INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

Internal Quality Assurance and Enhancement

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Ascencia Malta Business School
Part of the Collège de Paris Group

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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PART 1: QUALITY FRAMEWORK

This section sets out the institutional approach to quality assurance and enhancement at Ascencia Malta Business School across eight thematic areas, aligned with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015), the 11 Standards of the Malta Quality Assurance Framework, and the Education Act (Cap. 327) as amended by Legal Notice 221 of 2015.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Vision Statement

The primary purpose of Ascencia Malta Business School is to offer EU and international students qualifications at the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) Levels 5 to 8 at affordable rates. These qualifications are accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). MFHEA accreditation ensures that all qualifications undergo a thorough evaluation and align with the Malta and European Qualifications Frameworks. This recognition guarantees that Ascencia Malta programmes meet quality standards and are recognised by employers worldwide, thereby enhancing our students' career prospects both locally and internationally.

Ascencia Malta aims to provide a student-centred, inclusive learning community offering a wide range of courses, degrees, and disciplines that are geared to respond to the needs of the country and the broader multicultural community. This is achieved by engaging students in a unique experiential learning environment, producing skilful, innovative, and entrepreneurial graduates who possess global and technical competencies.

1.2 Mission Statement

At Ascencia Malta, we empower students through a student-centred approach that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning. We deliver high-quality education that meets rigorous standards and prepares graduates for success in a dynamic world. Together with our partnered stakeholders, we are dedicated to developing socially responsible leaders who champion diversity, inclusion, and equity, creating meaningful impact within our diverse community.

1.3 Overview

The Ascencia Malta Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Manual is the principal reference document for quality assurance and enhancement at the institution. The IQA Manual provides accessible guidance for staff, students, and other stakeholders concerned with the quality of the total learning experience across all programmes and awards delivered by Ascencia Malta Business School.

This Manual forms part of the broader Ascencia Malta Education Quality Framework (EQF) and is publicly available on the Ascencia Malta website in accordance with MFHEA Standard 10 (Public Information). The IQA Manual is structured in two parts:

- Part 1: Quality Framework – setting out the institutional approach to quality assurance and enhancement across eight thematic areas
- Part 2: Operational Policies – containing detailed policies and procedures that govern the day-to-day quality assurance operations of the institution

The Ascencia Malta Academic Board is primarily responsible for the maintenance, development, and oversight of the Education Quality Framework. The Academic Board has the ultimate responsibility for upholding the content of the Quality Framework and is required to confirm and approve the educational strategies and policies developed, incorporated in, and implemented as part of the Ascencia Malta Quality Framework.

This Manual is aligned with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), the 11 Standards of

the Malta Quality Assurance Framework, and the Education Act (Cap. 327) as amended by Legal Notice 221 of 2015.

1.4 Quality Assurance Information

There are specific sources of information related to quality assurance and the confirmation of education standards for programmes:

- The overarching education regulations and quality assurance requirements arising from the MFHEA standards, to which Ascencia Malta is committed to adhering
- The internal Ascencia Malta Quality Framework documentation, comprising this IQA Manual, programme specifications, policies, and supporting materials
- The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015) for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area
- Applicable Maltese legislation, including the Education Act (Cap. 327) and LN 221 of 2015

The Ascencia Malta Quality Framework is supplemented by specific guidance notes, policies, and strategy papers where required. In the event of uncertainty on any aspect of quality assurance or education standards, the Academic Board is the final authority for resolving conflicts and formally interpreting Ascencia Malta quality regulations.

2. OBJECTIVES

Ascencia Malta aims to provide – within the environment of an independent educational establishment – quality-focused and cost-effective further and higher education programmes. The institution delivers the following accredited programmes across MQF Levels 5 to 8:

2.1 Programme Portfolio

MQF Level 8 – Doctoral

- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

MQF Level 7 – Masters Degrees

- MBA in Leadership Excellence
- MSc in Business Economics
- MSc in Computer Science (Information Security and Cryptography)
- MSc in Computer Science (Blockchain and Fintech)
- MSc in Computer Science (Data Science and Artificial Intelligence)
- MA in Entrepreneurship
- MA in Leadership and Business Development
- MA in International Management and Global Business
- MA in Human Resource Management

MQF Level 7 – Postgraduate Diplomas

- PG Diploma of Business Administration in Leadership Excellence
- PG Diploma in Business Economics
- PG Diploma in Computer Science (Information Security and Cryptography)
- PG Diploma in Computer Science (Blockchain and Fintech)
- PG Diploma in Computer Science (Data Science and Artificial Intelligence)
- PG Diploma in Computer Science
- PG Diploma in Leadership and Business Development
- PG Diploma in International Management and Global Business

MQF Level 6 – Bachelor Degrees

- Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA)
- Bachelor Designer, Creator of Fashion and Textile Products

MQF Level 5 – Undergraduate Diplomas

- Undergraduate Diploma in Computer Networks Engineering
- Undergraduate Diploma in Computer Science
- Undergraduate Diploma in Business Administration

2.2 Educational Philosophy

These educational activities are based on established expertise and proven success in the delivery of internationally focused, high-quality programmes. The educational commitment is founded on the following principles:

- Educational disciplines 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
- Programmes delivered by Ascencia Malta are required to maintain their currency in terms of curriculum content, pedagogic approaches, and responses to market and environmental circumstances
- The inclusion of practical applications and culturally referenced teaching in learning and teaching practice
- Rigour and critical relevance in scholarship, associated research activities, case studies, and business development teaching, and their links to the education experience of students
- Innovation in learning, teaching, stakeholder development, and relationship development

3. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

3.1 Institutional Governance

Ascencia Malta Business School operates as part of the Collège de Paris Group under the oversight of Managing Director Asif Syed. The institution is led in Malta by School Director and Head of Institution Tess Giordmaina, supported by a team of senior academic and administrative staff.

The governance structure ensures effective oversight of academic quality, strategic direction, and operational management through the following bodies:

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors meets quarterly and is chaired by Tess Giordmaina, Head of Institution. The Board has responsibility for advising the Head of Institution and Head of Academics on strategic direction, planning priorities, risk evaluation and mitigation, annual strategy development, and the structure and content of the education portfolio. The membership includes individuals with senior-level experience in finance, further and higher education, and industry.

Academic Board

The Academic Board is the principal body responsible for academic quality at Ascencia Malta. It is the only academic governance body below the Board of Governors and has ultimate responsibility for the maintenance, development, and oversight of the Education Quality Framework. The Academic Board confirms and approves educational strategies and policies and oversees quality assurance and enhancement activity across all programmes.

The Academic Board is chaired by Gianluca Abela, Head of Academics. The Board meets biannually and includes representation from academic staff, administrative staff, and student representatives. The Academic Board also holds delegated academic responsibility for the effective and efficient development and operational implementation of education strategies, quality assurance policies, and all major academic changes.

Programme Management Committee (PMC)

The Programme Management Committee meets at least once per semester for each programme and is chaired by Gianluca Abela, Head of Academics. The PMC includes the Academic Manager (Dariush Rahiminia), the relevant Programme Coordinator, module lecturers, student representatives, and programme administrative support staff. The PMC is responsible for the operational management of individual programmes and for monitoring programme quality at module and programme level.

