

**Last Updated – August 2017**

**The Malta University Consulting Policy for Quality Standards of Further & Higher Education Qualifications and the Quality of the Learning Experience of Students for NCFHE Accredited Courses of the Professional Development Business Line.**

**1. Mission Statement**

To build around the life-long learning process and encourage and support continuing education, professional development and training.

**2. Overview**

The Malta University Professional Development (MUPD) business line falls under one of the subsidiary companies– of the Malta University Holding Company Ltd - Malta University Consulting Ltd (MUC).

It provides a variety of short adult training and educational programmes utilising facilities of the Malta University Residence Ltd and of the University of Malta (UoM) and trainers of the UoM and other institutions and industry professionals. The courses are aimed at a variety of audiences such as students, graduates and employees in the sector and the general public.

MUC offers two courses that are accredited by NCFHE both of which are in the Healthcare sector:

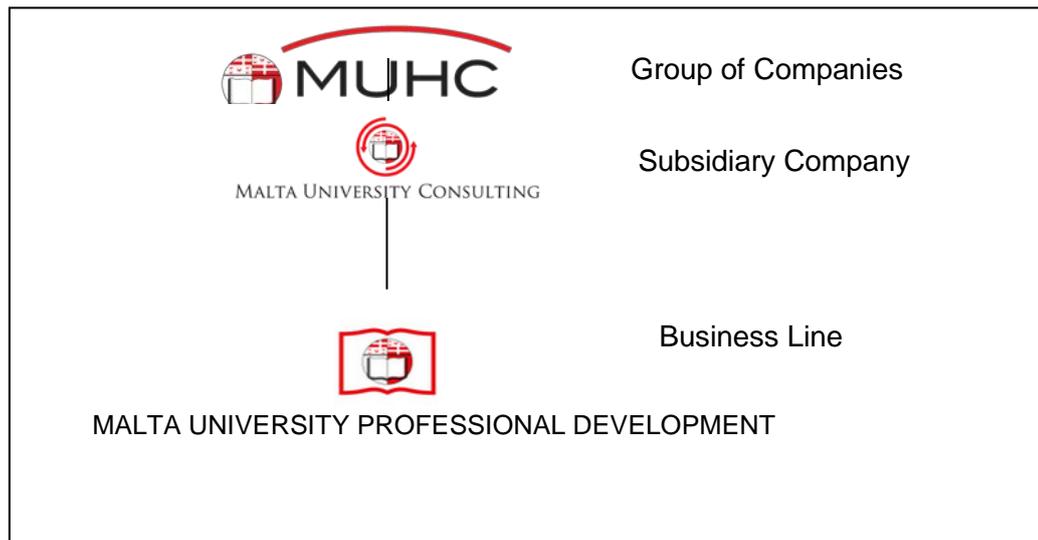
- Course for Residential & Day Care Workers (MQF Level 4);
- Course on Pharmacognosy & Herbal Products (MQF Level 6).

The fact that courses are repeated and their popularity remains year after year is a clear indication that the courses are meeting clients' expectations.

