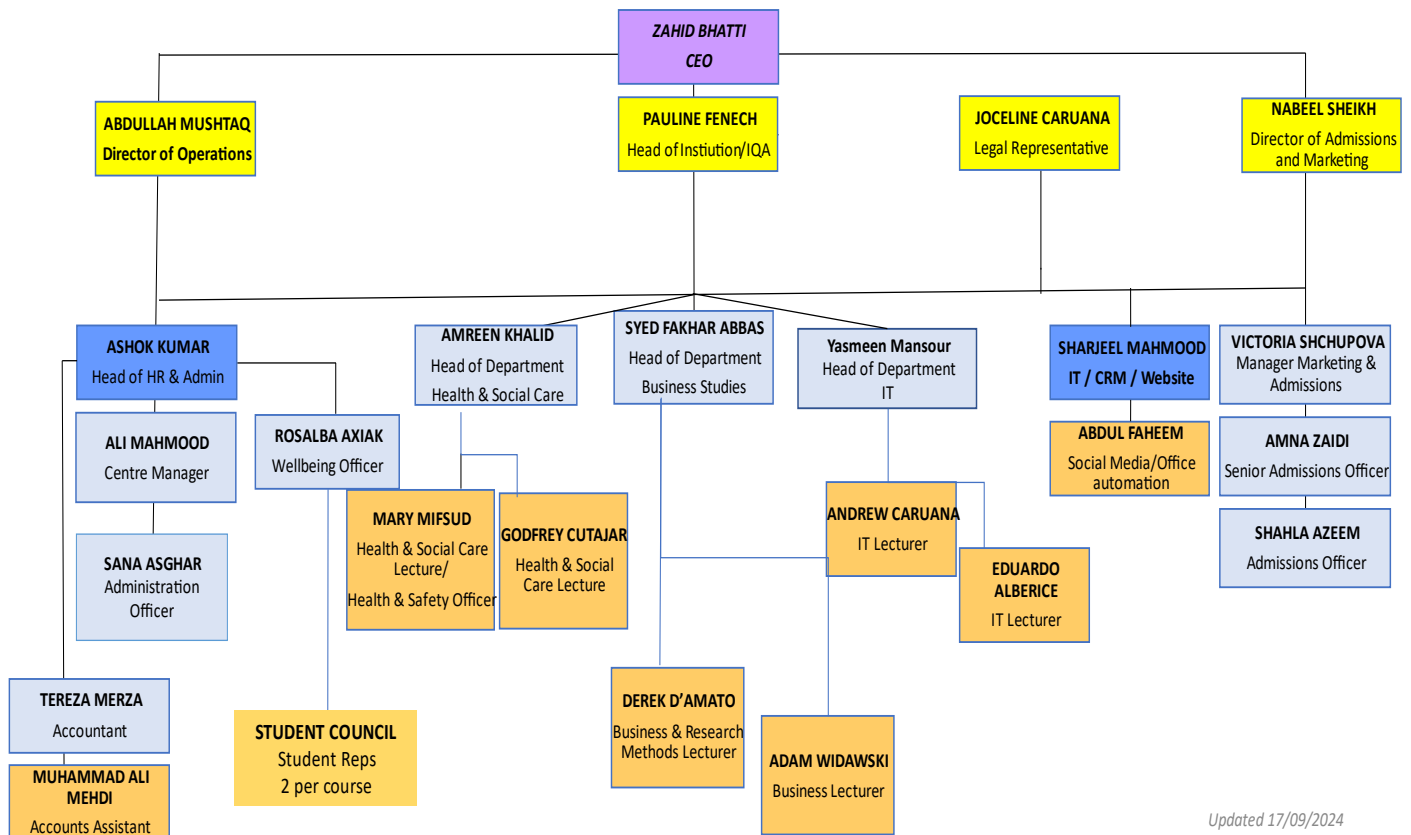
Programme definitive documentation, including programme specifications, programme and module descriptors, validation reports, and associated materials are held in specific sections of the quality library.