Student Council

The Student Council was formally established in October 2025 and is chaired by Gianluca Abela, Head of Academics. The Council comprises four elected positions:

- Miniar Mediouni – President
- Gabriel Ogbonna Okoronkwo – Vice-President
- Joseph Akindele Akintola – Cultural Representative
- Lokesh Bisht – Treasurer

The Student Council acts as a formal feedback mechanism and a platform for students to bring forward ideas for continuous improvement. Student Council representatives participate in the Academic Board and PMC meetings. Elections are held annually, with students volunteering for positions and being elected by their peers.

Student Council meetings are scheduled in alignment with the Academic Calendar 2025–2028, with two meetings per teaching block. Scheduled meeting dates include: 12 November 2025, 7 January 2026, 28 February 2026, 14 April 2026, 20 May 2026, and 10 July 2026.

3.2 Senior Management Team

Role	Name
Managing Director	Asif Syed
School Director / Head of Institution	Tess Giordmaina
Head of Academics	Gianluca Abela
Head of Quality Assurance	Pauline Fenech
Academic Manager (Digital Campus)	Dariush Rahiminia
Academic Coordinator & Registrar	Laura Rojas
Graduate Programmes Coordinator	Robert Moura
Undergraduate Programmes Coordinator	John Michael Nieras
Assistant Director of Studies (ELS)	Cerise Galea
Student Welfare Officer	Simon Borg
Student Welfare Officer	Vincenzina Molezzi
Marketing Manager	Abel Petre
HR Administrator	Daniela Grixti
Head of Sales	Akil Syed
Admissions Manager	Ivan Padron

3.3 Campus Locations

- Floriana Campus: 23 Vincenzo Dimech Street, Floriana FRN 1502
- Swieqi Campus: 88/90 Triq It-Tiben, Swieqi SWQ 3034

3.4 Strategic Plan

Ascencia Malta’s Strategic Plan is structured in three phases:

- Phase 1 (2025–2026): Consolidation and Quality Enhancement – currently in progress
- Phase 2 (2027–2028): Growth and Internationalisation
- Phase 3 (2029–2030): Leadership and Sustainability

3.5 Key Performance Indicators

- Accreditation: Continuous alignment with MFHEA standards
- Enrolment: 10% year-on-year growth; 85% or higher retention rate
- Programme Effectiveness: 80% or higher completion rate; 85% or higher student satisfaction
- Graduate Employability: 80% employed or in further study within 12 months
- Digital: 100% of courses supported through the Eascencia platform and ERP
- Industry Partnerships: At least 5 MoUs by 2027
- Financial: Annual audited accounts with balanced budget

3.6 Academic Calendar

Ascencia Malta operates a four-intake model aligned with the Academic Calendar 2025–2028 (v1.3). Each intake follows a structured cycle of orientation, teaching, reading week, and examinations:

Intake	Orientation	Teaching Block	Reading Week	Examinations
October 2025	26–30 Sep 2025	1 Oct – 30 Jan 2026	12–16 Jan 2026	23–30 Jan 2026
January 2026	26–29 Jan 2026	30 Jan – 24 Apr 2026	6–10 Apr 2026	17–24 Apr 2026
April 2026	15–19 Apr 2026	20 Apr – 17 Jul 2026	29 Jun–3 Jul 2026	10–17 Jul 2026
July 2026	28 Jul–1 Aug 2026	3 Aug – 23 Oct 2026	TBC	TBC

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

4.1 Quality Assurance Policy and Strategy

The Academic Board, with membership drawn from the academic and administrative teams responsible for the delivery of education programmes, provides oversight for quality assurance and enhancement activity and the strategic development and implementation of the quality assurance policy.

Ascencia Malta recognises the importance of engagement with external organisations in ensuring quality and promoting improvement, including:

- MFHEA, as the national accreditation and quality assurance body
- Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) for qualification comparability
- European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015) framework
- Appropriate relevant professional organisations (e.g., CIM, ACCA) as deemed appropriate
- Other educational partners and collaborating institutions

4.2 Quality Assurance Structures

Quality and quality enhancement are responsibilities shared across all management, teaching, and support staff at Ascencia Malta. The development and operation of quality assurance at programme level is primarily the responsibility of the Programme Coordinators (Robert Moura for graduate programmes; John Michael Nieras for undergraduate programmes) and the Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela).

The Head of Quality Assurance (Pauline Fenech) and the Academic Coordinator and Registrar (Laura Rojas) provide general and specific advice, report to the Academic Board, and advise the executive and senior management team.

Quality assurance and education standards are monitored through:

- Confirmation of education standards by External Examiners at Progression/Examinations Boards
- Regular annual and periodic review monitoring undertaken by the Academic Board
- Formal lesson observations (first cycle completed November 2025)
- Student feedback via Google Forms, face-to-face meetings, and the Student Council
- End-of-course evaluations and satisfaction surveys
- Biannual internal evaluations
- ClickUp project management platform for tracking quality action points
- Internal Verification Meetings as per the IV Policy

4.3 Quality Assurance and Feedback Channels

Quality is assured through regular use of feedback channels including:

- Student Council (SC): Provides formal feedback from student representatives. The Council was established in October 2025 with elected positions: President (Miniar Mediouni), Vice-President (Gabriel Ogbonna Okoronkwo),

Cultural Representative (Joseph Akindele Akintola), and Treasurer (Lokesh Bisht).

- Student satisfaction surveys: All students have the opportunity to complete anonymous surveys at key times during their programme, typically after enrolment and induction and then periodically throughout the year.
- Teaching faculty feedback: Monthly meetings within each team with the Head of Academics or Programme Coordinator to discuss issues and identify training needs.
- Programme Management Committee (PMC) meetings: Student feedback is reviewed and actioned at programme level, with reports escalated to the Academic Board as required.
- External Examiners' feedback via reports and programme team responses
- Module performance analysis related to evaluation and monitoring of education standards
- Peer observation and review of teaching
- Mentoring and appraisal systems

Ascencia Malta is committed to meeting Maltese and European quality standards at all times, in compliance with the ESG 2015, the MFHEA standards, and all applicable legislation.

5. TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

5.1 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The learning, teaching, and assessment strategy reflects Ascencia Malta's vision 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 responds to the 11 standards outlined in the Malta Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education, covering module design, learning outcomes, criteria-referenced assessment, validation and approval, monitoring and review, and the student learning environment.

Ascencia Malta 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 an excellent learning infrastructure
- Implementing effective formative and summative assessment practices within a supportive student-focused learning environment
- Regular review of the programme portfolio
- Faculty expected to regularly update the curriculum and the currency of their teaching
- Encouraging participation, active learning, problem-based development, and applied learning

5.2 Assessment Strategy

Ascencia Malta makes use of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment methods, providing feedback on assignments in an accessible way based upon agreed timeframes. The assessment strategy is aligned with learning outcomes, education level descriptors, and assessment criteria.

Good practice in assessment is promoted by:

- Minimising opportunities for plagiarism through the use of Turnitin and the Academic Integrity Policy
- Aligning assessment criteria with learning outcomes and MQF level descriptors
- Providing regular feedback to students via the Eascencia platform
- Using formative feedback to support student learning before summative assessment
- Ensuring double-marking and internal verification for all summative assessments

5.3 Academic Integrity

Ascencia Malta adopts a zero-tolerance approach to academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating in a written assessment, plagiarism, and inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools.