**3. Governance**

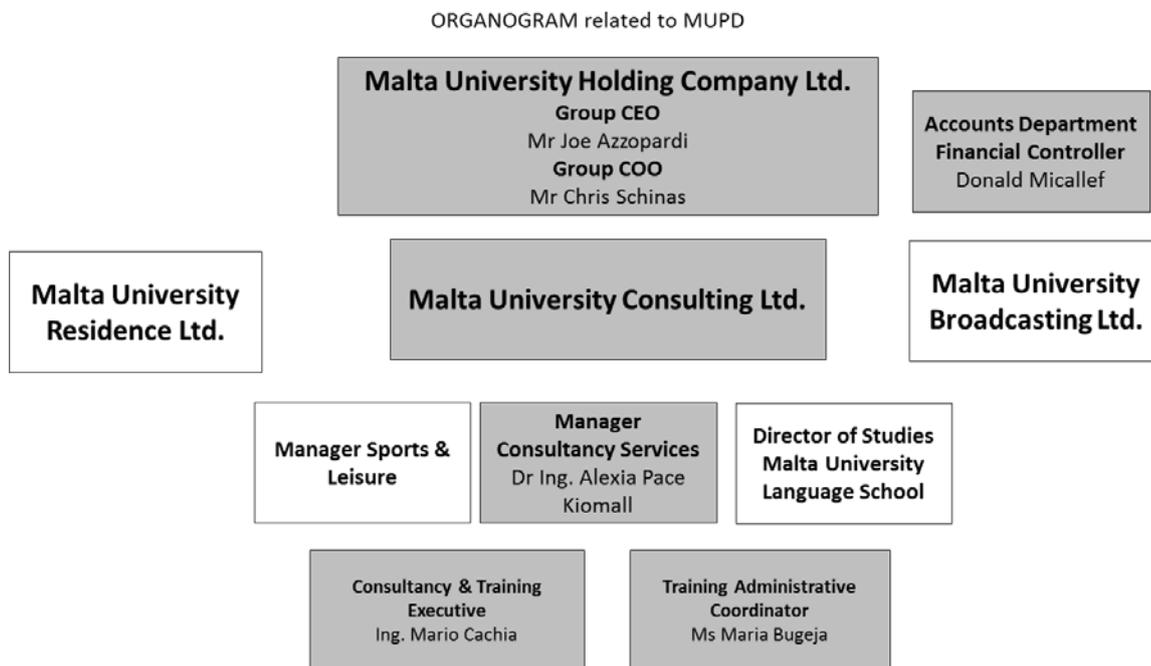
A Board of Directors for MUHC and its subsidiaries is appointed in accordance with the MUHC Memorandum of Association registered with MFSA. The Board ensures compliance with the applicable laws of Malta. The Directors are responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining internal controls as the Directors determine necessary to ensure good governance.

Figure 1 below sets up the structure of MUPD within the MUHC Group of Companies.



**Fig 1. Company Profile**

Figure 2 below illustrates the Company's Organogram



**Fig 2. Company Organogram**

Quality standards and the quality of the learning experience of students assurance at the MUPD is the shared responsibility between the Group CEO, MUC, Course Co-ordinators, Academic Advisors and Tutors as described in detail hereunder.

#### **4. Group CEO**

The GCEO is the link between the management of MUHC and all the subsidiaries with the Board of Directors. He leads the discussions establishing the strategic direction. As stated above the GCEO shares the responsibility for quality standards and the quality of the learning experience of students. He is regularly consulted on policy and operational issues.

The GCEO in consultation with his direct reports sets the objectives for each year to these employees who are on a period contract. At the end of the year the GCEO carries out performance appraisals based on these targets. Such process ensures that staff occupying headship positions are fit for purpose.

The GCEO also leads periodic reviews of the Training Programmes which essentially involves an evaluation taught programmes on offer and serves to ensure that programmes are and remain of acceptable quality, appropriate academic standard and relevant to the needs of industry and society.

The GCEO may also be asked to intervene on students' issues on a case by case basis and as required by MUC Management.

#### **5. MUC staff**

Administrative staff are qualified and experienced in the provision of personal development courses.

MUC's role involves the active participation in:

- ensuring course quality standards are being reached;
- selection of programme tutors and course coordinators;
- coordination of the course programme with the tutors and respective academic advisor;
- marketing of the course via different means (newspaper, social media, website, email notifications, Newspoint<sup>1</sup>, alumni etc..);
- receiving registrations and registration fees;
- paying the trainers;
- preparing & distributing certificates;
- operational support to trainers, course coordinators and students;
- photocopying handouts/course material for each student.

---

<sup>1</sup> University newsletter.

MUC Staff are present at the beginning of each lecture to set up the venue and to take attendance and distribute handouts. They are also present at the end of the course to distribute certificates to the students. Random checks are also held throughout the course by different members of staff of MUC to ensure that the course is running smoothly and as agreed with the course coordinators and academic advisors.

At the end of each course, in consultation with the Academic Advisor and Course Coordinator, MUC is responsible for analysing the participants' feedback submitted in evaluation forms and implementing improvements to the content and delivery accordingly. Discussions are also held with Academic Advisors, Tutors and Industry Professionals to ensure that the course content remains relevant to the industry's changing requirements. This involvement of stakeholders leads to continuous improvement in content and delivery methods and is essential for strategic planning.

Similarly, due consideration is given to the feedback given by external auditors.

If possible, prior to delivering a course, MUC and the course coordinator compare price and quality of similar courses being offered in Malta and Gozo. The involvement of UoM academics as co-ordinators and/or tutors is the main method by which MUC confirms that its programmes are comparable standard to similar courses offered by other local providers.

