E-Ascencia Student Policy Handbook

1.0 Introduction

Welcome to E-Ascencia, the Digital Campus of Ascencia Malta. This handbook outlines the policies, procedures, and expectations for all students enrolled in our distance learning programmes. By enrolling at E-Ascencia, you agree to abide by these policies and all supplementary guidelines issued by the Academic Management Team.

Unlike on-campus programmes, E-Ascencia provides flexibility with structured engagement requirements. This handbook ensures a fair, supportive, and academically rigorous learning environment for all students.

1.1 Engagement & Access Policy

1.1.1 Daily Content Access

E-Ascencia operates on a structured content delivery schedule to ensure consistent, manageable learning progression:

- **Daily Content Availability:** Approximately 3 hours of new course content will be made available each day during the active course period
- **Flexible Access:** You may access the platform at any time that suits your schedule

1.1.2 On-Demand Content Access

A key advantage of E-Ascencia is the ability to revisit course materials:

- **Unlimited Review Access:** You may access all previously released course content at any time during your enrolment
- **No Restrictions:** There are no limits on how many times you can review lectures, materials, resources, or assignments
- **Download Rights:** Subject to licensing agreements, you will not able to download certain materials for personal study use

1.1.3 Expectations for Engagement

While E-Ascencia offers flexibility, consistent engagement is essential for success:

- **Regular Access:** You are expected to log in and engage with course materials regularly (minimum twice per week)

- **Participation:** Completion of discussion forums, peer interactions, and collaborative activities if/when required
- **Assignment Submission:** Timely submission of all assessments
- **Communication:** Active monitoring of your email and course notifications on your personal dashboard

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1.2 Attendance & Retention Policy

1.2.1 Engagement Tracking

E-Ascencia does not use traditional attendance tracking. Instead, engagement is monitored through:

- **Platform Activity Logs:** Login frequency, content access, and interaction records
- **Assessment Submission Records:** Timely completion and submission of assignments
- **Progress Milestones:** Completion of unit checkpoint activities

1.2.2 Retention Requirements

To remain actively enrolled in your E-Ascencia programme:

- **Minimum Engagement:** You must maintain consistent engagement with course materials
- **Assignment Deadlines:** All assignments must be submitted within specified deadlines or extensions requested in advance
- **Access to the course:** Access to the courses will be granted for a defined period, determined by the number of credits allocated to the programme. Once this period has expired, the student will no longer have access to the course and will be considered as having failed.
- **Contact with Support:** If you foresee difficulties, you must notify your E-Mentor or Academic Manager immediately

1.2.3 Support for Disengagement

If you experience challenges with engagement or course progression:

- **Early Intervention:** The Academic Manager will contact students showing signs of disengagement
- **Extensions & Accommodations:** Genuine circumstances may be considered for deadline extensions

- **Academic Support:** Additional tutoring and study resources are available to support your success on request

1.2.4 Withdrawal & Leave of Absence

- **Formal Withdrawal:** Students must formally withdraw through the Student Portal. Informal abandonment may result in academic penalties

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2.0 Reassessment Policy

2.1 Reassessment (Resit) Policy for Failed Assignments

This policy applies when a student receives a failing grade on a final unit assessment.

Step 1: First Failed Attempt – Second Chance

- **Automatic Entitlement:** If you fail an assignment on your first attempt, you are automatically entitled to one free reassessment attempt
- **Resit Window:** You will have 10 working days from receiving your results to submit your reassessment
- **Extended Support:** The course E-Mentor will provide targeted feedback on your first attempt to guide your improvement upon request
- **Preparation Resources:** Access to additional study materials, tutorial sessions, and one-on-one support if requested
- **Outcome:** Your second attempt grade replaces your first attempt in the gradebook

Step 2: Second Failed Attempt – Payment Required (€500)

