

Quality Assurance Policy

Aim

The purpose of Freshart College's quality policy is to continuously and systematically ensure, improve and enhance the quality of the institution and the upgrading of educational regulations across the entire range of the College's educational programs. The quality harmonization in professional education is the main priority of the committee which evaluates and constantly adapts the modern quality practices in all the structures of the College.

Quality assurance at Freshart College supports the College's mission and its academic achievements. The College's approach is based on planning, implementation and review of activities, with the primary aim of continuously improving all of the College's operations, including the enhancement of the student experience.

Goals

The objectives of Freshart College's quality assurance policy are:

- Reliable, systematic and timely implementation of quality evaluation and certification actions.
- Upgrading the quality of the services provided to all recipients.
- The promotion of common values and a culture of quality in the institution
- The systematic collection, recording and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to measure the performance of the Institution at all levels of its operation.

Quality assurance principles

Freshart College is committed to implementing the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The College has adopted the following ESG Standard as its policy on quality assurance:

"Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and process, while involving external stakeholders (ESG 2014)".

The ESG Standards and Guidelines (that can be accessed online at: http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf) encapsulate the quality assurance principles to which Freshart College adheres to. The following quality assurance principles inform our Quality Assurance Framework:

- Quality assurance is understood to be the responsibility of the whole College, including faculty, staff and management.
- Freshart College students are involved in quality assurance procedures.
- Where examples of good practice are identified, they are acknowledged, shared and implemented in a collegial manner.
- Review processes are driven at academic programme level and with regards to the College learning environment, with subsequent quality enhancement plans

- Student feedback questionnaires are issued centrally using a standardised format.
- Evaluation and actions for implementation are Head of College.
- External Examiner Reports are implemented where appropriate.

The Quality Assurance Principles and Framework are part of a structured system for the enhancement of learning and teaching at Freshart College. Quality Assurance procedures support and encourage innovation in teaching and learning by providing a structure to enable reflection and action on the development of procedures to the benefit of the College community.

Points of Reference

The benchmarks governing the institution's quality assurance policy are:

- **Unified approach:** Establishing procedures that define the College's quality assurance requirements with a view to establishing a unified framework to ensure the consistency of academic standards and the high quality of learning experience.
- **External:** Quality assurance processes are enhanced through the involvement of other stakeholders taking into account external reference points, domestic and international practice, as well as feedback from interested external social groups (eg employers, market players, etc.).
- **Quality culture:** The existence of a management framework to support and enhance quality, the establishment of a quality culture, as well as the strengthening of an environment of continuous assessment, review and improvement by setting goals for continuous improvement.
- **Overall approach:** Quality management in the institution is a global approach that includes all the activities of the institution.
- **Collectivity:** Quality assurance is a collective task for all members of the academic community of the institution: students, academic, administrative and research staff and graduates. All departments of the Institution are responsible for the implementation of the procedures that concern them and must monitor and ensure their systematic and effective implementation. The Institution and subordinate departments shall inform the institution's competent bodies of the results of the implementation of these procedures in order to allow the institution to identify immediate problems or areas that need to be improved and undertake improving actions as well as identifying and disseminating good practices.
- **Strengthening quality:** Quality enhancing requires the systematic collection and utilization of qualitative and quantitative data as well as feedback, ongoing contact with students, comparative quality standardization and the use of good practices.
- **Liability:** Quality assurance responsibilities should be clear so that the roles and responsibilities of committees and individuals in relation to quality management in the institution are clear.

Internal Evaluation

The Internal Evaluation is a repeated participative process, with the aim of capturing the current situation in the Department, highlighting all the characteristics of its operation, positive and negative, and formulating a critical opinion on the quality of its work based on objective criteria and indicators common consent and general acceptance. There are many quality assurance processes to monitor, revise and report the academic quality and to use the data which derived for continuous improvement and enhancement which are followed and implemented by the College.