The institution's AI Use Policy (v1.3), as set out in the Student Handbook v1.5, establishes clear guidelines on the appropriate and inappropriate use of AI tools in academic work. AI tools may be used for research and idea generation but must not be used to generate assessed work that is submitted as a student's own. All AI usage must be declared and referenced.

5.4 Research and Scholarship

Ascencia Malta 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. Research activity is coordinated by the Academic Manager (Digital Campus), Dariush Rahiminia, who also serves as Editor-in-Chief of the E-Ascencia Insights publishing series.

Research and scholarship activity is reviewed through the staff development process, with all academic staff encouraged to maintain an active programme of professional development and scholarly activity.

6. STUDENT SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Student Induction

Registration takes place prior to the commencement of teaching each semester, during the designated orientation period as specified in the Academic Calendar 2025–2028. Each intake has a dedicated orientation period: October intake orientation runs 26–30 September; January intake orientation runs 26–29 January; April intake orientation runs 15–19 April; and July intake orientation runs 28 July–1 August.

Students are given a welcome induction pack which includes the Student Handbook (v1.5), programme information, semester timetable, information about the school and its facilities, general rules and regulations, assessment requirements, fee details, and visa/TRP requirements.

Students attend a formal induction during which they are introduced to the institution's staff including the Student Welfare Officers (Simon Borg and Vincenzina Molezzi), who serve as students' first points of contact for any queries or support needs.

6.2 Student Support and Welfare

Student support is available for all students through the following mechanisms:

- Student Welfare Officers (Simon Borg and Vincenzina Molezzi) provide primary welfare support and act as the first point of contact for student queries
- Programme Coordinators provide academic guidance and monitoring of individual student progress
- The Academic Coordinator and Registrar (Laura Rojas) manages student records and progression matters
- Career development support is provided through the education syllabus, guest lecturers, and seminar discussions
- Student accommodation is facilitated through vetted and approved independent agencies
- A Portuguese-speaking Student Manager was appointed in January 2026 to support the growing Brazilian and Portuguese-speaking student community

6.3 Student-Centred Learning

Ascencia Malta's teaching philosophy promotes a culture of student-centred learning which focuses on students' needs and learning requirements. Teaching and delivery blend lectures, tutorials, seminars, workshops/discussion sessions, and other suitable modes, employing diverse learning and assessment methods including case studies, individual and team presentations, joint class discussions, and tutorial-support sessions.

6.4 Attendance and Retention

Students are required to maintain a minimum attendance rate of 80% as stipulated in the Attendance and Retention Policy. Attendance is monitored electronically and updated in real time. Students falling below required attendance levels are required to attend an interview with the Programme Coordinator to discuss academic progress and any visa/TRP implications.

6.5 Student Voice and Representation

Ascencia Malta is committed to ensuring that the student voice is central to quality assurance and enhancement. Key mechanisms include:

- The Student Council, established October 2025, with elected positions: President (Miniar Mediouni), Vice-President (Gabriel Ogbonna Okoronkwo), Cultural Representative (Joseph Akindele Akintola), and Treasurer (Lokesh Bisht)
- Student representation on the Academic Board and Programme Management Committees
- Anonymous student satisfaction surveys at key points during programmes
- Regular face-to-face feedback meetings
- Formal complaints and suggestions procedure as outlined in the Student Handbook

7. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

7.1 Student Records

The Ascencia Malta Admissions team, led by Admissions Manager Ivan Padron, is responsible for the accuracy of all communications to students related to admission, registration, and acceptance. The Academic team, under Head of Academics Gianluca Abela, maintains records of student progression from entry to programme completion, including attendance, examinations, assignments, re-sits, and conferment of awards.

Securely held records include:

- Application and admission information
- Visa and sponsorship information
- Registration information
- Attendance records
- Academic progression information
- Records of marks, assessments, and examination results
- Records of grades awarded and final academic awards
- Disciplinary records
- Academic appeals and student complaint records

7.2 Data Retention

In accordance with MFHEA Quality Assurance Standard 8, archives must ensure content availability 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 40 years. All other data shall be anonymised following a 4-year retention period from the date of graduation, in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

7.3 Version Management and Documentation

Version management and updates for all documentation are subject to authoring access control and editing control. Responsibility for authoring, editing, and generating documentation resides with specified individuals within the institution but requires the final approval of the Head of Institution (Tess Giordmaina).

Definitive programme documentation, including programme specifications, programme and module descriptors, validation reports, and associated materials, is maintained in the institution's online quality library and on the ClickUp project management platform.

7.4 Quality Assurance Library

Ascencia Malta maintains an electronically based quality assurance document library which is located on the staff shared drive. The library provides access to a range of documentation including board minutes, policy and strategy papers, validation documentation, programme documentation, learning and teaching papers, scholarship and research papers, annual monitoring documentation, and other relevant materials. Access controls are applied at various levels to maintain confidentiality while facilitating appropriate access.

8. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY

8.1 Website and Marketing Information

Website content is produced by a dedicated team led by Marketing Manager Abel Petre, who collaborates with relevant departments whenever updates are required. Content is reviewed by the Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela) for educational accuracy, the Student Welfare Officers for social-related content, and the Marketing Manager for oversight and compliance. The Head of Quality Assurance (Pauline Fenech) performs a final review to ensure accuracy and regulatory compliance.

8.2 Programme Documentation

Following programme validation, the Marketing Manager consults with the Head of Academics, Programme Coordinator, Head of Quality Assurance, and Academic Coordinator and Registrar to identify promotional and marketing texts approved for use in programme marketing, promotion, and advertising. All published programme information is accurate, objective, and up to date in accordance with MFHEA Standard 10.

8.3 Public Availability of the IQA Manual

This IQA Manual is made publicly available on the Ascencia Malta website. Prospective students, current students, staff, and external stakeholders may access the Manual at any time. Any updates to the Manual are communicated to all stakeholders and the revised version is published promptly.

PART 2: OPERATIONAL POLICIES

This section sets out the operational policies and procedures that govern quality assurance at Ascencia Malta. These policies are reviewed annually by the Academic Board and updated as required.

1. STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1.1 Strategic Overview

Ascencia Malta encourages its staff and students to seek learning opportunities that will help develop their future skills. Teaching staff are required to hold qualifications at a higher MQF level than the programme they teach. Administrative and support staff are required to have, or to be capable of developing, relevant experience in appropriate areas.

1.2 Staff Development Aims

The staff development policy is broadly aimed at:

- Facilitating and supporting first-class standards of the learning environment and programme delivery
- Providing a coherent framework for the development of teaching faculty and support staff
- Supporting teaching and maintaining the currency of approaches to learning, teaching, and programme delivery
- Encouraging and ensuring best pedagogic practice and philosophy
- Supporting scholarship approaches pertinent to the vision and objectives of Ascencia Malta

1.3 Staff Development Review

Ascencia Malta operates a process of individual staff development review incorporating two areas of focus:

- The Learning and Teaching Mission: including teaching, learning, assessment, and programme delivery within required timescales; maintaining curriculum and syllabus relevance; and demonstrating enhancement activity
- Individual Development: education members of staff are required to confirm which three (minimum) KPIs have been met in the previous annual period, as discussed with the Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela) following lesson observations

1.4 Compliance

Ascencia Malta ensures that all staff are appraised of Maltese regulatory requirements, equality and diversity obligations, child protection legislation, health and safety requirements, first aid procedures, fire regulations, and data protection/GDPR requirements. All policies are provided to staff during onboarding and remain accessible at all times.