- **Payment Condition:** If you fail the reassessment attempt, further resit attempts require a payment of **€500 per attempt**
- **Payment Process:** You must complete payment before access to a third attempt is granted
- **Access Restoration:** Upon successful payment, your account will be re-enabled for the course, and you will have access to the third attempt

Step 3: Third and Subsequent Attempts (€500 per attempt)

- **Repeated Payment:** Each additional resit attempt beyond the second failure requires a separate €500 payment
- **Cumulative Cost:** Students should be aware that multiple reassessments can result in significant costs

- **Final Deadlines:** Resit attempts must be completed before the final module certification deadline

2.4 Academic Appeal

- Students may appeal a failing grade if they believe there are grounds (administrative error, process violation); appeals must be submitted within 5 working days of receiving results

2.5 Reassessment Records

- All reassessment attempts, payments, and outcomes are recorded in your student file
- Records are retained in accordance with GDPR and institutional data retention policies

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3.0 Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Use Policy for Students

3.1 Policy Overview

At E-Ascencia, we value academic integrity and responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in online education. While AI tools can enhance learning and efficiency, unrestricted use can compromise originality, critical thinking, and ethical standards. This policy sets strict guidelines on when and how AI can be used during coursework and assessments.

3.2 Permitted AI Use

Where AI Use is Encouraged:

- **Brainstorming & Ideation:** Using AI to generate initial ideas or discussion prompts
- **Research Support:** Using AI to summarize published articles or identify research directions
- **Learning Enhancement:** Using AI tutors or language learning tools to supplement course materials
- **Technical Assistance:** Using AI coding assistants for non-assessed practical work
- **Writing Support:** Using grammar checkers and citation tools to improve presentation (not generate content)

3.3 Prohibited AI Use

The following uses of AI constitute Academic Misconduct:

- **Submitting AI-Generated Content as Your Own:** Passing off AI-written assignments, essays, or solutions as your original work
- **Circumventing Assessment:** Using AI to bypass learning objectives or complete assessments without genuine engagement
- **Undisclosed Use:** Using AI tools without notifying your instructor when disclosure is required
- **Exam Violations:** Using AI tools during timed examinations unless explicitly permitted
- **Plagiarism via AI:** Using AI to paraphrase or remix existing works without proper attribution

3.4 AI Detection Measures

E-Ascencia employs multiple safeguards to ensure academic integrity:

- **AI Detection Tools:** All written assignments will be screened through specialized AI detection software
- **Submission Metadata:** The Learning Management System logs submission patterns, timestamps, and revision history
- **Draft Reviews:** Instructors may request draft submissions and revision history to verify authentic development of ideas
- **Manual Review:** Suspicious submissions undergo manual instructor review to assess coherence, argumentation, and alignment with your demonstrated knowledge
- **Comparative Analysis:** Your submission style is compared against your previous work and discussion forum contributions

3.5 Penalties for AI Misuse

Violating this policy will result in escalating academic penalties:

Offence Level	Consequence
First Offence	**Formal Warning** – Student must resubmit work with a significant mark deduction. A formal warning letter is issued and recorded in the student file.
Second Offence	**Automatic Zero** – The assignment is graded 0, and the student is reported to the Academic Integrity Board. The student is required to e-meet with the Academic Manager to discuss academic integrity expectations.

Third Offence	**Academic Misconduct Hearing** – The case is escalated to formal disciplinary procedures. Possible outcomes include: suspension from assessments (temporary), suspension from the programme, or expulsion from the institution.