MUC supporting staff has access to a budget for continuous professional development. This gives the opportunity to the staff to continue to improve on the skills required to perform their duties to a high standard.

MUC and the Course Co-coordinator monitor the course to verify compliance with the proposal submitted by MUC to NCFHE at the accreditation stage or subsequent reviews. Control instruments include keeping a signed attendance sheet and random surprise visits by MUC to the course delivery and the Course Co-coordinator. Moreover, when UoM staff deliver the course, one can safely assume that the same level of control as that of the UoM is in place.

Course Participants are provided with the photocopied course material by MUC required to follow the programme of studies at no extra cost and are given access by MUC to printed material at the UoM library for background research and reading and polish up the areas of weakness.

MUC and trainers follow the UOM policy in relation to misconduct (Section 4.3 – Manual of Conduct & Procedures - [https://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/secure/collective\\_agreement\\_2014/MOP\\_06082014\\_Final\\_Text\\_as\\_Approved\\_by\\_Council.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/hrmd/secure/collective_agreement_2014/MOP_06082014_Final_Text_as_Approved_by_Council.pdf)).

## 5.1 Academic Advisers

In the case when the course is being organised in collaboration with a Faculty/Department/Institute/Centre of the University of Malta, an Academic Advisor is appointed. As a minimum the Academic Advisor is appointed with the active involvement of a Head of Department or a Division Coordinator at the University of Malta ensuring the academic has the necessary qualifications and competence. Academic Coordinators are employed on part-time basis and are chosen on the basis of being either lead UoM academics on the subject or experts in the field. This gives MUC the facility to directly involve external specialists into the courses and if required change the Academic Coordinator in accordance with changes in the external environment.

Academic advisers have access to professional development through their profession and research and scholarly activity coming from the UoM.

Academic Advisers are academics already employed by the University of Malta and therefore adhere to the UoM Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy – refer to Resourcing: <http://www.um.edu.mt/apgru/QApolicy>).

The Academic Advisor responsibilities include:

- assuring that staff teaching on programmes have the appropriate skills and knowledge;
- in consultation with MUC is responsible for analysing the participants' feedback at the end of each course and implementing improvements accordingly;
- ensure that the programmes are comparable in standard to similar courses offered by other local providers;
- reviewing feedback given by external auditors and ensuring its timely implementation;
- close contact is kept with the industry enabling the Academic Advisor to identify the more important requirements. In the case when a company sends a number of employees for the same course, the employer is informed on the course
- take into consideration the results attained at the end of the programme to ensure that the programme is meeting the set objectives and expectations;
- in the process identify recommendations for improvement and further development of programmes;
- discontinue course when the popularity diminishes despite revision of content and pricing and the minimum number of participants is not reached. The course is discontinued in agreement with all inner stakeholders.

Basic market research is carried out both by MUC and the Academic Coordinator prior to delivering a course to compare price and quality of similar courses being offered in Malta and Gozo. The involvement of UoM academics as co-ordinators and/or tutors is the main method by which MUC confirms that its programmes are, as a minimum, comparable to similar courses offered by other local providers.

## 5.2 Course Coordinators

The duties of a course coordinator include ensuring that:

- carry out rigorous due diligence of tutors in cases when these are not UoM academics;
- tutors are available to students for ad-hoc personal support;
- the teaching venue has the necessary equipment to ensure satisfactory delivery of the course;
- in consultation with MUC analyses the participants' feedback at the end of each course and implementing improvements accordingly;
- reviewing feedback given by external auditors and ensuring its implementation.

Similar to Academic Coordinators, course coordinators are employed on part-time basis and are chosen on the basis of being either lead UoM academics on the subject or experts in the field. This gives MUC the facility to directly involve external specialists into the courses.

Given that most of the tutors are UoM academics working for MUC on part-time basis or professionals, these have access to professional development through their profession and research and scholarly activity coming from the UoM.

In the absence of an Academic Coordinator, a course coordinator is expected to carry out also the duties of an Academic Coordinator.

## 5.3 Tutors

All MUC organised courses are based on part-time teaching staff, academic advisors and course coordinators. This gives MUC the opportunity to opt for the best available tutors especially when the course merits the input of industry practitioners. Course dates are established with the trainer to ensure that the dates are convenient and do not clash with other commitments. In the case when a date needs to be changed, students are informed accordingly by email and phone or advised in the previous session.