2. LECTURING AND SUPPORT TEAMS

2.1 Programme Teams

Academic leadership across the institution is provided by the Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela), the Academic Manager (Dariush Rahiminia), and the team of Programme Coordinators, supported by the Head of Quality Assurance (Pauline Fenech), the Academic Coordinator and Registrar (Laura Rojas), and the Academic Board.

Programme teams meet regularly and there are scheduled Programme Management Committee (PMC) meetings which take place at least once each semester. Programme progression/examinations boards meet on a scheduled timetable.

2.2 Programme Coordinators

Programme Coordinators have quality assurance and education standards responsibility for their programme areas:

- Graduate Programmes Coordinator: Robert Moura – responsible for all MQF Level 7 and Level 8 programmes
- Undergraduate Programmes Coordinator: John Michael Nieras – responsible for all MQF Level 5 and Level 6 programmes

Programme Coordinators meet frequently to consider matters of common concern and the sharing of good practice, and form part of the extended Academic Team comprising the Head of Academics, Programme Coordinators, Academic Manager, Head of Quality Assurance, and Academic Coordinator and Registrar.

2.3 Module Evaluation

Within each programme, modules are periodically evaluated by the Programme Coordinators, students (via feedback forms and discussions at the Student Council), and the Academic Manager. Module lecturers are responsible for the quality and delivery of their modules and for ensuring that module content is appropriate to the MQF level requirements.

2.4 Lecturing Staff

The lecturing staff comprises contracted and part-time lecturers, all of whom are experts in their respective fields and many of whom are actively employed in industry. Lecturing staff are recruited based on their specific areas of expertise and experience, from Malta and from international sources. All members of the lecturing staff are required to maintain their personal Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The recruitment process includes a 15-minute micro-teaching session, reference letters from previous institutions, a comprehensive induction to Ascencia Malta’s facilities and policies, and professional feedback during the early months of employment.

2.5 Academic Staff Qualifications

Name	Qualification	MQF Level	Teaching Area
Gianluca Abela	DBA, MEd, BEd	MQF 8	Strategic Leadership
Dariush Rahiminia	PhD History of Europe (Sapienza Rome)	MQF 8	Policy Analysis, Professional Development
Kim Spiteri	MSc Occupational Psychology (Birkbeck)	MQF 7	HR & Organisational Psychology
Maria Cachia	MSc Economic Crime (Portsmouth)	MQF 7	Sociology, Compliance
Mathea Cassar	MSc Strategic Mgmt & Digital Marketing (UoM)	MQF 7	Marketing
Natasha Griscti	MA TESOL (UoM)	MQF 7	English/TESOL
Ray Spiteri	IHC Certificate	MQF 5	Business English, ELT
Robert Moura	MA Linguistics (UFSCAR)	MQF 7	HRM, Strategic Leadership
Samantha Leseurre	DAEFLE (Alliance française)	MQF 6	French for Business
Italo Esposito	Higher Diploma, MSc Hospitality (ongoing)	MQF 5+	Management, General Business
Damiano Laviola	BSc IT & Business (Aston)	MQF 6	Computer Science
Lindsey Marie Sant	MA TESOL (UoM)	MQF 7	Business Research Methods
Caterine Greif	PG Digital Marketing (ESPM Brazil)	MQF 7	Project Management, Digital Marketing
Federico Di Gesù	LLB Italian Law (Uni. Statale Milano)	MQF 6	Fintech & Blockchain
Prof. Domenico Lamanna Di Salvo	Dr. rer. oec. (University of Vienna)	MQF 8	Law, Business Law

3. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Ascencia Malta recruits students from approximately 26 different countries as part of a deliberate aim to create a truly multinational student body. As of February 2026, the institution has 356 on-campus students with an all-time dropout rate of 4.88% and a student success rate of approximately 95%. The first cohort of 29 students graduated in October/November 2025.

The institution operates a four-intake model (January, April, July, October) aligned with the Academic Calendar 2025–2028 and recruits from the following regions:

- Africa: Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Sierra Leone, South Africa
- South Asia: India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan
- MENA Region: Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Turkey
- Latin America: Colombia, Chile, Peru, Mexico, Brazil
- Other Markets: Philippines, Thailand, China, Portugal, Angola

Students are required to be fluent in English with a minimum level of IELTS 5.5 or equivalent. The Admissions team, led by Admissions Manager Ivan Padron, is responsible for initial screening and interviewing of applicants, including detailed checking of previous qualifications, benchmarking against Ascencia Malta and Identità requirements, and confirming applicants' ability to meet entry and financial requirements.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

Ascencia Malta's development and strategic direction hinge on its steadfast commitment to equal opportunities across all operations. The institution enforces formal policies and procedures that prohibit less favourable treatment of current or prospective students, programme participants, or employees based on grounds unrelated to their studies or employment.

Ascencia Malta cultivates an inclusive, supportive environment for learning and work, ensuring full participation by all students, participants, and staff. No discrimination will be tolerated on grounds of ethnicity, gender, language, age, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, physical or mental ability, thinking styles, experience, or education.

When making admissions decisions, staff will admit applicants on merit while recognising the value of maximising diversity in programme intakes. Flexible approaches, such as enabling alternative participation via the Eascencia online learning platform, are adopted where physical access is impossible or unreasonably difficult.

5. GOVERNANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

5.1 Board of Governors

The Board of Governors meets quarterly and is chaired by Tess Giordmaina, Head of Institution. The Board advises the Head of Institution and Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela) on strategic direction, planning priorities, risk evaluation and mitigation, annual strategy, and the education portfolio.

5.2 Academic Board

The Academic Board is the sole academic governance body below the Board of Governors. It has delegated academic responsibility from the Board of Governors and is charged with the effective and efficient development and operational implementation of education strategies. The Academic Board is responsible for approving the Ascencia Malta Education and Quality Framework, education strategies and policies, and all major academic changes.

The Academic Board is chaired by Gianluca Abela, Head of Academics. The Board meets biannually and includes academic and administrative staff as well as student representatives.

5.3 Financial Planning and Risk Management

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

5.4 Departmental and Staff Communication

Regular communication is maintained through monthly departmental manager meetings, quarterly all-staff meetings, Executive and Senior Management Team meetings, Academic Board meetings, PMC meetings, and extensive use of electronic communications. The Managing Director (Asif Syed), Head of Institution (Tess Giordmaina), and Senior Management Team hold quarterly meetings with all staff to maintain up-to-date communication on strategic matters.

6. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

6.1 Complaints Procedure

Ascencia Malta is committed to providing a transparent and fair complaints procedure for all students and stakeholders. Formal complaints may be submitted through the procedure outlined in the Student Handbook (v1.5).

The complaints procedure operates as follows:

- Stage 1: Informal resolution – the student raises the concern directly with the relevant member of staff or Programme Coordinator
- Stage 2: Formal complaint – if the matter is not resolved informally, the student may submit a formal written complaint to the Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela)
- Stage 3: Review – the Head of Institution (Tess Giordmaina) reviews the complaint and the response provided
- Stage 4: External referral – if the student remains dissatisfied, they may refer the matter to the MFHEA

6.2 Academic Appeals

Students have the right to appeal academic decisions including exclusion, resubmission requirements, and grades awarded. Appeals must be submitted within 5 working days of notification of the decision, in accordance with the Student Handbook (v1.5). The institution will provide a written response within 10 working days.