4.0 Student Conduct & Disciplinary Procedures

4.1 Code of Conduct

By enrolling in E-Ascencia, students agree to:

- **Academic Integrity:** Submit original work and maintain honesty in all assessments
- **Respectful Communication:** Treat instructors, peers, and staff with professionalism and respect
- **Platform Usage:** Use the Learning Management System and communication tools appropriately
- **Compliance:** Abide by all E-Ascencia policies, course guidelines, and legal requirements
- **Confidentiality:** Respect the privacy of course materials and classmate information

4.2 Disciplinary Process

E-Ascencia follows a progressive discipline approach:

Step 1 – Email Warning

- An informal warning is issued for minor policy violations
- The student is notified of the specific behavior of concern
- Documentation is made in the student file
- The student is given an opportunity to explain their actions

Step 2 – First Written Warning

- A formal warning letter is issued for repeated or moderate violations
- The student signs to confirm receipt
- A meeting with the Academic Manager will be held to evaluate the situation

- A behaviour improvement plan may be developed
- If no improvement is observed within 1 month, escalation to Step 3 may be recommended

Step 3 – Final Written Warning

- A Final Warning letter is issued by the Academic Director
- The student is formally notified that further violations may result in expulsion
- A signed behavior agreement may be required
- Progress is reviewed at a formal meeting after 3 months

Step 4 – Expulsion

- Expulsion is issued if no improvement occurs within 1 month of a Final Warning, or in cases of very serious misconduct
- The student receives a formal expulsion letter detailing the reasons
- The student loses all access to E-Ascencia
- No refunds will be provided unless required by law
- Records are maintained as required by law

4.3 Right to Appeal

Students have the right to:

- **Explain Your Position:** Present your side of the story and provide evidence or context
- **Appeal in Writing:** Submit a formal written appeal to the Academic Manager within 5 working days of receiving a disciplinary decision
- **Receive a Response:** Receive a written response to your appeal within 10 working days
- **Request a Meeting:** Request a virtual meeting with the Academic Manager to discuss your case

4.4 Records & Documentation

- All warnings, disciplinary actions, and appeals are recorded in your confidential student file
- Records are retained in accordance with GDPR and institutional policy
- Disciplinary records may affect future programme enrolment or references

5.0 Technology & Learning Management System

5.1 System Access & Technical Requirements

Minimum Technical Requirements:

- **Internet Connection:** Reliable broadband internet
- **Device:** Computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone compatible with modern browsers
- **Browser:** Updated version of a browser such us Chrome, Firefox, Safari, or Edge
- **Email:** A valid, regularly monitored email account

5.2 Technical Support

- **Support:** Available via email to the Help Desk
- **Response Time:** Non-critical issues within 10 working days; urgent issues within 5 working days
- **System Downtime:** Maintenance windows are scheduled for weekends; advance notice is provided

5.3 Account Security

- **Password Security:** You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of your login credentials
- **Unauthorized Access:** Notify the Help Desk immediately if you suspect unauthorized access
- **Account Monitoring:** The institution may monitor accounts for security and compliance purposes
- **Multi-Factor Authentication:** May be required for sensitive functions (e.g., grade viewing, payment processing)

6.0 Data Protection, GDPR & Privacy

6.1 Data Protection Principles

E-Ascencia, as a data controller, processes student personal data in line with GDPR principles:

- **Lawfulness & Transparency:** Data is processed for legitimate educational purposes with your knowledge

- **Purpose Limitation:** Data is collected only for specified educational, administrative, and legal purposes
- **Data Minimisation:** Only necessary personal data is collected and retained
- **Accuracy:** Personal records are kept accurate and updated
- **Integrity & Confidentiality:** Data is protected against unauthorized access or loss
- **Accountability:** Records of data processing are maintained and available for audit

6.2 Personal Data Handling

What Data We Collect:

- Identity information (name, email, phone number)
- Educational records (assessments, grades, attendance/engagement metrics)
- Financial information (payment records, invoicing)
- Communication records (email, forum posts, support tickets)
- Technical data (login history, IP addresses for security purposes)
- Accessibility and accommodation needs (optional, for support purposes)

How We Use Your Data:

- **Educational Delivery:** Content provision, assessment, and grading
- **Student Support:** Academic and welfare assistance
- **Administrative Functions:** Enrolment management, billing, certification
- **Quality Assurance:** Programme evaluation and continuous improvement
- **Legal Compliance:** Regulatory reporting and compliance with authorities
- **Communication:** Course updates, policy notifications, important announcements