Following the validation of a programme, marketing team leaders consult with the Senor Programme Leader, Programme Leader, and the Head of Quality/Registrar (as required) to identify promotional and marketing texts which are approved for use in the marketing, promotion, and advertising of the programme.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: SBM Organogram

SBM: Organisational Chart



Updated 17/09/2024

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Appendix 2: Diversity and Equal Opportunities

General Principles

SBM is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity for all students. In the provision of equal opportunities, SBM realises and accepts its responsibilities under the law with regard to unfair discrimination and is committed to fostering a discrimination free environment within which individuals will feel free to disclose relevant circumstances. SBM staff have a legal responsibility and a personal duty of care beyond the letter of the law for the practical application of this policy. Discrimination on account of ethnicity, gender, language, age, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, physical or mental ability, thinking styles, experience or education will not be shown against any person in determining whether he or she is eligible to be admitted as the student, or during his or her studies. Every possible step will be taken to ensure equality of opportunity.

When choices are made regarding admission to programmes, staff associated with making admissions decisions will admit on merit, recognising the desirability of maximising the diversity of the intake to programmes. Applicants are admitted to academic programmes principally for reasons of academic ability, professional and personal experience, their individual motivation, and to promote diversity. Certain programmes are designed for particular categories of students and admissions to such programmes will reflect the programme philosophy. Issues relating to practical implications of a disability are dealt with subsequently.

SBM considers that diversity of backgrounds brings a range of qualities and experience to individual programmes and reflects the broader community in which staff and students operate. All publicity material relating to programmes will reflect the broad principles listed above.

Implementation Framework

Information that is used for academic monitoring or other purposes shall protect an individual's privacy and provide the basis for the provision of effective support for disabled students, or to ensure health and safety. At Induction, students will be informed by the programme leader about the systems of support available to them. Transparent procedures will be used during all selection interviews, tests, and assessments so that individuals are not disadvantaged. Selection criteria will be kept under review to ensure that individuals are treated only based on the programme requirements as appropriate and on their relevant academic, professional, and personal capabilities.

Work tasks, patterns and facilities will be arranged wherever possible, within the constraints of the business and its operations, to support those individuals with particular identified needs. Flexible approaches to enabling alternative means of participation (e.g., the online learning platform) where physical access is impossible or unreasonably difficult will be adopted). Staff development relating to diversity awareness/equality will be provided for all staff. Appropriate staff will receive information about any particular needs of students in a clear and timely way. Complaints' students will have the means of reporting breaches of this policy, where they believe them to exist, without embarrassment or fear of reprisal.

Definitions

Direct discrimination is the less favourable treatment of an individual on the grounds of:

- Gender, sexual orientation, or marital status
- Nationality or ethnic origin
- Discrimination against Religion or Belief (or lack of it)
- Age

Indirect discrimination

is the imposition of a requirement or condition which is applied, or would be applied equally to persons covered by the legislation cited in the paragraph above but which:

- Is such that the proportion of persons of the same gender, marital status race or disability who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of persons not of that group who can comply with it cannot be shown to be justifiable irrespective of the gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, or belief (or lack of it), sexual orientation or disability of a person to whom it is applied.
- Is to the detriment of the individual concerned because he or she cannot comply with it.

Harassment

Harassment is behaviour that is unwelcome and undermines the dignity of the recipient. It may be based on someone's race, gender, convictions, age, or disability, or may involve bullying. It includes unwanted physical, verbal, and non-verbal conduct that results in the individual feeling vulnerable or compromised. It is the perception of the recipient that is important.

Examples include sexual or racial banter; the display of material with sexual or racial overtones (even if not directed at the complainant); sarcastic personal remarks about colleagues; and constant unfounded criticism of work performance.

Appendix 3: Data Retention Policy

Data Retention Policy

SCOPE

1. This Policy is aimed at regulating the retention, maintenance and disposal of documentation, both personal and other, within the different departments at the School of Business and Management in conformity with the principles of data protection legislation, and other legal provisions in Maltese Law.

BACKGROUND

2. The GDPR puts forward the principle that personal data and sensitive personal data should not be retained for periods that are longer than necessary. In this context, the School of Business and Management is putting forward a retention policy for all data and documentation that it collects and processes, with the purpose of ensuring compliance to the Regulation and to ensure that no resources are utilised in the processing and archiving of data which is no longer of relevance.