Grounds for appeal include:

- Circumstances affecting the student’s performance that were not known to the Examination Board at the time of the decision
- Material administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process
- Evidence of prejudice, bias, or lack of proper assessment on the part of examiners
- Unsatisfactory supervision or training in respect of dissertation or thesis work

Appeals questioning the academic or professional judgement of those responsible for assessing student performance will not be permitted unless the student believes marks or grades were affected by the factors listed above.

7. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AND INTEGRITY

7.1 Academic Misconduct Policy

Ascencia Malta adopts a zero-tolerance approach to any academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating in a written assessment, plagiarism, contract cheating, and the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools. Any student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to the Student Disciplinary Policy (v2.0) which operates a four-step process.

7.2 AI Academic Integrity Policy

In recognition of the rapid development of artificial intelligence tools, Ascencia Malta has adopted a comprehensive AI Use Policy (v1.3) as part of the Student Handbook (v1.5). The policy is guided by the principle that “work can be done with AI and not by AI.”

Key provisions of the AI Use Policy include:

- AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and similar) may be used for brainstorming, research assistance, and idea generation
- AI-generated content must not be submitted as a student’s own work in any assessed component
- All use of AI tools must be explicitly declared and referenced in submitted work
- AI-generated text that is paraphrased and integrated must be properly attributed
- Lecturers may specify module-level restrictions on AI usage in assessment briefs
- Suspected AI misconduct is investigated through the same process as other forms of academic dishonesty

Staff receive training on detecting AI-generated content, and the institution employs detection tools alongside Turnitin for plagiarism checking.

8. ASSESSMENT AND MODERATION

8.1 Assessment Policy

All assessment at Ascencia Malta is designed to be valid, reliable, and fair. Assessment is aligned with module learning outcomes and MQF level descriptors. The assessment schedule is published in advance so students know what is expected and when.

8.2 Moderation and Double-Marking

All summative assessments are subject to internal moderation to ensure consistency and fairness. A sample of assessed work is second-marked, and any significant discrepancies are resolved through discussion between markers and, where necessary, referral to the Programme Coordinator or Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela).

8.3 Examinations

The Academic office is responsible for securely receiving and storing approved examination papers, organising and carrying out examination procedures, invigilation arrangements, distribution of papers to markers and external examiners, and ensuring that regulations are complied with at all stages. Examination periods are aligned with the Academic Calendar 2025–2028, with designated exam weeks at the end of each teaching block.

8.4 Monitoring of Student Performance

Student academic 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 Coordinator. In the event of unsatisfactory performance, guidance is given by the Programme Coordinator or a nominated tutor.

9. INTERNAL VERIFICATION

Ascencia Malta operates a robust internal verification process to ensure the consistency and reliability of assessment practices across all programmes. Internal verification is conducted in accordance with the institution's IV Policy.

The internal verification process includes:

- Pre-assessment verification: checking that assessment briefs are appropriate, clear, and aligned with learning outcomes and MQF level descriptors
- Post-assessment verification: sampling of marked work to confirm that marking is consistent, fair, and in accordance with the assessment criteria
- Internal Verification Meetings: held regularly and chaired by Gianluca Abela, Head of Academics, to review verification findings and agree actions
- Documentation: all internal verification activity is recorded using the Internal Verification Checklist (Appendix B) and findings are reported to the PMC and Academic Board

The Head of Quality Assurance (Pauline Fenech) oversees the internal verification process and ensures that any corrective actions identified are implemented and monitored.

10. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

10.1 Engagement with External Bodies

Ascencia Malta engages actively with external quality assurance bodies and regulatory agencies to ensure that its programmes and operations meet national and European standards. Key external relationships include:

- Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA): Ascencia Malta holds a licence as a further and higher education provider and submits to regular accreditation and reaccreditation processes in accordance with the Education Act (Cap. 327) and LN 221 of 2015
- Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC): for the evaluation and comparability of international qualifications held by staff and students
- European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015): Ascencia Malta aligns its quality assurance processes with the ESG framework
- Relevant professional bodies (e.g., CIM, ACCA) for programme benchmarking and professional recognition

10.2 External Examiners

External examiners are appointed for all programmes to provide independent confirmation of education standards. External examiners review assessment processes, sample assessed work, and provide reports which are considered by the Academic Board. Programme teams are required to provide formal responses to external examiner recommendations.

10.3 MFHEA Reaccreditation

Ascencia Malta undergoes periodic reaccreditation by the MFHEA. The institution prepares a comprehensive self-assessment report, gathers evidence of quality assurance activity, and participates in external review visits. The IQA Manual forms a core part of the reaccreditation evidence base.

11. PROGRAMME DESIGN AND APPROVAL

All new programmes are designed in accordance with the MFHEA accreditation requirements and the Malta Qualifications Framework. Programme design involves consultation with industry stakeholders, academic staff, and students to ensure relevance and currency.

The programme approval process includes:

- Initial proposal reviewed by the Academic Board
- Full programme specification developed including learning outcomes, assessment strategy, and resource requirements
- Internal review by the Head of Quality Assurance (Pauline Fenech) and the Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela)
- Submission to MFHEA for external accreditation
- Marketing and promotional materials developed only after accreditation approval

The detailed programme design lifecycle, pedagogical framework, and viability assessment methodology are set out in Section 12 below.

12. PROGRAMME DESIGN AND PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This section sets out Ascencia Malta's comprehensive approach to programme design, the pedagogical framework underpinning curriculum development, mechanisms for incorporating student and industry input, and the framework for measuring programme effectiveness and assessing the viability of new programmes. This framework ensures that all programmes are designed to meet the needs of students, employers, and the broader economy, and that they align with national and European qualifications frameworks and quality standards.

12.1 Programme Design Lifecycle

Ascencia Malta follows a structured five-phase programme design lifecycle for the development of all new programmes and the major revision of existing programmes. Each phase involves defined activities, stakeholder consultation, and quality assurance checkpoints.