Secure Communication:

- Personal data should not be transmitted by email unless necessary
- Sensitive information (financial data, medical information) must be encrypted or sent through secure channels
- Do not include unnecessary personal details in forum posts or public communications
- Use the secure Student Portal for sensitive transactions

6.3 Data Retention

- **Active Enrolment:** Data is retained during your active participation in the programme
- **After Programme Completion:** Records are retained for 7 years in accordance with regulatory requirements
- **Upon Withdrawal:** You may request deletion of non-essential data; some records are retained for audit purposes
- **Right to Erasure:** Subject to legal and contractual obligations, you have the right to request deletion of your data

6.4 Your Rights Under GDPR

As a student, you have the following rights:

- **Right of Access:** Request a copy of the personal data E-Ascencia holds about you
- **Right to Rectification:** Request correction of inaccurate data
- **Right to Erasure:** Request deletion of data (subject to legal exceptions)
- **Right to Restrict Processing:** Request that processing be limited in certain circumstances
- **Right to Data Portability:** Request your data in a structured, machine-readable format
- **Right to Object:** Object to processing for direct marketing or other purposes
- **Right to Lodge a Complaint:** Contact the relevant data protection authority if you believe your rights have been violated

6.5 Requests & Inquiries

To exercise your data protection rights or file a complaint:

- **Contact:** Email the support address
- **Response Time:** Requests will be responded to within 30 days
- **Appeals:** If unsatisfied, you may escalate to the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (Malta)

6.6 Monitoring, Logging & Access by the Institution

E-Ascencia reserves the right to:

- **Security Monitoring:** Log and monitor data access for operational, security, and compliance purposes
- **Authorized Access:** Content and account access occurs only in defined circumstances:

  - Legal obligation or court order
  - Investigation of serious misconduct or academic integrity violations
  - Security incidents or fraud prevention
  - Student welfare concerns or safeguarding issues
- **Proportionality:** Monitoring is conducted with respect for privacy and data minimisation principles
- **Documentation:** All access is documented and reviewed for compliance

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7.0 Declaration of Student Policies and Procedures

Student Acknowledgement & Consent

By enrolling in E-Ascencia, I confirm that I have read and understood the policies in this handbook. I acknowledge:

✓ I have reviewed the E-Ascencia Student Policy Handbook

✓ I understand the Content Release Schedule and engagement expectations

✓ I understand the Reassessment (Resit) Policy, including the €500 fee for third and subsequent attempts

✓ I understand the Academic Integrity and AI Use policies, and the consequences of violations

✓ I understand the Data Protection and Privacy policies, and my rights under GDPR

✓ I understand that I may be prohibited from accessing courses, assessments, or the platform if I do not accept these policies

✓ I accept sole responsibility for:

- Ensuring my study materials and documentation are current and accessible
- Maintaining my account security and login credentials
- Monitoring my student email and course notifications
- Submitting work by specified deadlines
- Complying with all E-Ascencia policies and applicable laws of Malta

✓ I agree to respect and follow the rules and policies of E-Ascencia and abide by the laws of Malta

✓ I understand that my engagement may be monitored through activity logs, assessment submissions, and platform interactions

✓ I agree to use the E-Ascencia platform and resources only for legitimate educational purposes

✓ I acknowledge that breach of these policies may result in academic penalties, suspension, or expulsion

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8.0 Policy Review & Amendments

This handbook is reviewed annually and updated in response to:

- Regulatory changes (GDPR, educational accreditation requirements)
- Technological developments and platform updates
- Student feedback and operational experience
- Institutional strategic priorities

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This handbook is a living document. Ascencia Malta reserves the right to update policies with reasonable notice to students. Significant changes will be communicated via email and the Student Portal.