OBJECTIVES

3. This policy aims to achieve the following objectives:
 - a. Regulate the retention of and disposal of the various types of documentation whether held in manual or automated filing systems at the School of Business and Management (SBM), while adhering to the Data Protection principle that personal data should not be retained for a longer period than necessary;
 - b. Dispose of unnecessary documentation that is no longer relevant and is taking up useful storage space;
 - c. Promote the digitisation of documentation as may be reasonably possible in order to minimize the use of storage space required to store the required documentation, as well as to promote a sustainable use of paper and printing consumables.

ADMINISTRATION

4. Documentation is held and recorded by the Registry and Administration sections within the department. This Policy is therefore applicable to all such documentation. It will be the responsibility of the relevant departments of the School of Business and Management and its Data Controller to ensure that all provisions of this Policy are adhered to. In the case of any issues with personal data, the final decision rests with the School of Business and Management Data Protection Officer for endorsement.

DOCUMENTATION HELD WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

5. As part of its operating requirements the School of Business and Management, requests, keeps and maintains a wide range of documentation which may include personal data. The various types of documentation utilised by the School of Business and Management may be categorised as follows:

HR And Recruitment:

- a. Personal Data of all SBM employees
- b. Attendance and absence records
- c. Discipline related Records
- d. Financial records including payslips, tax and national insurance contributions
- e. Medical records

Marketing:

- a. Details of Agents and the signed agreement
- b. Personal Data of the contact person
- c. Details relating to the type of activities of each agency

Admissions:

- a. Students' personal details
- b. Students' next of kin contact
- c. Students' previous academic records
- d. Students' recruitment interview
- e. Students' fees and payment details

Academic Records:

- a. SOWs of each tutor
- b. Lesson observation records
- c. Assessment and Assignment records
- d. Attendance
- e. Students' certification
- f. Students' medical certificates;
- g. Other relevant details

SECURITY OF DOCUMENTATION

6. Documentation is maintained in an accessible but secure location with adequate access provided to officials who have the clearance level to access the relevant documentation. In the case of documents with sensitive personal data with higher clearance levels, access

control protocols are fully adhered to, to ensure that only those that have the required security clearance have access to such documentation.

7. In the case of personal data, the GDPR also stipulates that only those required to process personal data should have access to personal records.
8. Personnel who are found to be in breach of these security protocols, and thus in breach of the GDPR, will be subject to disciplinary action.

MANUAL VS ELECTRONIC RECORDS

9. In terms of retention periods, it needs to be pointed out that the same retention period will apply for both electronic and manual data.

RETENTION PERIOD

10. Retention of different categories of documents is governed by different requirements and different legislation and regulations. The following schedule outlines the retention requirements for the various categories of documentation within the different departments at the School of Business and Management.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
<u>HR and Recruitment</u>	
Personal Information	
Employee Personal File	1 year after end of contract
Application forms for enlistment, calls, positions etc	1 year after position has been filled
Application Forms for the filling of positions co-financed from EU Funds	1 year after position has been filled
Attendance and Absence Records	
Attendance Sheets	2 years (in 2024 the 2022 records are deleted)
Vacation Leave Application Forms	2 years
Yearly Leave balances	2 years
Disciplinary records	
Admonishments	1 year
Disciplinary Charges	1 year
Medical Records	
Sick Leave Certificates	1 year

Sick Leave Records	1 year after end of contract
Medical History	Within 1 year of end of contract
Medical Referrals	Within 1 year of end of contract
Financial Documentation	
Tax and National Insurance Records	Retention period will be for 10 years
Procurement Records	Retention period will be for 10 years
Accounting Records	Retention period will be for 10 years
Inventory Records	Retention period will be for 10 years
Yearly Financial Statements	Retention period will be for 10 years
Marketing	
Details of Agents and the signed agreement.	Retention period will be for 10 years
Personal Data of the contact person	Retention period will be for 10 years
Details relating to the type of activities of each agency	Retention period will be for 10 years
<u>Admission</u>	
Students' personal details	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Students' next of kin contact	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Students' previous academic records	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Students' recruitment interview	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Students' fees and payment details	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Academic Records	
SOWs of each tutor	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Lesson observation records	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Assessment and Assignment records	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Attendance	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Students' certification	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites
Students 'medical certificate	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA

	requisites
Other relevant details	Retention period will be for 10 years as per MFHEA requisites

CONCLUSION

This retention policy aims to achieve a good working balance between the retention of useful and meaningful information in line with the provisions of the relevant legislation and the disposal of data which is no longer required and is being archived unnecessarily. Data that needs to be destroyed after the noted timeframes will be disposed of in an efficient manner to ensure that such information will no longer be available within the different Departments at the School of Business and Management. Data Protection Controllers, Heads, and DPOs are aware of the noted retention periods and will instruct all relevant personnel to follow the indicated procedures accordingly.