As a priority, MUC taps into the UoM staff and contacts through the various Faculty Alumni. MUC endeavours to engage the best local based academics for the courses. MUC is flexible in regards to timing of the programme delivery.

Priority is given to academics already employed by the UoM who consequently already adhere to the UoM Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy – refer to Resourcing: (<http://www.um.edu.mt/apqru/QApolicy>) to act as tutor.

However, in instances when MUC seeks expertise from other institutions and professionals, a more rigorous due diligence is carried out by the Course Coordinator. The higher the MQF Level of the Course, the higher the academic requirements for the trainers. As a minimum requirement, a relevant first degree and/or 3 years' experience related to the subject is necessary. The Course Coordinator requests and subsequently vets the CVs from interested potential tutors.

The duties of a Tutor include:

- in collaboration with the Academic Coordinator the responsibility for the course content subject in compliance with course objectives and content as accredited by the NCFHE. Trainer in collaboration with the Academic Advisor and MUC is responsible for course content updates. In the case of non-UoM staff, it is emphasized that the notes need to be updated with time;
- choice of adequate pedagogical methods;
- being available to students for ad-hoc personal support through the Course Coordinator;
- through continuous monitoring of student participation and progress inform MUC if there is the need to intervene to give additional support to students;
- assess assignments ensuring that:
  - ✓ assessment is reliable, with clear and consistent processes for the setting, marking, grading and moderation of assignments;
  - ✓ assessment is valid and effectively measures student attainment of the intended learning outcomes;
  - ✓ assessment is inclusive and equitable, ensuring that tasks and procedures do not put into a disadvantage any group or individual;
  - ✓ assessment procedures are transparent, and criteria and methods by which students' work is being judged are made clear to students, staff and external examiners;
  - ✓ the amount of assessed work is manageable;
  - ✓ each programme includes a variety of assessment types, in order to promote effective learning and allow a range of learning outcomes to be appropriately addressed.
- in collaboration with MUC and the Course Coordinator is responsible for:
  - ✓ analysing the participants' feedback at the end of each course and implementing improvements accordingly;
  - ✓ reviewing feedback given by external auditors and ensuring its implementation;
  - ✓ conducting basic market research to ensure that the programme offered is comparable standard to similar courses offered by other local providers.

Although MUR provides conference equipment (including projector, audio, free-wifi access screen, flip chart, white board and board markers) tutors are encouraged to

bring their own laptop and save their presentations on a USB stick. However, a back-up laptop is always available in the room should this be needed.

Payment for the preparation and delivery of course content is based on the number of pre-agreed delivery hours. It is pre-agreed with the tutor although preference is given to the application of standard hourly rates. Where a Department/Centre/Institute from the University is involved, this is always at arm's length and an agreed share in the form of a percentage of the revenue is contributed to the Department/Centre/Institute. Payment is forwarded to the tutor within 30 days from date of the last day of course delivery.

Given that most of the tutors are UoM academics working for MUC on part-time basis or professionals in the field, these have access to professional development through their profession and research and scholarly activity coming from the UoM.

## **6. Teaching Venues**

Teaching venues and teaching aids are in conformity with NCFHE standards and regulations. The Malta University Residence, MUC sister company, is the main provider of the venues and all the equipment/facilities required for the successful delivery of courses. Should the need arise the facilities of the UoM are also tapped. In the case when a specific software package is required for teaching, an educational licence is bought and University Computer Labs are used for such delivery. MUC also has agreements with alternative venues (such as St Tereza School and Junior College) to make use of their facilities. These venues are equipped with smart interactive white boards, computers and video conferencing facilities should these be required for the course delivery. In case of attendance of one or more students with physical disability, the venue is shifted to an alternative with such accessible options. This approach and the fact that non-MUC staff are part timers ensure sufficient resources are available to deliver all MUC's academic programmes.

## **7. Marketing material**

MUC with the support of Malta University Sports and Leisure prepares the course marketing material (including flyer, course information sheet and registration forms) and markets the course programmes for a minimum of two months through the different social media (such as MUHC website, MUHC Facebook page, LinkedIn, UoM's Newspoint, MUHC E-newsletter, email correspondence to MUC and UoM contact lists, UoM students and alumni, industry contacts, past course attendees, and local newspapers in the form of press releases).