Phase 1: Needs Analysis

The needs analysis phase establishes the rationale and demand for a new programme. Activities include:

- Market research using Jobsplus Malta labour market data and EU Skills Panorama to identify skills gaps, emerging industry needs, and employment trends
- Competitor programme analysis covering both Malta-based institutions and international comparators to benchmark proposed offerings
- Collège de Paris group consultation on curriculum trends, international best practice, and group-wide programme strategy
- Identification of skills gaps and emerging industry needs through analysis of sector reports, employer surveys, and national policy documents
- Review of enquiry data and student interest trends to assess potential demand
- Alignment with Malta's National Employment Policy and national skills priorities

Phase 2: Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder consultation ensures that diverse perspectives inform programme design. Activities include:

- Industry professional input from guest lecturers, advisory contacts, and employer networks to ensure curriculum relevance and employability focus
- Student feedback from existing programmes, gathered through satisfaction surveys, end-of-programme evaluations, and Student Council consultations
- Academic staff expertise and research interests, ensuring that programme design draws on the institution's scholarly strengths
- Alignment with Malta's National Employment Policy and national skills priorities to ensure programmes contribute to national workforce development
- Student Council representative consultation: elected representatives (President, Vice-President, Cultural Representative, Treasurer) are invited to programme design consultation sessions to provide the student perspective

- Collège de Paris group input on international programme standards and cross-border learning opportunities

Phase 3: Curriculum Design

The curriculum design phase translates the needs analysis and stakeholder consultation into a detailed programme specification. Ascencia Malta employs the ADDIE methodology (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) as the primary instructional design framework. Key activities include:

- Mapping learning outcomes to MQF/EQF level descriptors to ensure appropriate academic rigour and progression
- Application of Bloom's Taxonomy for cognitive domain mapping at each MQF level, ensuring that learning outcomes progress from knowledge and comprehension at lower levels to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation at higher levels
- ECTS credit allocation and workload calculations, ensuring that student effort is appropriately distributed across modules and assessment tasks
- Assessment strategy design aligned with learning outcomes, incorporating a mix of formative and summative methods including coursework, examinations, presentations, and practical projects
- Incorporating practical application, case studies, and industry-relevant content to ensure graduates are prepared for professional practice
- Designing the blended delivery model combining face-to-face teaching at the Floriana and Swieqi campuses with digital delivery through the Eascencia platform
- Ensuring that curriculum content reflects current scholarship, research, and professional practice in the relevant discipline
- Embedding employability skills, digital literacy, and cross-cultural competencies across all programme modules

The ADDIE methodology ensures a systematic and iterative approach to curriculum design:

ADDIE Phase	Activities	Outputs
Analysis	Needs assessment, learner analysis, context analysis, task analysis	Needs analysis report, learner profile, programme rationale
Design	Learning outcomes mapping, assessment strategy, module structure, delivery model	Programme specification, module descriptors, assessment matrix
Development	Content creation, resource development, platform setup, staff briefing	Teaching materials, Eascencia content, assessment briefs
Implementation	Programme delivery, student induction, teaching and assessment	Taught programme, assessment outcomes, student feedback
Evaluation	Formative and summative evaluation, feedback analysis, external review	Evaluation report, action plan, programme enhancement recommendations

Bloom's Taxonomy Mapping by MQF Level

Ascencia Malta applies Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure that learning outcomes are appropriately pitched for each MQF level:

MQF Level	Bloom's Taxonomy Focus	Typical Assessment Types
Level 5	Remember, Understand, Apply	Coursework, practical assignments, short examinations
Level 6	Apply, Analyse, Evaluate	Case studies, research projects, presentations, examinations
Level 7	Analyse, Evaluate, Create	Dissertations, research papers, strategic projects, critical reviews
Level 8	Evaluate, Create (original contribution)	Doctoral thesis, original research, peer-reviewed publications

Phase 4: Internal Review

Before submission for external accreditation, all programme proposals undergo rigorous internal review. Activities include:

- Academic Board review and approval of the programme proposal, ensuring alignment with institutional strategy and quality standards
- Joint review by the Head of Academics (Gianluca Abela) and the Head of Quality Assurance (Pauline Fenech) to confirm academic rigour, regulatory compliance, and quality assurance readiness
- Resource assessment covering staffing requirements (number, qualifications, FTE), lecturer qualifications mapping against proposed curriculum, facilities, library and digital resources, and technology requirements
- Financial viability assessment including minimum viable enrolment threshold analysis, full resource costing, and break-even modelling
- Risk assessment covering regulatory, market, and operational risks associated with the new programme

Phase 5: MFHEA Accreditation Submission

Following internal approval, the programme proceeds to the MFHEA accreditation process. Activities include:

- Preparation of the full programme specification per MFHEA requirements, including programme aims, learning outcomes, module descriptors, assessment strategy, resource provision, and quality assurance arrangements
- Self-evaluation against MFHEA programme accreditation criteria to identify any areas requiring strengthening before submission
- Submission to MFHEA with all supporting documentation, including evidence of stakeholder consultation, resource availability, and staff qualifications
- Response to MFHEA feedback and conditions, with amendments made to the programme specification as required

- Post-accreditation implementation planning: staff recruitment and briefing, resource procurement, Eascencia platform setup, marketing campaign development, and student recruitment

12.2 Incorporating Student Input in Programme Design

Student input is a central element of programme design and review at Ascencia Malta. The institution employs multiple mechanisms to ensure that the student voice informs curriculum development:

- Feedback from existing programme surveys informs new programme development by identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement in current offerings
- Student Council representatives (President: Miniar Mediouni, Vice-President: Gabriel Ogbonna Okoronkwo, Cultural Representative: Joseph Akindele Akintola, Treasurer: Lokesh Bisht) are invited to programme design consultation sessions
- End-of-programme evaluations identify curriculum gaps, emerging student interests, and areas where programme content could be enhanced
- Graduate destination surveys (when available) inform programme relevance and employability outcomes, enabling the institution to assess whether graduates are securing appropriate employment or progressing to further study
- Student representatives participate in periodic programme reviews conducted on a five-year cycle
- The Student Feedback Action Log is maintained and reviewed at PMC meetings and Academic Board meetings to ensure that student feedback is systematically actioned

12.3 Incorporating Industry and Trade Input

Ascencia Malta is committed to ensuring that its programmes are informed by current industry practice, employer needs, and labour market trends. Industry and trade input is incorporated through the following mechanisms:

- Guest lecturer and industry practitioner feedback on curriculum relevance, with guest lecturers providing insights on current industry challenges and required competencies
- Industry advisory contacts consulted during the needs analysis phase to validate programme rationale and identify emerging skills requirements
- Labour market intelligence from Jobsplus Malta, EU Skills Panorama, and sector-specific reports used to inform programme design and review
- Professional body requirements (e.g., CIM for marketing, ACCA for accounting and finance) considered for professional development pathways and programme alignment
- Collège de Paris group industry partnerships leveraged for curriculum insights, international benchmarking, and access to employer networks across Europe

- Employer feedback from student placement and internship experiences (planned for Phase 2 of the Strategic Plan, 2027–2028) will provide direct evidence of programme relevance and graduate preparedness
- Annual review of industry trends and emerging technologies to ensure curriculum currency, particularly in technology-focused programmes (Computer Science, Data Science, Blockchain)

12.4 Measuring Programme Effectiveness

Ascencia Malta employs a comprehensive set of routine mechanisms to monitor and measure programme effectiveness. These mechanisms provide data for evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement:

Student Satisfaction

- Student satisfaction surveys are administered each semester via Google Forms and QR-code-enabled digital feedback forms
- KPI target: 85% or higher overall satisfaction rating
- Results are analysed by the Head of Quality Assurance and reported to the PMC and Academic Board
- The Student Feedback Survey template (Appendix D) provides the standard framework for gathering feedback

Academic Performance Metrics

- Module pass rates and grade distribution analysis per assessment period, identifying modules with unusually high failure rates or grade inflation
- Student retention rates monitored per cohort and per programme, with interventions triggered when retention falls below the 85% KPI target
- Programme completion rates tracked against KPI targets (80% or higher)
- Time-to-completion data monitored to identify students at risk of exceeding maximum registration periods