Appendix 4: Additional Data Protection Requirements

Mandatory Staff Training

Objective

To ensure all staff members understand their responsibilities in safeguarding personal data and are aware of the School of Business and Management's data protection policies and procedures.

Implementation

Induction Training: All new staff members must undergo data protection training as part of their induction process.

Refresher Training: Periodic refresher training sessions will be conducted to keep staff updated on any changes to data protection policies and regulations.

Privacy Notice(s) for Data Subjects

Objective

To provide clear and transparent information to data subjects about how their personal data is collected, processed, and used by the School of Business and Management.

Implementation

Privacy Notices: SBM will create and maintain Privacy Notices that clearly outline the purposes, legal basis, and rights of data subjects regarding the processing of their personal data.

Dissemination: Privacy Notices will be made accessible to data subjects through various communication channels, including the SBM website, email communication, and physical notice boards.

Information Asset Register

Objective

To maintain an organized record of the personal data processed by the School of Business and Management.

Implementation

Creation: SBM will establish and maintain an Information Asset Register detailing the types of personal data processed, the purposes of processing, and the departments responsible.

Updates: The Information Asset Register will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in data processing activities.

Records Retention Schedule for SBM

Objective

To establish a specific Records Retention Schedule tailored to the records, retention periods, and departments of the School of Business and Management.

Implementation

Development: SBM will collaborate with relevant departments to create a Records Retention Schedule that aligns with SBM's unique record-keeping requirements.

Approval: The Records Retention Schedule will be approved by the appropriate stakeholders and periodically reviewed to ensure continued relevance and compliance.

Review and Compliance Assurance

Internal Audits

SBM will conduct regular internal audits to assess compliance with these additional data protection requirements.

Continuous Improvement

Based on audit findings and changes in data protection laws, SBM will continuously improve its data protection measures and update policies accordingly.

By implementing these additional data protection requirements, the School of Business and Management aims to uphold the highest standards of data protection, ensuring the privacy and rights of data subjects are prioritized and protected.

Appendix 5: Data Protection of CRM System Policy Enforcement Framework

1. Technical Controls:

1.1 Access Controls:

Role-based access controls are implemented to ensure that only authorized personnel have access to the CRM system. Access permissions are regularly reviewed and updated in accordance with staff roles and responsibilities.

1.2 Encryption:

All data within the CRM system, both in transit and at rest, is encrypted to safeguard against unauthorized access and protect sensitive information.

1.3 Audit Trails:

Robust audit trails are maintained to log and monitor user activities within the CRM system. This ensures accountability, traceability, and early detection of any suspicious or unauthorized activities.

1.4 Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):

MFA is enforced to add an additional layer of security, requiring users to authenticate their identity through multiple verification methods before gaining access to the CRM system.

2. Policy Controls:

2.1 Data Classification and Handling:

Clear data classification policies are in place to categorize data based on its sensitivity. This classification determines the level of access, storage, and protection measures applied to each type of data within the CRM system.

2.2 User Training and Awareness:

Regular staff training sessions are conducted to ensure that all users are aware of data protection policies and best practices. This includes training on the appropriate use of CRM data and the consequences of non-compliance.

2.3 Incident Response Plan:

An incident response plan is established, outlining the procedures to be followed in the event of a security incident or data breach within the CRM system. This plan includes steps for containment, eradication, and recovery.

3. Process Controls:

3.1 Change Management:

A formalized change management process is in place to assess and implement any changes or

updates to the CRM system. This includes testing procedures to ensure that changes do not compromise data security.

3.2 Regular Audits and Assessments:

Periodic internal and external audits are conducted to assess the effectiveness of data protection controls within the CRM system. Vulnerability assessments and penetration testing are also performed to identify and address potential security risks.

3.3 Policy Review and Update:

The data protection policy for the CRM system is subject to regular reviews to align with evolving technology, compliance requirements, and organizational changes. Updates are made to the policy as needed.