Such quality assurance actions/data sources are:

- Systematic collection of qualitative and quantitative data from the tutors through the Course Description Forms (on a six-monthly basis) and the Individual Census Forms (on an annual basis) that they must complete
- Continuous and systematic collection of feedback from students and staff through structured questionnaires. The utilization of feedback and the immediate resolution of any problems or areas in need of improvement pointed out by the students and adopted by the College administration, as well as the dissemination of good practices, are key pursuits of the institution.
- Highlighting the Department's achievements, at an academic, scientific and social level
- Monitoring and improvement of the services provided by members of the teaching, research, technical and administrative staff. Training opportunities will be provided to the institution's administrative and academic staff through a variety of means, such as participation in conferences, training seminars and related programs.
- The contribution to regional development, as well as the development and deepening of the institution's relations with social, cultural and productive bodies.
- Activate the institution of the Visiting Academic, which will contribute to the internationalization of the College. This effort will strengthen collaborations with universities in the fields of Arts and Design and research centers abroad. The cultivation of the College's relations with the European and international environment as well as its continuous promotion abroad can also be activated through Erasmus Programs.
- Revision of Internal Processes and Quality Mechanisms - Formation of new policies where deemed necessary (eg in teaching matters and modernization of learning methods). The participation of all interested parties in the design and revision of curricula is particularly important.
- Monitoring the labor market in the field of Fine Arts in relation to the assurance and enhancement of quality at national and international level and the implementation of innovative institutions, procedures and quality assurance mechanisms in the institution.
- The provision of high quality infrastructure that supports and enhances the learning experience and research (eg databases, laboratories).
- The correct implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- The existence of clear responsibilities regarding who bears responsibility for quality assurance at all levels of the institution's operation.
- Submission of an Internal Evaluation of the quality of the institution's work at all levels (An internal evaluation report will be submitted every year)

Review of quality assurance policies and procedures

Reviews should be undertaken of all areas of Freshart College's activity, academic and non-academic, on a regular basis. Freshart College monitors the effective implementation of quality assurance policy and individual processes. The Quality Assurance Committee monitors the implementation of the policy and informs the Management Committee of any deviations, problems or areas that need to be improved so that appropriate improvement actions can be taken immediately. In addition, the Quality Assurance Committee shall submit recommendations to the Administrative Commission on the progress of implementation of quality assurance procedures and on actions to be undertaken to further improve and enhance quality. The needs to review the policy and its procedures can be presented during implementation or as a result of feedback.

The review measures make up the Quality Assurance Framework of the College are:

1. Continuous Self-Evaluation, consisting of internal biannual review based on mid and end of semester student feedback, forms the core of our assessment of teaching and learning methods, and,
2. Periodic Programme Review which consists of internal and external review of the current programmes at Freshart College.

External review will be carried out by External Advisors, such as an Academic Director from another validated University, that will oversee the standards of the discipline and ensure that the academic standards are comparable with other institutions operating validated programmes in the EQF First Cycle.

Quality Assurance Responsibilities

College:

- Setting appropriate objectives in learning and teaching
- Providing the intellectual and material resources to support these objectives
- Monitoring annually and enhancing learning and teaching performance
- Evaluating the success in meeting learning and teaching objectives
- Revising modules and making minor revisions to programmes
- Accounting for their academic performance to Faculty Board
- Demonstrating high standards to external examiners and other external agencies
- Preparing, where appropriate, for professional accreditation

Faculty:

- Taking operational responsibility within the College for the management of academic quality and standards,
- Approving new programme proposals, major revisions to programmes and discontinuation of programmes
- Monitoring and reviewing the standards of awards
- Considering external examiners' reports
- Monitoring student progression
- Approving boards of studies and assessment, progression and awarding committees
- Approving the appointment of external examiners
- Approving, where appropriate, the programmes of study of individual students
- Overseeing the development and management of codes of good practice and other quality assurance procedures
- Overseeing external examiners' annual reports
- Overseeing the annual monitoring of programmes
- Acting for the University in areas of external review, audit and accreditation
- Facilitating and promoting quality enhancement and the dissemination of good practice

Internally, quality assurance procedures are developed on the basis that each member of College has personal responsibility for the maintenance of academic standards. The Internal Quality Committee is responsible for the internal evaluation, i.e. the inventory, processing and presentation of the relevant data, for the most complete assessment of the quality data related to the evaluation of the specific program. Freshart College's academic and administrative staff also hold responsibility

for the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of quality policies and procedures. Students, in partnership with teaching staff, are responsible for their learning and for providing constructive feedback on teaching and courses.