Graduate Outcomes

- Graduate employability data collected from first graduating cohort (October/November 2025): target of approximately 75% in employment or further study within 12 months
- Graduate destination surveys will be administered from 2026 onwards as cohort numbers grow
- Alumni feedback will be sought to inform programme relevance and identify areas for enhancement

External Review

- External examiner reports reviewed and actioned when external examiners are appointed
- MFHEA accreditation and reaccreditation feedback incorporated into programme improvement plans
- Benchmarking against comparable programmes at other institutions in Malta and internationally

Internal Review Mechanisms

- PMC reviews of programme performance data each semester, with action points recorded in ClickUp
- Annual programme monitoring reports submitted to the Academic Board by Programme Coordinators (Robert Moura for graduate programmes; John Michael Nieras for undergraduate programmes)
- Biennial curriculum review cycle with external stakeholder input to ensure programmes remain current and relevant
- Student feedback action log maintained and reviewed at PMC and Academic Board meetings to demonstrate responsiveness to student concerns
- Lesson observation findings (first cycle completed November 2025) used to inform teaching quality enhancement

12.5 Viability and Feasibility Assessment Framework

Before any new programme is submitted for accreditation, Ascencia Malta conducts a rigorous viability and feasibility assessment to ensure that the programme is sustainable, adequately resourced, and aligned with institutional strategy. The assessment framework includes the following elements:

Financial Viability

- Minimum viable enrolment threshold analysis based on financial modelling, taking into account tuition fee income, staff costs, and overhead allocation
- Full resource costing: staffing (number of lecturers, qualifications, FTE requirements), facilities (classroom capacity, laboratory needs), technology (software licences, Eascencia platform), and library resources (digital subscriptions, physical texts)
- Financial break-even modelling with 3-year projection, including sensitivity analysis for different enrolment scenarios

Market Demand

- Market demand analysis: enquiry data trends from the Admissions team, competitor programme benchmarking across Malta and internationally, and demographic analysis of target student populations
- Review of applications and expressions of interest for the proposed programme area
- Analysis of labour market demand for graduates in the proposed discipline

Strategic Alignment

- Alignment with Ascencia Malta Strategic Plan priorities and phase objectives (currently Phase 1: Consolidation and Quality Enhancement)
- Contribution to the institution’s programme portfolio diversity and progression pathways
- Alignment with Collège de Paris group strategy and programme portfolio

Resource Readiness

- Staff expertise mapping against proposed curriculum to identify recruitment needs and any gaps in teaching capacity

- Facilities assessment: availability of appropriate teaching spaces, IT resources, and student support facilities
- Library and digital resource audit to confirm availability of discipline-specific materials

Risk Assessment

- Regulatory risk: likelihood and impact of accreditation delays or conditions
- Market risk: sensitivity to changes in student demand, competitor activity, and immigration policy
- Operational risk: capacity to deliver the programme alongside existing commitments
- Financial risk: impact on institutional finances if enrolment targets are not met

The viability assessment is reviewed by the Academic Board before a decision is made to proceed with MFHEA accreditation submission. A positive viability assessment is a prerequisite for progression to Phase 5 (Accreditation Submission) of the programme design lifecycle.

13. PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

Ascencia Malta conducts both annual and periodic reviews of all programmes to ensure they remain current, relevant, and of appropriate quality.

13.1 Annual Programme Monitoring

Annual programme monitoring involves the collection and analysis of data on student performance, retention, progression, and achievement; student feedback; external examiner reports; and action plans from the previous cycle. Each Programme Coordinator produces an annual monitoring report which is reviewed by the Academic Board.

13.2 Periodic Programme Review

Periodic programme reviews are conducted on a five-year cycle and involve a comprehensive evaluation of the programme, including curriculum content, assessment strategy, learning outcomes, resource provision, and student outcomes. Reviews may involve external panel members and student representatives. The Programme Review Template (Appendix C) provides the framework for periodic reviews.

14. STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION

The Admissions team, led by Admissions Manager Ivan Padron, manages the full admissions cycle from initial enquiry to enrolment and registration. The admissions process includes:

- Detailed checking of previous qualifications against MQF requirements
- Benchmarking applications against Ascencia Malta entry criteria and Identità requirements
- Video-link interviews to confirm the applicant’s suitability, academic abilities, and professional experience

- Evaluation of English language proficiency (minimum IELTS 5.5 or equivalent)
- Confirmation of financial commitment requirements

All quality assurance matters related to recruitment, admissions, and enrolment are benchmarked against the MFHEA standards.

15. STUDENT PROGRESSION AND CERTIFICATION

Student progression is monitored on a semester basis, at the end of each examination period, and at the end of each cohort assessment year. The Academic Coordinator and Registrar (Laura Rojas) maintains comprehensive records of student progression from entry to programme completion.

Certification is managed through:

- Examinations boards confirming student results and award eligibility
- The Academic Board ratifying final awards
- Awards and certificates issued in accordance with MFHEA requirements
- Transcripts detailing modules completed, grades achieved, and MQF level

16. RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Ascencia Malta's policy on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is aligned with the MFHEA framework. At present, the institution assesses applications for RPL on a case-by-case basis. International qualifications are evaluated with reference to MQRIC comparability determinations.

The institution is committed to developing a more comprehensive RPL framework as part of its Phase 2 strategic plan (2027–2028), including formal procedures for the assessment of prior experiential learning.

17. LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

17.1 Learning Environment

Ascencia Malta operates from two campuses – Floriana (23 Vincenzo Dimech Street, Floriana FRN 1502) and Swieqi (88/90 Triq It-Tiben, Swieqi SWQ 3034). Both campuses provide fully equipped classrooms, IT facilities, and student common areas. Substantial investment is maintained to ensure that the delivery of programmes and the student experience is of the highest quality.

17.2 Eascencia Digital Platform

Ascencia Malta makes substantial use of the Eascencia online learning platform. Eascencia operates as the online learning division of Ascencia Malta and is recognised and regulated by the MFHEA. The platform provides online delivery of lecture notes, interactive discussion forums, virtual support packages, and digital learning materials.

17.3 Library Resources

Resources are available for all courses offered. These comprise physical library collections at the Floriana and Swieqi campuses and an online library accessible to all students.

17.4 IT Resources and Security

The IT Use Policy and Information Security Policy (detailed in the IT Policy document) set out the requirements for the use of IT resources at Ascencia Malta, including acceptable use, data protection, access controls, and security incident management. All staff receive training on IT policies during induction and refresher training at least every 12 months.

18. DATA PROTECTION AND GDPR COMPLIANCE

18.1 Data Protection Policy

Ascencia Malta is fully committed to compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) and the Maltese Data Protection Act (Cap. 586). All personal data collected from students, staff, and other stakeholders is processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.

18.2 Principles

Ascencia Malta adheres to the following data protection principles:

- Lawfulness, fairness, and transparency: personal data is processed on a lawful basis with clear communication to data subjects
- Purpose limitation: data is collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes
- Data minimisation: only data that is necessary for the stated purpose is collected
- Accuracy: reasonable steps are taken to ensure personal data is accurate and kept up to date
- Storage limitation: personal data is retained only for as long as necessary for its purpose, subject to MFHEA Standard 8 archiving requirements
- Integrity and confidentiality: appropriate technical and organisational measures are in place to protect personal data against unauthorised access, loss, or damage

18.3 Data Subject Rights

Ascencia Malta respects the rights of data subjects under the GDPR, including the right of access, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, data portability, and the right to object. Requests should be directed to the Head of Quality Assurance (Pauline Fenech) or the HR Administrator (Daniela Grixti).