4. Continuous Improvement:

4.1 Feedback Mechanism:

A feedback mechanism is established to encourage users to report any concerns or potential policy violations. This helps in continuous improvement and the refinement of controls.

4.2 Training Program Evaluation:

The effectiveness of the staff training program is regularly evaluated, and adjustments are made to address emerging data protection challenges and enhance user awareness.

By implementing a comprehensive framework of technical, policy, and process controls, the School of Business and Management ensures the consistent enforcement of the Data Protection of CRM System Policy.

Appendix 6: Data Protection and IT Security Policy

Introduction

The School of Business and Management is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of all data, while ensuring compliance with relevant data protection laws and best practices. This policy outlines the procedures for the creation, management, and deletion of staff accounts, enforces restrictions on remote work, and establishes protocols for handling data breaches.

Staff Accounts Creation, Management, and Deletion

Creation of Staff Accounts

New staff accounts will be created by the IT department upon request from the HR department. The request should include the necessary information for account setup, such as the employee's name, position, and department. Access permissions will be granted based on the principle of least privilege.

Management of Staff Accounts

Ongoing management of staff accounts will be the responsibility of the IT department. This includes updates to access permissions based on changes in job roles, promotions, or other relevant factors. Requests for modifications should be submitted through the appropriate channels and will be processed in a timely manner.

Deletion of Staff Accounts

Staff accounts will be promptly deactivated upon termination of employment or any other circumstance that requires account removal. The HR department is responsible for notifying the IT department of employee departures or changes in job roles that necessitate account deletion.

Remote Work Policy and Technical Controls

Remote Work Restrictions

For security reasons, staff members are not permitted to work from home unless explicit authorization is granted by the IT department and is in compliance with the organization's remote work policy. Remote work requests must be submitted in advance and are subject to review and approval.

Technical Controls

To enforce the remote work policy, technical controls will be implemented. This includes secure VPN connections, multi-factor authentication, and monitoring tools to ensure compliance. Any unauthorized attempts to access the network remotely will be flagged and addressed immediately.

Data Breach Handling Policy

Definition of Data Breach

A data breach is defined as the unauthorized access, acquisition, disclosure, or destruction of sensitive information that compromises the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of such data.

Reporting Procedure

In the event of a suspected or confirmed data breach, staff members are required to report the incident immediately to the IT department. The IT department will then conduct an investigation and take necessary actions to mitigate the impact.

Notification Protocol

If the breach involves personal data and is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, affected parties will be promptly notified as required by applicable data protection laws.

Review and Update

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated by the IT department to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with evolving data protection and IT security standards.

By adhering to this policy, the School of Business and Management aims to create a secure and compliant digital environment for its staff and stakeholders.

Appendix 7: Password and Access Control Security Measures

1. Authentication into Microsoft 365:

1.1 User Identification:

Students and staff authenticate into Microsoft 365 using unique usernames that are assigned based on their roles and affiliations with the School of Business and Management (SBM).

1.2 Password Complexity:

Strong password policies are enforced, requiring users to create complex passwords that include a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters.

1.3 Password Expiry and Renewal:

Passwords have a predefined expiration period, and users are prompted to change their passwords regularly to enhance security.

1.4 Account Lockout Policies:

Account lockout policies are in place to mitigate the risk of unauthorized access due to multiple unsuccessful login attempts. After a specified number of failed attempts, the account is temporarily locked.

2. Azure Active Directory (Azure AD) and Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):

2.1 Azure AD Integration:

SBM utilizes Azure Active Directory (Azure AD) as the identity and access management service for Microsoft 365 accounts. This ensures centralized user identity management and enhances security.

2.2 Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is implemented to add an extra layer of security during the login process. Users are required to authenticate their identity through a secondary method, such as a mobile app, phone call, or text message.

2.3 Conditional Access Policies:

Conditional Access policies are configured in Azure AD to define specific conditions under which access is granted. This includes factors such as user location, device compliance, and the strength of authentication methods used.

3. Desktop PC Authentication:

3.1 Windows Authentication:

Desktop PCs within SBM are integrated with Azure AD for Windows authentication. Users log in using their Microsoft 365 credentials, providing a seamless and secure login experience.

3.2 Single Sign-On (SSO):

Single Sign-On is implemented to allow users to access multiple applications, including desktop PCs, after signing in once with their Microsoft 365 credentials.