The Course Information Sheet is vetted by MUC and the Course Co-ordinator before publication ensuring a high level of correctness. As a minimum the course information sheet clearly states:

- dates, times and venue of course sessions;
- registration fee and paying options;
- whether the course has been approved by any third party scheme for rebates (such as Get Qualified scheme);
- closing date of registration;
- accreditation level - as defined in accordance with the MUC application form for accreditation and as approved by the NCFHE;
- aim and content of the course;
- the academic qualifications required to qualify for course registration;
- the intended learning outcomes;
- course outline of the sessions;
- profile of course tutor;
- certification information;
- contact information.

## **8. Registration Fees**

Every course is run on the basis that as a pre-established minimum number of course participants. Should the minimum not be reached, then the course is postponed to a future date or cancelled. Registrants are paid back the full amount in the case of course cancellation or a credit note is issued in the case of postponing a course.

To apply for a course, a participant needs to fill in a registration form (downloadable from the MUHC website) and forward it to MUC. Payment of courses can be done in the following ways:

- Online via credit card(<https://pay.muhc.com.mt/courses/>);
- Via bank transfer;
- Via cheque or cash.

VAT receipts are issued on receipt of payment. Copies of receipts are held at the Finance Division of MUHC and at the MUC office.

MUC adopts the following Refund Policy:

- Should a course be cancelled by MUC, full refunds are affected to all applicants within 30 days;
- Should an applicant cancel the registration at least ten days before the course scheduled start date, full refund will be affected. Any cancellation beyond this date needs to be justified and refund percentage or credit to attend a future course is treated on a case-by-case basis in liaison with the MUHC Group CEO.

In the case of University of Malta students, on providing proof that they are registered students following a University course, they are given a discounted student rate.

## **9. Course Participants**

As adults who have subscribed to the part-time programme of study on voluntarily basis it is expected that the students own a PC/laptop with basic Microsoft Office and access to the Internet to be able to work on the assignments.

Participants can be refused from participating in training for the following reason(s):

- Failure to meet pre-established academic entry requirements;
- Failure to satisfy registration requirements on time;
- If the pre-established minimum number of students is not reached;
- If the pre-established maximum number of students has been reached.

The MUHC GCEO handles, in collaboration with MUC management and course coordinators, and on a case-by-case basis, any claims of inconsistency, oversight and fairness of assessments.

Course induction is done on the first day of the delivery of the programme. Group work and exercises are encouraged and assessed assignments are used where applicable. Feedback on assignments is also forwarded.

Given that the accredited courses offered are of short duration the opportunity of placements is not available for such courses.

Students are encouraged to participate by being involved in group work and exercises. They are free to ask questions throughout the course.

Given that the courses duration and the adult target audience it is expected that the students raise any issues with the course coordinator through the contact details (telephone number and email address) which are made available to students at the beginning of each course and found on the Course Information Sheet.

## **10. Course Certificate**

Participants who attend at least 80% of the course (based on signing of an attendance sheet signed for every session attended) and satisfy the assessment criteria, are awarded a Certificate of Attendance issued by MUC and/or in collaboration with the respective University academic entity. In the case of courses that include an assignment at the end of the course, a Certificate of Participation is issued by MUC which includes the grade of assignment awarded. The level (amount of equivalent ECTS and MQF level) and grade awarded (in the case of assignments) is stated on the certificate awarded on programme completion.

The assignment given at the end of the course ensures that the students have grasped the learning outcomes of the course programme.

## **11. Financial Probity**

MUHC Group is audited by external auditors on an annual basis with financial year ending at end of September.

Given that MUC forms part of a group of companies (MUHC) should the need arise, reserves from other subsidiaries are, subject to the necessary GCEO or Board approvals, loaned in the event of unpredicted circumstances.

## **12. Information Management**

Participants are requested to fill in a feedback form at the end of the course.

Information gathered by MUC per course include:

- the profile of the student population, including details of vulnerable groups;
- course participation, retention and completion rates;
- students' satisfaction with their programmes;
- learning resources and student support available.

MUC staff working on training not only have access to the information but are usually directly involved in the gathering of the data, analysis and proposing changes. This information is gathered from the registration forms and statistics forwarded to NCFHE on a bi-annual basis as per requests received. Soft and hard copies are saved. All files are kept under lock and key at the Main Office.

It is planned that the effectiveness of the programmes and the subsequent career progression of students who have attended a training programme will be gauged via communication with entities that had sent employees for the programme.