External quality assurance is provided through various bodies and standards/regulations/laws to which the College adheres to/is regulated by, such as The Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Law of 2015, the European Guidelines and Standards for Quality Assurance, the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programs, the Private Universities (Establishment, Operation and Control) Law 109(1) of 2005 and the KYSATS – Cyprus National Academic Recognition Information Centre – NARIC Law.

External quality assurance is dealt by the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth.

Internal Quality Assurance Committee

The Committee is responsible for all matters related to maintaining and improving the quality of education provided by the College. Specifically, the Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for the following:

1. cultivation of perceptions and behaviors that recognize the importance of quality and its assurance for the accomplishment of the College work;
2. application of a policy and associated procedures for ensuring the quality and standards in relation to the programs of study offered and the qualification titles awarded;
3. operation of formal mechanisms for the approval, monitoring and periodic review and where necessary revision of the programs of study offered and the qualification titles awarded;
4. ensuring that the students' assessment on the basis of published criteria, regulations and procedures is applied consistently;
5. possession by the teaching staff of the necessary qualifications and skills in relation to the teaching it is required to perform, as well as possession of the data documenting the degree of competency of the teaching staff;
6. the adequacy and suitability of learning resources for each program of study offered for the purpose of supporting the process of student learning;
7. collection, analysis and use of all data related to the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of the programs of study offered and other educational activities; and
8. publication, in printed and electronic form, at regular intervals, an up to date, impartial and objective report regarding the programs of study offered and other educational activities as well as the qualifications titles awarded.

Apart from the above the committee is responsible for the following:

coordination of the preparation of special self-assessment reports in relation to the external accreditation of the College, in accordance with the standards applicable to these reports set and published by the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education; and

1. preparation of the general assessment reports of the College for submission to the Agency, concerning the College as a whole and including data on a number of key quality indicators published by the Agency.

The structure of the Committee on the Internal Quality is as follows:

1. President – Director of Administrative Affairs
2. Program Coordinator - Head of Academic Affairs
3. Internal Quality Controller
4. Academic Affairs Officer
5. Professor
6. Professor
7. Student

Regularity of Meetings

The Quality Assurance Committee meets 4 times in a Year. The exact dates are announced in advance relative to the procedures mentioned above.

Detailed procedures involved Quality Assurance System

What follows is a detailed description of the procedures involved in quality assurance.

1. Development and approval of a new program of study

Before a new program of study can be introduced it must obtain approval for its development. A suggestion for a new program of study may originate from a variety of sources: e.g. a faculty or administration member of the College, a student of the College or an external source. A suggestion for a new program of study may arise for various reasons, for example, identified niche market; student feedback; strategic opportunity; growth market. Suggestions for a new program of study are accompanied by a 2-4 page supporting document/paper that briefly includes:

- the proposed name, aims and description of the program;
- the target market and evidence of market demand; and
- need for special resources.

The proposal is placed on the agenda of the academic committee's next scheduled meeting. The academic committee must decide whether to proceed with the development of the proposal. If the committee is positive about the development of the new program it ratifies the composition of an ad hoc committee composed of a number of appropriate people that will develop the proposal and appoints a chairperson for the committee. The appointed members of the ad hoc committee must consist of people with experience/knowhow in the field of the particular program of study, people with experience in teaching, research and curriculum development. The committee consists of faculty members of the College and of external individuals (e.g. industry experts, alumni, members of professional associations). The committee's chairperson will have the responsibility for steering the proposal through the development process. The committee's chairperson will have responsibility for submitting to the academic committee members, before the due date set by the academic committee, the developed proposal.

A copy of the developed proposal is given to each member of the academic committee. The academic committee following a thorough evaluation of the proposal meets within 15 days in order to decide one of the following courses of action:

- To approve the developed proposal (with or without requesting any minor changes that the ad hoc committee will be asked to implement) and decide who the program's coordinator will be;

- To refer back the developed proposal to the ad hoc committee chairperson for further consideration (pointing out serious issues that must be considered);
- To defer consideration of the developed proposal until a later date; and
- To have no further consideration of the developed proposal.