3.3 Group Policy Controls:

Group Policy controls are configured to enforce security settings on desktop PCs, including password complexity requirements, screen lock policies, and other access controls.

4. Security Awareness Training:

4.1 User Education:

Students and staff receive regular security awareness training to educate them on the importance of strong passwords, secure authentication practices, and the significance of MFA.

4.2 Phishing Awareness:

Specialized training on recognizing and avoiding phishing attempts is provided to prevent unauthorized access due to social engineering attacks.

5. Continuous Monitoring and Improvement:

5.1 Security Audits:

Regular security audits and monitoring activities are conducted to identify and address any potential vulnerabilities or unauthorized access attempts.

5.2 Policy Review and Update:

Access control policies are subject to periodic reviews to align with industry best practices, technological advancements, and evolving security threats.

By implementing these comprehensive security measures, SBM aims to ensure robust protection for both student and staff accounts, enhancing the overall security posture of its information systems.

Appendix 8: Retention of Data Query

1. Backup Duration:

1.1 Backup Frequency:

The School of Business and Management (SBM) conducts daily backups of the Synopsis CRM database to ensure the integrity and availability of critical data.

1.2 Backup Storage Duration:

SBM maintains a retention period of 30 days for backup data. This means that backup copies are stored for a duration of one month, allowing for data recovery in case of system failures or unforeseen incidents.

2. Backup Procedures for Synopsis CRM:

2.1 Cloud Server Backup:

Synopsis CRM data is backed up daily on a cloud server, ensuring redundancy and accessibility from diverse locations.

2.2 Automated Offsite Backup:

The cloud server is configured to automatically take an offsite backup, providing an additional layer of security by storing a copy of the data at a remote location. This safeguards against potential on premises issues that could impact the primary data center.

3. Data Retention Queries:

3.1 Why 30 Days Retention?

The 30-day retention period aligns with the business needs of SBM, offering a balance between data recovery capability and storage efficiency. This duration allows for the retrieval of historical data within a reasonable timeframe, while also managing storage resources effectively.

CRM / Website Daily Backups:

We regularly back up CRM and Website on our cloud system on a daily basis which ensures that we have a recent and retrievable copy of our data in case of data loss or system failures. This minimizes the impact of potential disruptions to our operations.

Backup Storage at 2 Different Locations:

Storing backups at two different locations enhances data resilience. In the event of a disaster, having backups in separate geographical locations ensures that our data remains accessible and recoverable.

Retention for 30 Days:

Retaining backups for 30 days provides a reasonable window for recovering from various types of data loss scenarios. This timeframe allows us to revert to a known and stable state in case of accidental deletions, data corruption, or other issues.

Limited Authorized Access to the Server:

Access to the server, which houses our cloud-based management software, is restricted to only two authorized individuals. This limitation minimizes the potential attack surface and reduces the risk of unauthorized access. These authorized individuals have unique credentials and undergo authentication processes to ensure that only trusted personnel can access and make changes to the server.

3.2 Data Integrity and Compliance:

The backup policy is designed to maintain the integrity of data and comply with relevant data protection regulations. Retaining data for 30 days ensures that SBM can recover information in case of accidental deletions, system failures, or data corruption.

4. Security Measures:

4.1 Encryption:

All backup data, including Synopsis CRM data, is encrypted during transit and storage to enhance security and protect against unauthorized access.

4.2 Access Controls:

Access controls are implemented to restrict unauthorized personnel from tampering with or accessing backup data. Only authorized personnel with specific permissions can manage and restore backups.

Appendix 9: OTHM Quality Assurance Policy

OTHM QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

1.0 Introduction

The key role of OTHM is to secure standards for those qualifications we certificate. As part of our commitment to quality assuring standards we aim to provide guidance and support to help Centres and their learners to achieve learning and development goals. We also ensure that any regulatory requirements are met, and in turn we support Centres to meet those requirements.

We review all our policies annually or in response to regulatory changes to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

2.0 Scope of policy

This policy is aimed at all OTHM stakeholders including learners, Centres, and other parties involved in any aspect of OTHM qualifications and endorsed learning provision.