18.4 International Data Transfers

Personal data shall not be transferred outside the EEA without appropriate safeguards in place. Any international transfer must be approved by the Board of Governors and must comply with GDPR requirements for international data transfers.

18.5 Data Breach Procedures

In the event of a personal data breach, the institution will notify the Information and Data Protection Commissioner within 72 hours where feasible, and will inform affected data subjects without undue delay where the breach is likely to result in a high risk to their rights and freedoms.

19. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Ascencia Malta is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all students, staff, and visitors across both campuses. The institution complies with the Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act (Cap. 424) and all relevant Maltese health and safety legislation.

Key provisions include:

- Regular health and safety risk assessments of both campuses
- Fire safety procedures and regular fire drills
- First aid facilities and trained first aid personnel at each campus
- Health and safety induction for all new students and staff
- Incident reporting and investigation procedures
- Regular review and updating of health and safety policies

20. STUDENT VOICE AND REPRESENTATION

20.1 Student Council

The Student Council was formally established in October 2025 and operates as Ascencia Malta's primary platform for student representation. The Council is chaired by Gianluca Abela, Head of Academics, and comprises four elected positions:

- Miniar Mediouni – President
- Gabriel Ogbonna Okoronkwo – Vice-President
- Joseph Akindele Akintola – Cultural Representative
- Lokesh Bisht – Treasurer

Elections are held annually, with students volunteering for positions and being elected by their peers. Student Council meetings are scheduled in alignment with the Academic Calendar 2025–2028, with two meetings per teaching block.

20.2 Student Representation on Governance Bodies

Student representatives participate in the following governance and quality assurance bodies:

- Academic Board meetings
- Programme Management Committee (PMC) meetings
- Review Panels for programme evaluation

20.3 Feedback Mechanisms

In addition to the Student Council, Ascencia Malta employs the following feedback mechanisms:

- Anonymous student satisfaction surveys distributed at key points during programmes via Google Forms
- QR-code-enabled digital feedback forms
- Face-to-face feedback meetings with Programme Coordinators and the Head of Academics
- End-of-module and end-of-programme evaluations
- The Student Feedback Survey template (Appendix D) provides the standard framework for gathering student feedback

21. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ascencia Malta is committed to the development of all lecturers and staff. Encouragement and support is provided for:

- 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 and CPD workshops
- Participation in conference attendance and delivery of conference papers
- Attendance at discipline group, scholarship, teaching and learning networks, or similar professional events

The Academic Board reviews staff development activity on a regular basis, identifies continuous improvement themes, prioritises proposals, and confirms the focus for a series of staff development workshops in each education cycle. The CPD Record template (Appendix E) is used by all academic staff to document their development activities.

Peer teaching observation is used to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to share good practice. The first cycle of formal lesson observations was completed in November 2025, and observations are conducted using the Lesson Observation Form (Appendix A).

22. RISK MANAGEMENT

Ascencia Malta maintains a comprehensive approach to risk management across all areas of institutional activity. Key elements include:

- Risk identification and assessment across academic, operational, financial, and reputational domains
- Regular review of the institutional risk register by the Board of Governors (quarterly)
- Mitigation strategies identified and monitored for all significant risks
- Business continuity planning to ensure uninterrupted delivery of programmes
- Financial risk management through annual audited accounts and balanced budgets
- Academic risk management through programme monitoring, internal verification, and external examination
- IT and data security risk management as set out in the IT Use Policy and Information Security Policy
- Regular reporting to the Board of Governors on risk management activity and outcomes

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Lesson Observation Form

Lecturer Name	
Observer Name	
Date of Observation	
Programme	
Module	
MQF Level	
Number of Students Present	
Duration of Observation	

Observation Criteria (Rate 1–5: 1 = Unsatisfactory, 5 = Excellent)

Criterion	Rating / Comments
Lesson planning and preparation	
Clarity of learning objectives	
Subject knowledge and accuracy	
Teaching methodology and delivery	
Student engagement and participation	
Use of learning resources and technology	
Assessment and feedback practices	
Classroom management	
Differentiation and inclusivity	
Overall effectiveness	

Strengths Identified

_____

Areas for Development

_____

Agreed Action Points

_____

Signatures	Date
Lecturer: _____	
Observer: _____	

Appendix B: Internal Verification Checklist

Programme	
Module	
Assessment Title	
MQF Level	
Internal Verifier Name	
Date of Verification	

Pre-Assessment Verification

Check	Yes/No	Comments
Assessment brief is clear and unambiguous		
Learning outcomes are clearly stated		
Assessment criteria are aligned with learning outcomes		
Assessment is appropriate for the MQF level		
Marking scheme/rubric is provided		
Submission requirements are clearly stated		
Assessment is free from errors		

Post-Assessment Verification

Check	Yes/No	Comments
Marking is consistent with the rubric/criteria		
Grades awarded are appropriate for the quality of work		
Feedback is constructive and developmental		
Feedback is provided within agreed timescales		
Records are accurate and complete		
Any discrepancies have been resolved		

Summary and Recommendations

_____

Signatures	Date
Internal Verifier: _____	
Programme Coordinator: _____	

Appendix C: Programme Review Template

Programme Title	
MQF Level	
Programme Coordinator	
Review Period	
Date of Review	
Review Panel Members	

Section 1: Programme Overview

Provide a brief overview of the programme, its aims, and its position within the institutional portfolio.

_____

Section 2: Student Data and Performance

Summarise key data on enrolment, retention, progression, achievement, and graduate outcomes.

_____

Section 3: Student Feedback

Summarise student feedback received during the review period and actions taken.

_____

Section 4: External Examiner Reports

Summarise key themes from external examiner reports and responses.

_____

Section 5: Curriculum and Assessment

Evaluate the currency and relevance of the curriculum, the appropriateness of assessment methods, and alignment with MQF level descriptors.

_____

Section 6: Learning Resources

Evaluate the adequacy and quality of learning resources, including library, IT, and Eascencia platform provision.

Section 7: Action Plan

Action	Responsible Person	Target Date

Approved by Academic Board:

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix D: Student Feedback Survey Template

Programme	
Module (if applicable)	
Semester/Intake	
Date	

Please rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree):

Statement	Rating (1–5)
The programme content is relevant and up to date	
The teaching quality is good	
The lecturers are knowledgeable and approachable	
Assessment methods are fair and clearly explained	
Feedback on assessments is timely and helpful	
Learning resources (library, Eascencia, IT) are adequate	
I feel supported by the Student Welfare Officers	
Administrative services are efficient and helpful	
The campus facilities are satisfactory	
I would recommend this programme to others	

What do you like most about your programme?

_____

What improvements would you suggest?

_____

Any other comments:

_____

Thank you for your feedback. All responses are anonymous and will be used to improve the quality of our programmes.

Appendix E: CPD Record Template

Staff Member Name	
Role	
Department	
Academic Year	

CPD Activities Undertaken

Activity / Event	Date	Outcome / Reflection

Development Goals for Next Period

_____

_____

Agreed with Line Manager:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Staff Member Signature:

Signature: _____ Date: _____