It is important that the proposal is initiated in sufficient time for all stages of the procedure for approval to be completed before the proposal is due to take effect. The Academic Committee will receive proposals no later than the 30th of June (15 months before the start of offering the program of study).

Once the developed proposal is approved, the College prepares the application for evaluation – accreditation of a program of study and any other documents and submits them to the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education.

2. Monitoring of quality of the education offered

Monitoring and evaluation is the process of systematically gathering and scrutinising relevant information and critical reflection on its significance. The purposes of these activities are:

1. The assessment of the quality of provision;
2. The identification of deficiencies and strategy for remedy;
3. The sharing and reinforcing of good practice; and
4. The encouragement of innovation and subsequent enhancement of good standards.

The routine monitoring of academic provision is carried out throughout the year and is the formal responsibility of individual instructors through the academic committee.

A critical appraisal will normally cover a review of areas like:

- Aims and objectives: the extent to which these have been satisfied, and of their continuing relevance;
- Curriculum: including the arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment;
- Staffing and resources;
- Learning services and student support services related to the course;
- Student views;
- Relevant staff development research;
- Views of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture and the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education on any academic issue; and
- Where appropriate, vocational and career aspects of relevance to the course through external input from employers and other bodies.

3. Review and evaluation of an existing program of study

Every 2 years since the day a program of study started being offered is reviewed and evaluated by Academic Committee and Quality Assurance Committee in a joint meeting based on a report prepared by the program's coordinator. The purpose of the review and evaluation is to facilitate continuing academic development and, where appropriate, change. The program's coordinator report provides information on the following:

- A review of the program's of study aspects (see aspects considered when developing a new program of study);

- A review of the students' admission, withdrawal, progression and graduation rates;
- A review of students' facilities and services satisfaction and faculty and course satisfaction;
- Information related to the employment of graduates;
- Aspects of good practice;
- A critical appraisal of the operation of the program of study; and
- Suggestions, if necessary, for revising anything related to the operation of the program of study and the rationale for any proposed revisions.

The report is provided to the Quality Assurance Committee and to the Academic Committee members and the discussion related to the particular program's review is placed on the agenda of the Quality Assurance Committee's and Academic Committee's next scheduled joint meeting.

In the meeting, following a thorough examination of the report by committees' members, the Quality Assurance Committee and the Academic Committee decide one of the following:

- the program is being offered adequately;
- the program needs to be revised (in such a case the revision of an existing program procedure is initiated); or
- the program needs to be discontinued (see the discontinuation of an existing program of study section).

4. Revision of an existing program of study

Minor revisions related to a program of study (e.g. change in the syllabus of a course, change of main book) are implemented by the appropriate faculty members and approved by the appropriate Department Head. For any major revisions the procedure described below applies.

A suggestion for revising an existing program of study may originate from a variety of sources: e.g. a faculty or administration member of the College, a student of the College or an external stakeholder and should be presented to the academic committee for examination. It is important that the proposal is initiated in sufficient time for all stages of the procedure for approval to be completed before the proposal is due to take effect. The Academic Committee will receive proposals no later than the 28th of February (19 months before the start of offering the program of study).

The proposal is placed on the agenda of the academic committee's next scheduled meeting. The academic committee has to decide whether to proceed with revising the existing program of study. If the committee is positive, it ratifies the composition of an ad hoc committee composed of appropriate members that will prepare a proposal regarding the revision of the program and appoints a chairperson for the committee. The appointed members of the ad hoc committee must consist of people with experience/knowhow in the field of the particular program of study, people with experience in teaching, research and curriculum development. The committee consists of faculty members of the College and of external individuals (e.g. industry experts, alumni, members of professional associations). The committee's chairperson will have the responsibility for steering the proposal through the preparation of the proposal. The committee's chairperson will have responsibility for submitting to the academic committee members, before the due date set by the academic committee, the developed proposal. The developed proposal should include the following for the program of study:

- Revision(s) suggested;
- Reasons for requesting these revision(s);
- Benefits from proceeding with these revisions(s); and

Student voice

The College undertakes to provide opportunities for students to participate in, and provide feedback on, the teaching and research activities of the University; and to consult and support student representative organisations.

Students provide feedback on their learning experience through course and teaching evaluations and core College surveys.