3.0 Policy statement

OTHM are committed to ensure that management and assessment of our qualifications is valid and reliable and that learners who have shown that they can meet the standards of a qualification receive certification. Our quality assurance procedures must also ensure consistency of standards over time for all qualifications.

4.0 Quality assurance principles

OTHM quality assurance system is based on the following principles:

- The quality assurance system should be understandable to stakeholders, effectively administered and cost effective to operate
- Qualifications should be accessible to all learners who have the potential to achieve them
- The criteria, which define the performance required of learners for them to achieve qualifications, should be appropriate to the purpose, explicit and in the public domain
- Each criterion should be unique and necessary, and should comply with the specifications for the qualification
- Assessment should be valid, reliable and practicable, and assessment results should be in line with the criteria for the qualification
- Qualifications should be only offered in Centres that have the resources and expertise to assess learners against the qualification's criteria
- Staff in Centres should be provided with effective support in assessing and internal quality assuring learner work for certification
- Responsibility for quality assurance should be shared with Centres.

5.0 Quality assurance components

To ensure that the qualifications OTHM offers are designed, delivered and assessed to acceptable national standards, several quality assurance elements are set out, which are based on the quality assurance principles. These elements underpin all OTHM qualifications and underpin the mechanisms through which national standards are maintained.

Element	The Criteria Cover
Recognition as an OTHM Centre	The management procedures which underpin the implementation and assessment of OTHM qualifications in Centres.
Approval to offer specific OTHM qualifications	Resources required of Centres for the implementation and assessment of specific OTHM qualifications.
Validation of OTHM qualifications	Ensuring that OTHM qualifications are fit for purpose
Internal verification of internal assessment	The process by which Centres ensure that all internal assessments are valid and consistent with approval from OTHM prior to use and through the use of standardisation activities.

Each element covers an area of assessment or quality assurance and is divided into requirement or criteria. The criteria set out the corresponding responsibilities of OTHM and its Centres.

6.0 Internal Quality Assurance

OTHM recognise the crucial importance of establishing and retaining standardisation of assessment requirements across subjects and levels.

Internal quality assurance at Centres must cover assessment decisions made by

- all assessors
- assessment decisions to meet the criteria of the specifications
- learner work that reflects the level of achievement and
- learner work that reflects certificate claims

Centres must undertake standardisation activities appropriate for each qualification to be delivered with all relevant assessors and internal quality assurance staff. In general this should be conducted prior to first delivery of the qualification as part of the preparation for delivery, prior to assessment and as part of the post delivery review. In addition any new assessors and quality assurance staff should undertake standardisation prior to working with the qualification. With an established qualification where no changes have occurred, centres should conduct standardisation activities twice in an academic year as a minimum.

7.0 External Quality Assurance

OTHM will appoint individuals who are occupationally and professionally competent to

ensure accurate and consistent standards of assessment, across OTHM delivery Centres and over time. They are responsible for completing any External Quality Assurance (EQA) activities.

The purpose of such activities is to ensure Centres:

- Have appropriate levels of resources to support the delivery of the qualification, including both physical resources and staffing
- Are using appropriate assessment methods and making appropriate assessment decisions according to OTHM requirements
- Have appropriate internal quality assurance arrangements as outlined within the relevant qualification specification
- Are using appropriate administrative arrangements to support the function of delivery and assessment.
- Feedback to Centres is given through the EQA report form which includes details on the above criteria and any areas where further development is required.

8.0 Monitoring and Training

OTHM monitor and review all quality assurance processes and procedures continually and formally at least annually. We provide mandatory training for EQAs at least annually and more frequently if required in addition to providing feedback and support on performance.

9.0 Regulatory references

Ofqual requires all regulated Awarding Organisations to establish and maintain evidence of their compliance with the General Conditions of Recognition. As part of its ongoing process of compliance, OTHM policies and procedures will reflect the particular conditions and criteria they address.

This policy addresses the following Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition (GCR).

GCR Reference	GCR Section title
D1	Fitness for purpose of qualifications
E4	Ensuring an assessment is fit for purpose and can be delivered
G1	Setting the assessment
G9	Delivering the assessment
H1-6	From marking to issuing results

10.0 Policy review date

July 2020

11.0 Useful contacts

For more information on our qualifications and services visit: www.othm.org.uk.
Alternatively, call at: +44(0)20 7118 4243 or email at: info@othm.org.uk

End of policy